

SOUTHEY FARM

Tim and I bought the farm in 1970. We bought it for the land and not for the accommodation: this was a wooden building with a tin roof erected temporarily in the 1940s.

The property had been purchased from George Dennis of North Tawton, who only farmed the land and did not live here. He had acquired it from the Greenslades, who had been here for many years. I was told that Mr. Greenslade used to deliver milk in the village with a horse and cart and was not very kind to his horse. They retired to a Woolaway bungalow that had been built in a corner of a field. This is now called Avalon and is lived in by Jeff White. Cherrywell cottages used to be farm cottages that had replaced some others that were demolished. Cherrywell front doors used to look out over the farm to Dartmoor and the back sections would have been kitchen gardens I presume.

Tim had been here for a month or so before I got here, with our most recent baby, from Northern Ireland. He and Peter Reddaway and his men had been trying to make the place look more habitable for a family of 6 – I fortunately did not see it before they started. Our 2 daughters and I arrived over the Whitsun weekend that year – it had all been organised that the furniture would have arrived before us, and I had stayed with my aunt on the way to make this possible. However, this was during the troubles in Northern Ireland and that was where we moved from – the Army needed the boat our furniture was to be on and then it was delayed because of the bank holiday. So that first weekend was not quite how it was meant to be. It was in fact extremely restful after all the travelling etc. and Peter Reddaway's parents lent us a bed, the Rector lent us his Baby Belling and Shirley Reddaway made us a cake. It was also lovely weather!

We lived in this building (temporarily) for 10 years. Tim built us an extension to it – again with help from people in the village – and we pondered where to build. Of course the planners were not happy with anything. We suddenly thought that the hay barn would make a good house and applied for planning permission. Meanwhile Tim started work on it, working weekends and after work. He always said that if he had known how long it would take he would never have started. So we moved in in 1980/81 and shortly afterwards actually got planning permission, having had to go through various hoops. Tim had a lot of help again from local builders, electricians and plumbers etc. with advice on how to do things. Leonard Piper started the roof and put in the stairs if I remember rightly. There was an electrician who was unable to do the work through disability but pointed Tim in the right direction! Tim had met all these marvelous people when he first came as there used to be a village cricket team and he loved cricket and was very good at it.

When Tim retired he used his redundancy money to build an annex for our son Peter to live in with his family. This was built out of the garage that had been a calf rearing shed. It was erected by local builders, A.J. Wood of South Zeal.

They lived there until he bought a house in North Tawton and so we then used the annex as self catering holiday accommodation. We had been doing bed and breakfast in the house for a while and this seemed a progression from that. Come foot and mouth we were very fortunate that there was a tenant who wanted to stay for a year so we were able to keep open.

In 2004 we sold the farm to our eldest son, Andrew, and built the current geriatric unit over the garage. Andrew knocked down lots of internal walls and made the house quite different and then converted the milking parlour into holiday accommodation. This work was carried out by Paul Reddaway, Peter's son.