

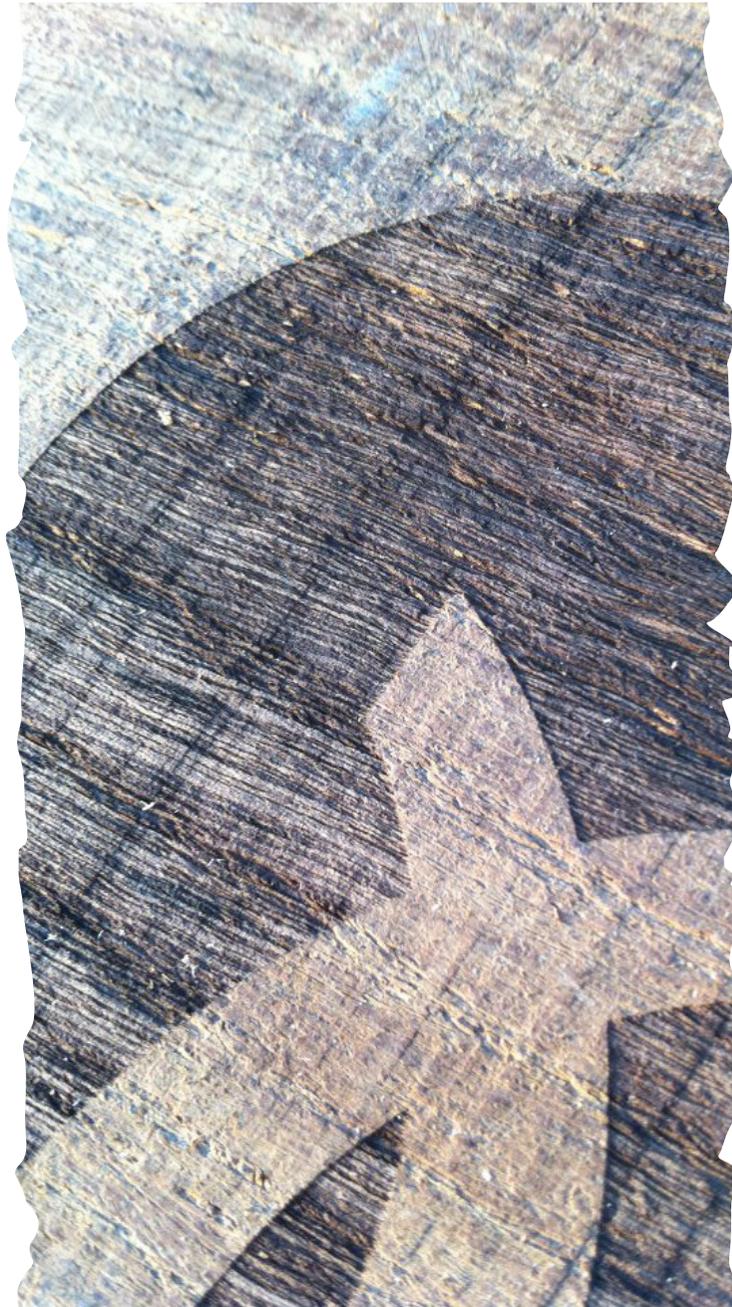
08th May 2009

The Bivouac has arrived

The new Bivouac website has arrived. A huge thank you to Matt and the team at Box-head* for putting this together. Keep your eye on our founder diaries. As each of us work to pull the different elements of the project together, we're going to share our journey right here. We've already come across loads of great things that we'd love to share with you and now we have the chance to do just that.

I'll start with an update. What are we up to? We are currently looking for the first site for The Bivouac. We are looking for somewhere just right... somewhere uncompromisingly perfect. It's got to have that something special. We've had a great couple of months traveling the length and breadth of the UK looking at sites and chatting to landowners. We've got several conversations open and we're optimistic for an agreement very soon.

Do you know an area or landowner that could host The Bivouac? – We'd love to hear from you.



09th May 2009

It's real life

Today is the first time in 18 months of this project where I have my little girl Martha Willow being looked after and I am sitting in an office away from the little shed; the shed that we have converted ourselves and now call home.

I can fully get into the detail and concentrate. It feels wonderful. I am excited about all the avenues this project is taking us down. I truly believe something special is being born. It's daunting. It's real life. It's not bringing in any income at a time where one is really needed. But it's peaceful. I hope you get some of the magic... and come with us on the journey of The Bivouac together.





09th May 2009

The Chicken Incident

We'd had our lovely egg laying Wyandot hens for about three weeks.

Living in the mighty city of Leeds we wanted a bit of the country with us. So I made what I thought was a secure run and coop in the bottom of the garden.

Last night it looks like something got them! So... I need to secure it even more and then find two new lovely birds to pop out more eggs for us.

Does anyone else out there keep chickens? If so, how do you keep them all safe?

UPDATE... It turns out it was Foxy Loxy that got our wee chickens. Improved security measures almost in place! looking forward to fresh eggs again. Mmmmm...

15th May 2009

Our Family Adventure

So we've taken the plunge to make our Bivouac adventure an adventure for the entire family and decided to...

Home School/Home Educate/"learn outside the classroom" with our 2 Children Milly (4) and Ben (2), not that they need much more than life and play at the moment! It's either madness or genius, or a bit of both- I am sure they go together well! We want them to love being outside, learn to build things, grow things, look after animals, cook, play etc etc, all the things that parents want for their children. We are so excited about the way the bivouac will be able to provide these opportunities for our family and everyone else's! The Biv team are bursting with ideas to make family time the best time and we can't wait for our ideas to become reality! In the mean time our lucky kids can be the "guinea pigs" and let us know how to do it even better.

When we told Amelias's nursery our plans, we were really nervous that they would think that we were a bit nuts. In actual fact the Nursery Teacher just said "well you've got to live the dream-Good Luck!". We'll do that then, here goes!



25th May 2009

More chicken news

I've had a few hints and tips about deterring Foxes including high explosives...

Apparently a good one (according to Sue Price) is to spray Mens urine around the boundaries of your garden!

So I'll keep you posted! Two new hens joining us next week - Very excited.

Update... My friend Thom has the following to say...

Thing with foxes is that they can get over most high fences & will dig under any gap they see but it shouldn't matter. There's very little you can do to deter them so just make sure the chicks have somewhere secure to roost overnight – my parents use me & my bro's old playhouse, slightly modified with laying boxes sticking out the back. It's got a proper door latch which we wedge tight & there's no way anything's getting in or out of there. It does mean however you have to open it up & lock it tight everyday.



27th May 2009

Bivouac Hat

I know we haven't secured the first Bivouac site yet... but in amongst all the important planning, I often find my mind drifting to the smaller but arguably more important details. With our eyes looking as far north as the Orkney Islands and as far south as Cornwall, I'm very aware that I'm going to need a good hat. A very good hat. A hat that's at home in torrential rain and blazing sunshine.

I have a confession... I already own such a hat.

It has stood by me through months of international travel and despite my sustained abuse, it has remained faithful. But I'm nervous. Overseas it's perfectly acceptable to be dressed like an eccentric Englishman with an aging, British-made felt hat. In fact people flocked to it. But here... in the UK... in 2009. I'm not sure. I'd love to hear your thoughts.

27th May 2009

A bit more of this action please

The Best man is training to be a stunt man so the weekend was always going to be a mad one...

<http://vimeo.com/4872292>

This is me trying to jump into the basin of a little waterfall called 'The Washing machine' in the lake district at a recent stag weekend. I can't wait for us all doing this sort of thing at The Bivouac!

28th May 2009

Community Life

I guess I am in a moment when I truly love the community Sam and I have here in Sussex. Every aspect works and works well. It's the first time in a long time where I have felt like this. On the other hand, discussions and ideas are flowing for Bivouac sites outside of this area and I believe in this business as a lifestyle opportunity.

I feel torn.

I am learning to give fully to all and any community that we find ourselves in and believe that we can feel fulfilled anywhere we lay our hat if it is the right place to be (not Sam's silly hat though).

As a wise friend said recently... "you are not leaving our community but taking us with you on your journey"



31st May 2009

Its Playtime!

My current and rather lovely bivouac job is to start planning an all singing all dancing, all playing! woodland, Bivouac Playground. We also want to create some forest surprises too...

So I have been looking for inspiration wherever I go and watching the Children and their Friends playing outside together. We want to cater for all ages, from little walkers, right up to us old folk who might fancy a dash around a forest assault course! We really want the Playground to be made from sustainable materials wherever possible and built in an eco-friendly way, it also has to blend in well to its surroundings (most likely green and leafy) so I think it goes without saying timber frames are the way forward. It has to be the "bees knees" so sand pits, zip lines, climbing walls and the like, all have to make an appearance.

We also want to add some treats into the forest too. Things that add to the sensory appeal of the Forest or help us understand its plants or animals a bit more. Perhaps magnifying-glass posts, to identify the "mini- beast" you find or a tree house to watch the Birds, maybe a home-made music area with reused bottle wind chimes. Or maybe something that is just for fun, like a sunken trampoline!

All this "research" has meant that I have been able to treat me and the kids to trips to our local RHS Garden, Harlow Carr in Harrogate, and many other lovely parks. This photo of a brilliant log wall was taken at Harlow Carr. It has been an enjoyable place to start!

So, if you know of any great parks that are worth recommending please do, and if you have any ideas that would go down a treat for our forest fun then let us know that too!

02nd June 2009

Everyones Excited

Just had a great day in London for 'my other job' but got to talk plenty of 'Bivouac' too!

Everyone that I've spoken to about The Bivouac wants to know more. It's great! Everyone seems to catch on to something about The Bivouac that gets them excited...

I'm Excited that people are excited. We are all excited that people are excited. Thats a lot of excited(s).

I think it's the...

Back to Basics approach,
Simple Luxury,
Morning dew on meadow grass,
pimms on the decking,
Hill waiting to be conquered,
Dappled sunlight though the trees,
Warmth from the Wood burning stove,
Storytelling around the firepit,
Kids (and big kids) damming up streams,
etc,
etc,...



08th June 2009

We've Been Exploring

It's been great getting out into the countryside to explore potential bivouac sites. I've been snapping away and hobbling (a very mundane incident involving... you guessed it; walking not canyoning) after Claire and the kids.

Milly & Ben love exploring the plots of land that we are looking at for the bivouac. It sounds pretty cheesy but the UK has so much to offer.

Where would your perfect 'Bivouac' spot be in the UK?



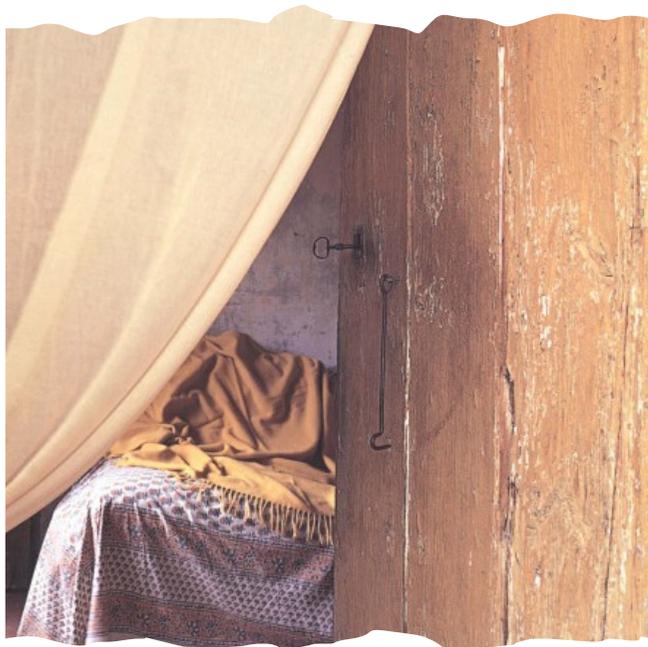
16th June 2009

Sheds and Shacks Weekend Away

So, for those of you who don't know; Me, Sam and Martha are currently living in a shed/shack and it has been such a source of inspiration for the bivouac design journey! Back in the early months we had the privilege of working with Architect, Nick Taylor. We focussed on what we call our 'shacks'. Between us we have designed something unique...

Here is a little book which I love to read which has inspired part of my role as the 'interior girl', check it out.

Huts, Havens and Hideaways by Jo Denbury - Huts, Havens and Hideaways



18th June 2009

Weekend Away

At the minute I'm rushed off my feet with exciting conversations, opportunities and things to explore. But I'm in the detail... the most detailed parts of the detail... I'm talking to different land owners about how a relationship might work, mocking up accounts forecasts, investigating planning restrictions, evaluating construction techniques and scrutinizing environmental impact... it's tough... it's a balancing act...

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/thruhike98/2688385989/sizes/l/in/photostream/>

We're going camping in Dorset this weekend with family. Brilliant. A chance to get outside, long views, fire, fresh air and plan some good stuff for The Bivouac.



30th June 2009

Lost in the Trees

We've had a great weekend in Dorset camping with family! Beth's almost seven months pregnant now, but that didn't stop us enjoying the rolling hills, long views and sea-side towns. We also went to Longleat and enjoyed their HUGE adventure play area.

Martha loved it. If money was no object I'd love to create a large tree top adventure park at The Bivouac; something that went on for 100s of meters, weaving through woodland with swings, nets, slides and ziplines. I'm really looking forward to seeing Claire's play area ideas for the first Bivouac site... It might not be as big as Longleat's, but I imagine it's full of adventure! Views, fire, fresh air and plan some good stuff for The Bivouac.



03rd July 2009

Field walks

We went out for more more exploring in the yorkshire dales at the weekend. I took a few photos and Ben fell asleep...

Milly & Ben love running around the edge of the fields; looking down every single mouse hole, asking 'why do the mice live in the ground and not in little houses'. I didn't think I had a good enough answer so I kept quiet and took some more photos.

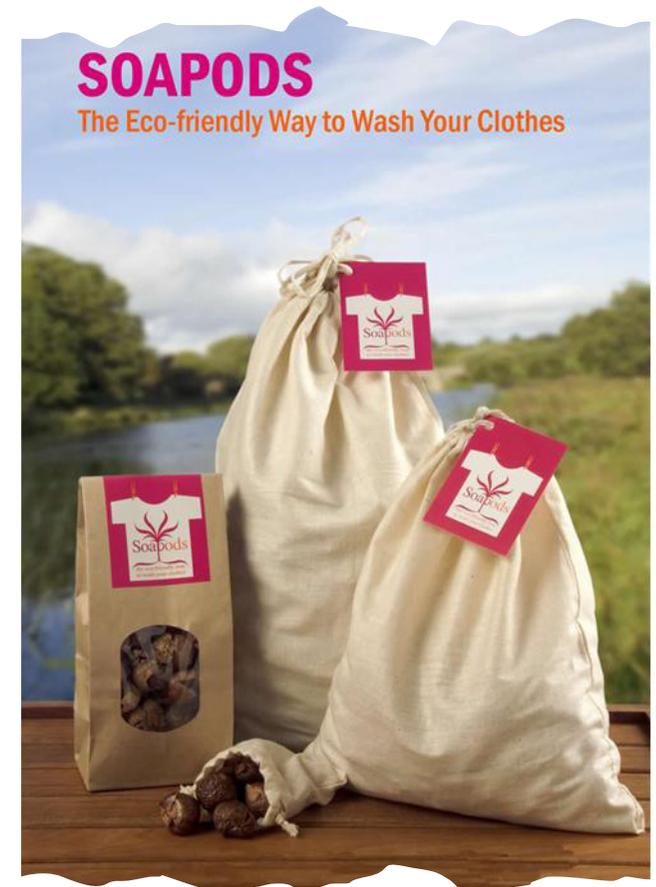


04th July 2009

Washing with nuts!

Now there is making an effort and recycling and then there is washing your clothes with nuts... yes nuts!

Thinking about the facilities for our guests I am sure a decent washing and drying facility would be welcomed. So I am then thinking about the provision of washing detergent... and being The Bivouac we'd only want the greenest option for our guests. I have discovered these little bags of nuts which go directly into your wash. Would you consider testing them out? I'll buy you a bag and send them to you if you can review this product for me. Any interested parties? Get in touch! Check them out... www.soapods.com



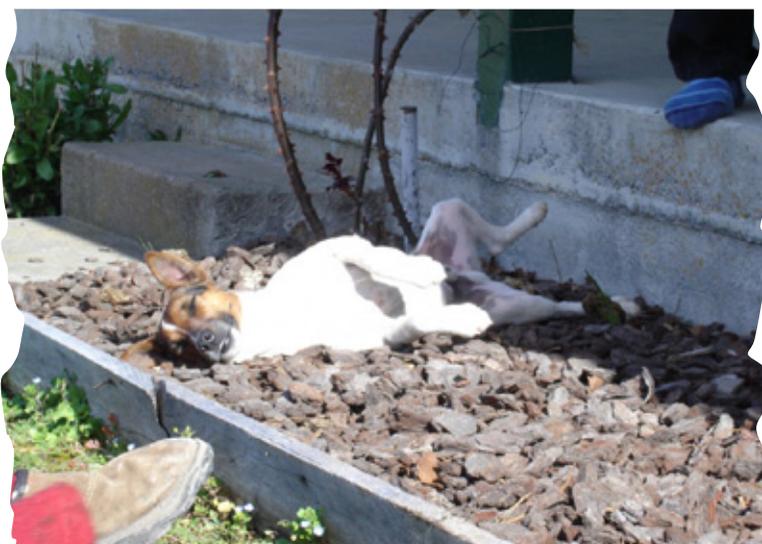
04th July 2009

Sussex Tour

This week Beth and I have had a tour of some round wood timber buildings across Sussex. We have seen some gorgeous properties made entirely by hand using freshly cut timber that has simply had its bark stripped off. We've seen an array of A-frames waiting to be erected and we've seen a large house mid-way through construction.

I wish I could show you some photos on here... they kindly let me photograph their projects... but I didn't ask if I could post them online. There was a property set deep into a woodland and it was surrounded by amazing hand-made wooden features including the fire pit and seating area shown in the photo above. By chance, the guy that makes the chairs popped in for a cup of tea. His name is Andy and I grabbed his card.

www.phoenixwoodcrafts.co.uk



03rd August 2009

It's a dog's life

Dogs, in my opinion, are smelly, hairy and they lick embarrassing places!

I have bonded with some dogs over the years... and others I think have a gentle nature – but on the whole... I don't like them.

But... Where do we stand at a future Bivouac site? We can't say no to dogs... it's perfect for dogs. But I wouldn't want to stay in a place that the week before had a dog in there. Hmm, would a dog owner put their beloved dog in a kennel outside? I think you'll sneak them in... go on admit it. You'll have your dog around the fire, on the bed and poohing in the woods. Yikes... the thought of it scares me!

How about having some dog friendly options of accommodation and some strictly no dogs?

Please vote – dogs welcomed / part welcomed / not at all welcomed!

I have designed a cool dog house which can live outside the shacks... is that good enough?

I wanna hear from you dog owners out there...



04th August 2009

Woodland Comfort

This week I heard about a stunning project by some creative architects in Norway. They are wooden holiday apartments set in woodland, positioned to enjoy the most impressive views of the site. Take a little look at the photo.

There are many more photos at <http://www.jsa.no/photos/Juvet/index.html> The work is showcased by the creators; architects Jenson & Skodvin in Norway.

We're going for a different look and feel but, I thought I'd show you this! – I was impressed by the positioning, use of natural light and the photography. Having said that, I've just thought of a great addition to our planned hot-tub space.

06th August 2009

Wanna join in on Bivouac?

We have recently been joined by a fantastic guy called Liam. Liam is Uni student and is working with us over his summer break to gain work experience in our exciting new start up business. Liam's role is an important one

11^d August 2009

Joy's reviewed the Soap Nuts! - Thanks Joy!

I read on the Bivouac web site that the team were after someone to do a trial of "Soap Nuts".

Being a relatively new mum and still coming to terms with the piles of washing that seem to have attached themselves to my new job description I thought I'd give it a go!

I was really surprised when a package arrived through my letterbox that looked like sticky dates. I wondered about their cleaning powers but followed the instructions, without much expectation or hope!

I used about six nuts and put them in the drum of the washing machine in a little linen bag provided. I also put a couple of drops of essential oil in the fabric softener draw, which I read made the clothes smell nice. I opted for mandarin, as I love the fresh citrusy smell.

I was really surprised when the wash cycle finished

and he'll be working with Sam on a vital aspect of our project.

Bivouac would welcome meeting anyone who would like to gain work experience with us in a similar way or on a more long-term basis. We have a whole host of creative roles as well as business stuff and venture creation. You could be based at home, with us in Sussex or with Dave and Claire in Leeds. Do get in touch if this appeals...

and the clothes came out with not a stain in sight. I put a really grubby baby bib in as a tester and it was completely clean post the Soap Nut wash.

The instructions claim that the Soap Nuts can be used several times over so I thought I'd take it to the next level with a white wash using the same nuts. I was a bit disappointed after the wash to find a stubborn chocolate stain remained on my white vest top. However if I had used fresh Soap Nuts I think they just may have shifted the stains.

I dried the two wash loads on the line outside and towels that usually have a slightly crispy feel to them felt much softer and smelled lovely!

Over all I have been really impressed, the Soap Nuts are more economical and better for our planet. I also love the way I could mix up the fragrance by choosing a different essential oil! I think I am a Soap Nut convert!

13th August 2009

The birthing of two babies...

The Bivouac has been likened to having a baby by several folk now.... and seeing as we are literally about to have another baby I can see what they mean. The time has arrived when hospital bags are packed and the new baby preparation is sorted. Now we wait Anytime here in we will be meeting our second child and it's a very exciting time.

The Bivouac is very similar. Lots of hard work getting to the stage ready for birth – but all the painful aspects get forgotten fast and the excitement and joy of this new birth takes you to another place altogether. I encourage you to keep with us on the Bivouac journey.. we are not giving much away at this stage as like with a new born.. until they are actually in your hands safe you don't want to assume too much. We will be giving you more over the next six months which is exciting stuff.

I for now am going to sign off blogging for a wee while.. and am going to concentrate on the task at hand.



14th August 2009

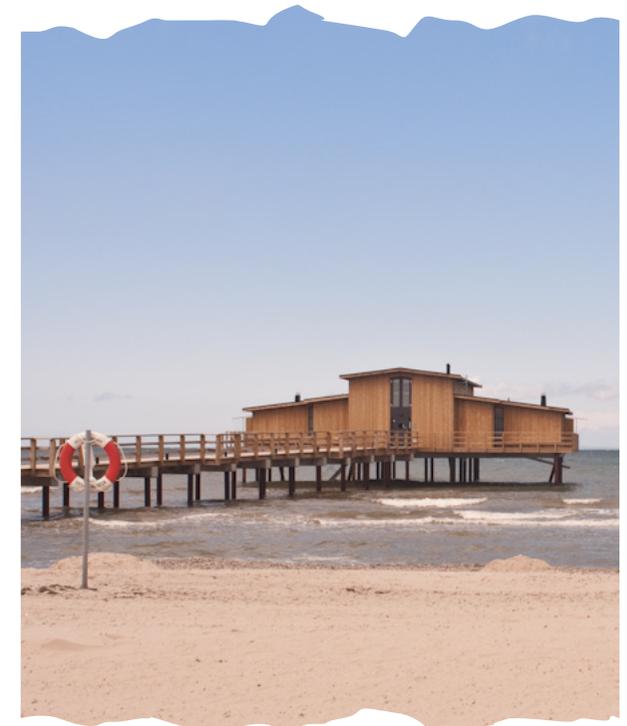
Swedish Sauna

Sweden is nice. Here are some photos from a recent trip.

The building at the end of the pier is a swedish sauna. I really wanted to give it a go but unfortunately we didn't have time.

I think a barrel sauna or two at 'the bivouac' would be an excellent idea. Just need to work out the whole nudity policy now!

What's worse... Speedos or Nudees?



29th September 2009

The Original Hut Company

Today we made a trip over to Bodiam in East Sussex to meet a lovely couple called Anna and Nick; together they have created The Original Hut Company.

This is a great concept and we were really impressed. The huts are made on recycled caravan chassis' and are presented beautifully. They have accommodation huts set up along with an excellent toilet and shower hut. Each hut has seating which transforms into a double bed and bunk beds. There is also a sink, gas rings, log burner and storage space.

They have set up a site in a stunning spot on their farm with views of Bodiam Castle. Check out their website www.original-huts.co.uk We'd recommend booking in and trying it out yourself. – their booking details are on their website.

01st October 2009

We've got the camera out

Here's a few words from Beth and the Girls as we move forward into the autumn.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02m49gUlvXc>



05th October 2009

Hangers

Found over on a lovely french store... <http://livettelasuissette.typepad.com/shop/2008/11/my-entry.html>

Would love to stock these in our new online store (coming soon).

05th October 2009

Hi again!

Sorry I've been away for a while, not sure where entirely, but I think I am back now! In my next few posts I would like to show you some things that I love and think could work really well in a bivouac style, and, tell you about some of the things that are really important to us at "the Bivouac" and that you will find when you come and stay with us...

The first thing I love is the "PlantLock", by The Front Yard Company.

I would love it if you bring your own bikes to explore the amazing landscapes we have in North Yorkshire, and know they are safe and close by, or you could borrow a Bivvy bike to get around the site +/- the kids in tow! Picture the great European city bike swap schemes, only free and on a smaller, more rural scale! See this readers digest article for the joys of bikes!

Your bike is bound to feel very fashionable!



06th October 2009

Bye, bye summer. Hello Autumn

Cycled to work (the day job) this morning - Twas chilly on my fingers. Summer is definitely gone but 'Hello Autumn'.



06th October 2009

My heart belongs to Scotland...

Well it does today anyway...

I was looking through last years photos and discovered a set from a holiday we had with some friends at the end of November.

It was the cheapest time of the year to go but we ended up getting an amazing alpine style holiday - Scotland delivered! We stayed in a real nice cottage, Wood fire lit all the time (the temperature dropped to -8°C at night and leveled at about -2°C during the day). It was amazing and I'd quite like to be back up there right now - Hacking up the hills (with a thermas of coffee in the bag).



09th October 2009

Too cold for the beach?

At what point do you retreat to the car... Just before it rains? or during the downpour?



09th October 2009

Meet TED

If you don't already know TED - you should!

As they put it on their website... 'Riveting talks by remarkable people, free to the world' get involved - Here is a link to one of my favourites to date...

<http://www.ted.com/talks/view/lang/en//id/642>

09th October 2009

Should you take a holiday from recycling?

Recycling can be an effort sometimes, if we are honest. Surely it's not just me who has to psyche myself up to wash a peanut butter jar out before recycling? Sometimes it might feel like it would be nice to take a break from "doing the right thing" but it's not cool if someone makes that decision for you...

It can be extremely frustrating going on holiday and finding, no, or very limited recycling facilities. Watching the milk cartons piling up for landfill feels to me to undo all my hard work from the weeks before! That is something that the bivouac would like to change.

At The Bivouac we want to make recycling even easier than at home. 'A recycling place for everything, so everything can go in its place!'. We would quite like to use your leftovers of cooked and raw food for compost on The Bivouac veggie patch (you can help yourselves to the veg later!) and for the chickens, and we would love to be able to take the rarely recycled plastics 5 and 6 and turn them into something else, perhaps toothbrushes something like this <http://www.preserveproducts.com/products/toothbrush.html> that you can find in your accommodation and the shop. If we can make all this recycling look pretty for you too, that would be even better!

Do you think we can convince you to keep the recycling going on your holiday? Tell us how.

p.s these lovely bins are from <http://www.gardentrading.co.uk>

14th October 2009

The Biggest Treehouse Ever?

Wow! This place is amazing. If anyone knows where it is, let us know!



15th October 2009

To wash... or not to wash...

That is the Bivouac question!

I've been looking at ways we can wash whilst staying on site... which is unique and green and actually does the job. So far I have come across many ways which would be fine in the tropics... but here... in the UK... I'm not convinced. We have a structure for the main unit... but I want to find another shower source for the more creative areas of Bivouac.

Then again, would you mind if there was only an outdoor more open option? Would you enjoy the experience and challenge yourself to really get back to basics and shower with nature all around? I'm not convinced!

Know of any solutions? No electricity remember! Answers on a post card. (or below in the comments box!)



16th October 2009

Autumn is definately here!

I find this time of year exciting, lovely colour's on the trees, conkers falling everywhere, wearing slippers again and snuggling inside, and awaiting the Autumn and Christmas Festivities that lie ahead...

This years arrival of Autumn makes me feel really excited about next years, when we will be up and running! We cant wait to host some amazing events to celebrate the Seasons. We have made sure that the accommodation that we provide can go through the best that Britain throws at us weather wise, to feel simple yet luxurious and comfortable and helping us enjoy a winter wonderland. Anyway... keep space in your diaries for Bivouac Events such as a Bivouac style Harvest Festival, Conker picking (and fighting!) Apple bobbing, Bonfire Night, Carol singing by the open fire and mulled wine, Christingle festivities, and loads more, maybe if you are lucky, a Nativity Play!

Beautiful picture bynatureluv - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/stanzim/3013242871/in/pool-autumn-2008-images>



21st October 2009

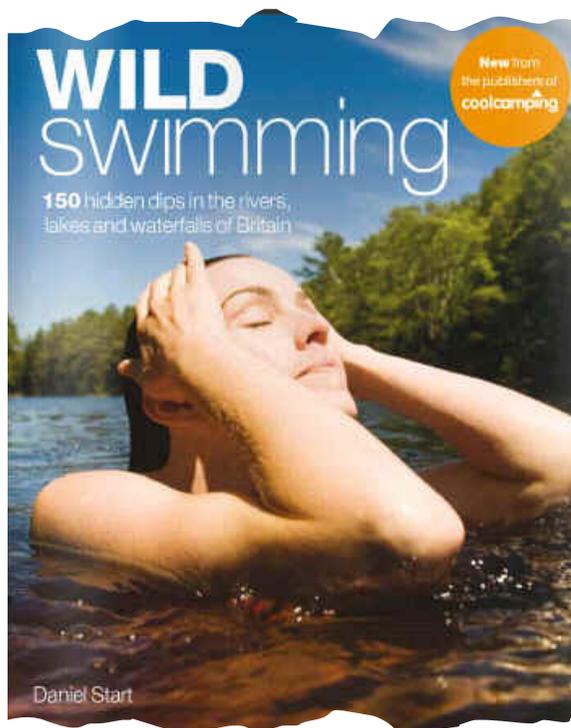
Retro Camping!

Over the august bank holiday we went camping- we borrowed some friends' 8 birth canvas frame tent a' la "eurocamp style"...

Well, it was definitely the oldest tent on the site, which we would prefer to call "retro". People gave us looks as we dragged it out of the car as it took up almost the entirety of it (we have an estate car), the removal allowing us to unfold our small children out of the car next, having traveled with ears in elbows and knees in chests the whole way. They also watched, as without instructions we tried to assemble the 12-15 poles. An hour later it was up, but that evening we were the ones feeling smug. It was blowing a gale and all those fancy new tents were whipping around, guide ropes hitting tents etc etc. No-one slept... apart from us! all we heard was the occasional creak. Big and clunky can be beautiful, it definitely helped us get into the spirit of camping and it was the best looking tent around, going for the new "glamping" (gamourous camping) thing we took our herb pots, floral peg bag and some bunting!!

p.s unashamed plug... as i cant normally sew for toffee I would like you to know that I made that rather attractive 5 ft length of bunting. Look at this if you want the best online tutorial of how to make it.

<http://www.joyfulabode.com/2008/12/02/how-to-make-a-bunting-holiday-decoration/>



30th October 2009

Natural swimming...

Two years ago I was working in Australia. Being very hot and working hard... I often looked for swimming pools to cool off after work.

One day I was taken to an amazing natural pool which had been created from everything alive and real. No chemicals, no harsh lines, just clear fresh water with plants and pond life enjoying the same space.

I have never forgotten that swimming experience. I want to create it again in my life... for others to enjoy. The Bivouac would be a perfect venue for this... have a look at these two sites where companies are creating these delights for you. See what you think.

<http://www.gartenart.co.uk/?gclid=CNbQulrT5J0CFYwA4wodAkjwLA>

<http://www.clear-water-revival.com/#/home>

I bought this book in the summer... "Wild Swimming"
Daniel Start

Check it out if you are a UK outdoor swimmer type like me. 150 hidden dips in the rivers, lakes and waterfalls of Britain. One of which is just on my doorstep.. page 73, Barcombe Mills - Ouse. LUSH!

03rd October 2009

Dreaming of a Zero

I've been lusting after these Zero Motorcycles... they look fantastic.

They are electric and run almost silently.

I bet they still do quite a bit of damage to the landscape though... I'm not into the idea of razzing across a natural landscape chewing it up as I go... but I gotta confess... there is something magnetic about these...

I think it is the combination of design, adrenalin and environmental sensitivity.

Maybe I (and most lovers of outdoor adventure) would be more comfortable achieving the same riding experience on a machine that looked more like a mountain bike? - Maybe that's what zero should turn their design focus towards. I'd buy one. Maybe I can persuade the team to stock these in The Bivouac Shop.

<http://www.zeromotorcycles.com/>

09th November 2009

Coasting

It's a super, cold crisp morning. Reminded me of this shot I took in St James' park down in London a couple of years ago...



11th November 2009

Where is Winter?

I just wanted to celebrate this AMAZING weather we are having...

I know its boring to talk about weather.. but seriously, this is LUSH! November is usually freezing... but we've been canoeing and walking as if it was spring. I LOVE IT!

If you have not been to Seaford Head (East Sussex) go up there for a long walk... beautiful.



11th November 2009

Planning and Landscape Architect

We're all working our socks off... doing everything possible to pull together an exciting and unique holiday experience.

Beth mentioned in her video with the girls that we're working on a really exciting project in North Yorkshire. We're still at the early stages with the details so we haven't shouted about it on our blogs yet.

Early next week I am meeting the planning officer and a landscape architect... this is a really important meeting... We have intentionally designed the space to be sensitive to the landscape, to work well with the local community and to add value to other things in the area...

We've tried to be really creative and sensitive to others when pulling our plans together... we think we've done a pretty good job... but the planners and landscape architect are experts... I'm really looking forward to hearing their feedback. We can draw on their experience to make sure our site is as sensitive as possible to the landscape and local area. The planners will also outline what they consider acceptable development and what isn't... let's hope they like our plans!





16th November 2009

Beautiful Fresh Green Timber

Today I've been visiting local sawmills. We're looking for local timber for use on some of The Bivouac accommodation.

We're lucky enough to be surrounded by great quality mature forests that are sustainably managed. Today the forest manager agreed that we could fell a few of the trees that we need and a local sawmill has agreed to cut them up to our specification. This is fantastic news... truly local timber, felled by local guys, milled by a family business and delivered just a few miles down the road to our first site (subject to planning permission!). This is what The Bivouac is all about. I love it!

17th November 2009

Rustic recipes

We've all been camping in the UK and wished we had brought the chef haven't we? Well I certainly have.

Especially as my husband doesn't do cooking unless he has a can opener, a pie and a microwave! Yes sad but true but it's always down to me to rustle up a good healthy scrummy meal whilst enjoying the outdoors.

I have cooked from the back of campers, in pouring rain on the side of a mountain, in a sand storm - you name it, I've tried it. So, for Bivouac cooks - those of you that will stay with us and find that you are the designated cook - I want to offer you a helping hand. Not only will you have a few options of how to cook, but I will leave a hand made Bivouac cook book in each shack and tent.

Now, this is where I need your help. I want to find a whole mix of great camp food recipes which can be added into this book. What meals have you created by the camp fire, in a tent on a stove - and thought - this is pretty darn good! Send them into me and I'll add them into the book with your own name accompanying it. Wholesome, healthy, warming, fun, easy, complex - if you would make it and we'd enjoy it - send it in.

Right - I'm off to make a cuppa... and avoid the cake sitting there telling me to eat it!



23th November 2009

Hello Instructables

Lots of interesting questions (that need answers) are cropping up at every turn with the bivouac at the moment...

Like... How do we power the cabins? Do we power the cabins? How do we heat the cabins? Each question has an easy answer and a seemingly green answer.

My favourite thing to do is to visit www.instructables.com and look for some mad (but great) solutions.



27th November 2009

New rhythm...

Well today is the first day in months that Sam is having both the girls and I am on my own... doing Bivouac work. It feels really strange to be without noise and activity...

It took me ages to get going this morning as my brain is still full of cotton wool... I am sure my girls will appreciate this rhythm of work much better... no more "hold on" and 'tap, tap, tap' on my laptop when they want to play.

I am so excited and scared all at once about the Bivouac journey. We are fully immersed into the fabric now and I can almost taste the reality of it enfolding. We have decided when to move to the first site.. and this is a big move for us. So now, its all hands on deck to get the plans in place and the details right. We will let you know all about it soon... I promise!



29th November 2009

Bubbles...

I am researching hot tub's and sauna's for Bivouac. If only it was a bit more practical... some of the ideas out there are fab and I'd love a dip!

The ingredients I am working with are no electric, no building but a beautiful view.

Ideally I would like one with the real outdoor element and one with a bit more luxury? I have to persuade Sam (Mr tight budget) if we are going to have two. So far I can fit in a natural one with no need for electric - but this means no bubbles! Having had a hot tub recently that bubbled - I sat there and thought - some folk may not be satisfied unless they have bubbles.

Survey - bubbles with less view or view with no bubbles?



26th December 2009

Unisex - yay or nay?

This last few weeks have been manic. Trying to design the ever changing space of The Bivouac site with the restraints and guidelines of funding and planning. It is a crazy process.

One thing I have looked at are the camping facilities. I have a choice... either separate the males and females and have a small space each, or have unisex facilities and have a really lovely space? I have gone for the latter... believing that folk will prefer this. Each shower will have its own cubicle and changing space.. non of the usual naff shower block experiences you've had before. This is cosy, clean, and giving you that extra comfort which you so want when you're camping. I think you'll like it...

But - before I get too far in my planning... can you tell me... would you be happy to do the unisex thing? Or is this just asking too much?!



02nd January 2010

What is The Bivouac?

I think it is time to give you a little more detail... so many of you comment that you still don't have a clue.. and I can now reveal a little more...

The Bivouac is a group of people who want to share a journey together creating an environment which inspires others. In everything we do we aim to be healthy, transparent, clear, honest, honourable, eco friendly and welcoming to all.

We are creating a space where Bivouac can hub together and open doors out. The first of these hubs.. is going to be in North Yorkshire. That is all I can say on the location for now.. but the area is stunning, the land owners are inspirational and we are very excited. A bivouac site is being designed to include those who love camping and those that don't and at the same time offer a regular connection to the local community. We are creating a holiday experience and a day-trip destination which celebrates life in all its colour.

There will be shacks - gorgeous hand made round timber woodland retreats. Cosy, comfy and private.

There will be tents - set up for ease and filled with all you'll need for your stay.

Community space - a hub of food, drink, events, activity, kids, fun... and much more

Extra - there will be extra twists and turns for your enjoyment.

What next?

We are working very hard to pull all this together, meet planning policy, raise finance and connect with local people that are getting involved.

Any questions? Just ask...

I hope that helps... for now...



02nd January 2010

Stop for Breath

It's been a really busy 6 weeks since my last update. The more the project unfolds, the bigger it feels!

We've got a lot of work to do and a lot of people to talk to in order to pull the next stage together...

We've been talking to architects about the design of the community space.
We've been talking to Landscape architects about the layout, planning and visual impact of the site.
We've been talking to craftsmen about the finer details of the handmade shacks.
We've been talking to specialist planning consultants who are advising on some planning details.
We've been talking to our landlord about timings.
We've been talking to a growing local team of people who are getting involved at this planning and preparation stage.
We've been talking to our investor and funders about the financial plan and time line.

We've been talking to banks to make sure our funding expectations are realistic.

The team has been talking our socks off doing dozens of jobs to support the above conversations and coordinate this mass of gathering information.

This stage is really exciting. The next big milestone for our shared journey is planning permission. Once we have landed this and have finalized a site design that is satisfactory to the planners we will let you know about the first site!

Thanks for your consistent interest. If you have any thoughts or questions, we'd love to hear from you.
Happy New Year!



16th January 2010

Fancy being snowed in?

Picture this...

Bivouac Team meeting on site a few weeks ago. Snow, snow, snow.

One car ended in a ditch, one stuck at bottom of hill, one ferrying everyone around in 4x4 and one made it!

Some hours later we all get there. We were met with snow drifts over a metre high...
Somebody joked that our guests better be a hardy bunch if they are staying at Christmas.. but thinking about that now... it could be a perfect way to spend the festive time. Log fire roaring.. unable to get back to civilisation.. being visited by the Bivouac team with treats and weather news. I think that sounds cosy and romantic.

Hhmm I am not allowing my brain to think of bored children and running out of milk and chocolate am I?

Well... adventure is unpredictable and Bivouac is adventure!



27th January 2010

Wilderness Wood

Many folk when hearing about Bivouac have said "oh have you been to Wilderness Wood in East Sussex?" No - I had to reply. Sadly not...

www.wildernesswood.co.uk

So today I got up early, packed bags, bundled Martha and Elsie in the car and set off to pick Jules up who was my trusted helper and voice of inspiration. I thought this was going to be a lovely adventure... something which our household has lacked of late.

All that great intention of having a lovely winter walk and lunch out - I had forgotten to consider that two babies and freezing cold weather, post swim... might not mix well. We arrived at the wood. Both girls had literally just fallen off to sleep. Yikes.. ok walk after... lets just feed. So we drove through the wood stock with the smell of fresh wood and sights of hand crafted benches and fencing and little mushroom stools. Past an old barn, quirky and rustic. Into the car park hidden amongst the tree's.

A sign tempted us towards the woodland trail but we agreed at this stage we'd be best waiting for that treat when both our husbands were around and warmer climates reached! Cafe it is...

The cafe was small but cosy and inspiring to the eye. I did have every intention of taking photo's to show you.. but with a toddler throwing food, a hungry baby and boob not easily accessible, and of course Jules and I chatting ten to the dozen... I didn't get any taken! Rubbish.. sorry.

It wasn't long before I gave in to the thought of car heating and easy life back in the bosom of home. Wimp... what has happened to me?

But... a great place for another day. And yes, I can see why it was recommended so many times and likened to Bivouac. The earthy flavour and simple character was enough to entice me back someday soon...



09th February 2010

Tiny Sussex Cottage

Whilst driving deep into East Sussex last week I came across this tiny house.

The photo does not really show you how tiny it was... but it was TINY! I had to stop and take a picture.. as it just reminded me of a Bivouac shack. Small, neat, cosy, unique, unusual. So I thought I'd share it with you...

I was spotted with my camera so I just shot one and drove away fast!

Do send in any pictures which you feel may inspire us... we can put them up here for others to enjoy!



16th February 2010

Cast Iron

I've been busy looking into signage for our first Bivouac site

I've been busy looking into signage for our first Bivouac site and came across these amazing, untreated cast iron signs at the Holbeck Urban Village Leeds.



03rd March 2010

Reflecting on what The Bivouac means to me...

It seems so long now that we have been plugging away on this dream, this project, and sometimes I can find myself running out of steam and wondering if we'll make it to the end.

It's in these moments that I allow myself to dream again... to visualise the hours, days and moments which will follow once we are open - and I am reminded that this is a journey worth the hard work.

For me Bivouac is far more than just a place to take a holiday. It is more than a creative expression of how to use nature, people and places to their potential. Its more than the land search (which is now complete) and more than finding investment (also virtually complete) and more than linking in people with passion (an exciting ongoing journey). For me.. it is after the site is developed and we are open that the real journey of Bivouac takes place.

I have a journal of notes, pictures, thoughts and ideas which are brimming with ideas for the years which will follow. I am looking forward to finding that rhythm in this where I can give of myself to this project and see these ideas jump from these pages in my book into life and see others enjoyment.

I want people to come to The Bivouac and be lifted in their spirits, challenged in their souls, moved toward a better way - and all by very simple ingredients of care, time, love and inspiration. Through the food they eat, the views and atmosphere around, the event which takes place, the fire pit stories, the workshops on offer to the deep sleep they get.

So - when I am feeling that this is a lot of hard work... when I wish that we were earning a wage... when I worry if our girls need more time with us.. or at least better time when they are with us... I just stop - and visualise this dream.

Come for a cuppa when you see our 'open' sign. I'd love to offer you some cake.



12th April 2010

Busy Planning

We're in a funny old season with The Bivouac at the minute... we're all working our socks off doing long days and dealing with dozens of people; we're moving towards planning permission for the site and all of the intricate detail that goes with that.

I'm sorry I've been off the blog for a while... it's a product of being buried in the planning detail; this means that most of what I have been doing isn't really that exciting as well as not having had loads of time to day dream about the other stuff... the exciting stuff. But, it all seems to be coming together. Let's hope we're on target for our submission date.

I'm delighted the sun has come out too.

Better crack on.



12th April 2010

Entrepreneurial Kids & Free thinking

'I think kids could change the world as entrepreneurs.'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=dCar_sFfEf4

Great talk by Cameron Herold...

17th April 2010

Riding in the woods!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=XIQdydGhpdc

Nice video from the guys at 'Kranked'

22th April 2010

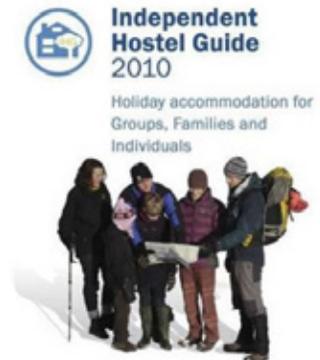
Independent Hostel Guide

I scored a free copy of the Independent Hostel Guide last week.

The guys at IHG ran a promotion in partnership with Berghaus the outdoor gear people and I snapped up one of the 500 free copies they were giving away. I'm a great fan of quirky affordable accommodation for curious travellers on a budget... The word 'Hostel' is a funny old word as it's so broad that using it often either over plays or undervalues the accommodation offering.

I confess, I wasn't expecting much from this little book, as my experience of UK hostels has been pretty hit and miss. But, this publication is Fantastic! It shows loads of places in the UK which I'm desperate to try out! It shows maps, photographs, facilities, contact details and approximate prices. Brilliant.

I would well recommend that you check it out. You can pick up a copy from their website <http://www.independenthostelguide.co.uk/index.php> or a book retailer like Amazon. Lets support these independent hostel guys and get some outside playtime.



04th May 2010

Canoeing Adventures

Yesterday I finally did a kayak trip that I've wanted to do for quite a while.

It was my first UK paddle of the season... I paddled from Barcombe Mills to the New Haven Estuary in East Sussex. It was a fantastic trip!

I have been carefully watching the weather and the tide times... at 16.00 yesterday conditions were looking perfect... There'd been quite a bit of rain upstream from Barcombe, High tide at Newhaven was at about 14.30 and there was a strong behind wind. I was on the water at 16.30 and the current picked right up and went in my favour all the way to the estuary. It really reignited my love for paddling moving river water.

I can't wait to get up to Yorkshire and do some canoeing with these guys... <http://www.triitoutdoorpursuits.co.uk/> They are a local adventure sports company that we hope to work with for the provision of some of the adventure sports that we'll offer at The Bivouac.



13th May 2010

Woodland Bivi

I've been thinking about making some Bivouac shelters in the woodland where our first site will be. These shelters will be available for anyone wanting to head out of their shacks or tents for a night and experience true Bivouac life...

We'd give you a rucksack packed with the essential items you'll need.. and you do the rest. Find your bivy spot and nest up, learning about who you are in that open air.

I was sent this picture yesterday which I thought captured this very well...





13th May 2010

Mini update

Ah it's been ages since I had some childcare and had the time to get stuck into Bivouac again. My jobs list is HUGE now and I am trying not to feel overwhelmed!

Things are all progressing well... we are almost ready to submit a huge application for planning permission and we then will get stuck into the detail of the nicer bits.

Us Hardwick's now move on site in the next 6 weeks... and this is going to be a big change for us. So... the journey continues. Wont be too much longer before we can reveal a lot more about what we are up to....

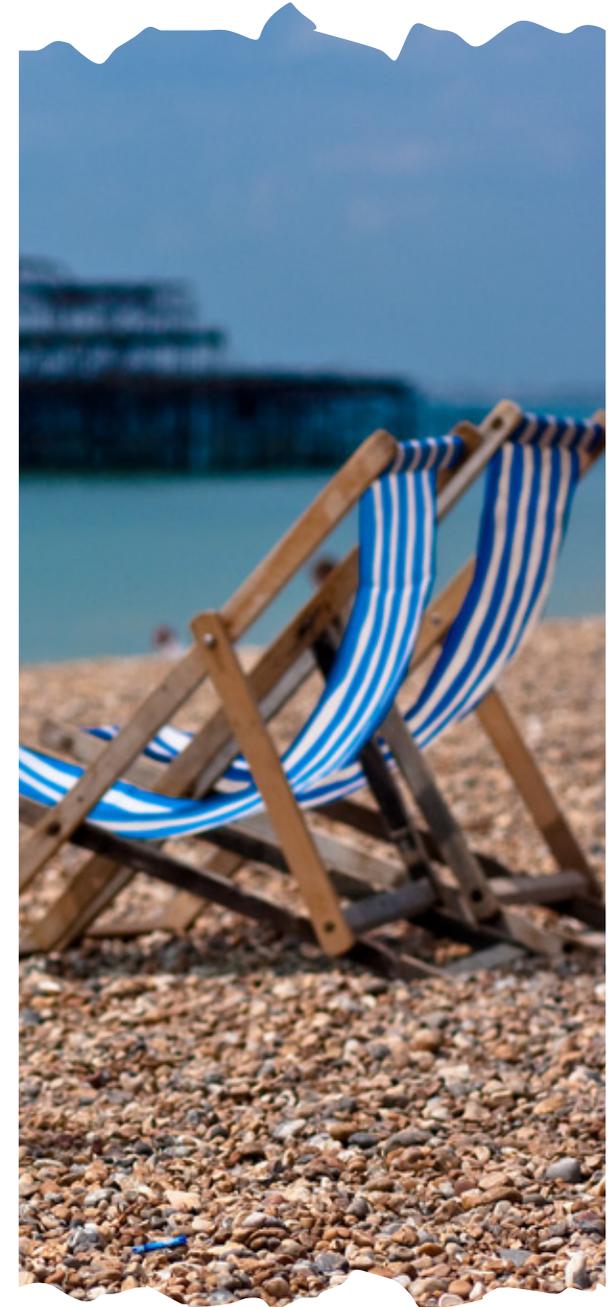
13th May 2010

Brighton does it best!

Last Sat Sam and I took the kids and my niece and nephew to the children's parade to start the Brighton Festival. It was FAB! The noise, colour, Fancy dress, effort, variety, creativity... inspiring. It made me think how much we will miss this area....

But then, it hit me... Bivouac can do a children's parade!! We don't need Brighton to have all the fun... We'll do one ourselves!

So I am going to be going around all the local schools and seeing who I can get involved for this annual fun of colour, music and celebration of children and new life. Hhmmm hope the Northerners like this idea... They might just think I am a Brighton nutter!



04th June 2010

Packing up...

We are packing up... saying goodbye to our life in the shed... our Sussex rambles and bike rides... sunny days... about to load the van in two weeks and head North! Bivouac is getting closer to birth... exciting, daunting and girls are wondering what is going on! At the same time my parents are selling the family home for the last 30 years, so that is also a big change too...

change is GOOD!



23rd June 2010

Unique and unusual house builds....

I love the house that simon built in Wales...

He now runs many courses and volunteer days where you can get involved and experience some of this great lifestyle.

I would like my own woodland home... wonder if Bivouac can magic that to happen?

<http://www.simondale.net/house/>

30th June 2010

Little surfer dude

I love this video. The little chap is absolutely loving being on that board!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=PPk8-3FeCgk

I love this video. The little chap is absolutely loving being on that board!

The footage is shot on these great little go pro HD Cams.

<http://www.goprocamera.com/>

05th July 2010

A perfect place to holiday!

We are here, on site, starting to unpack and make a home. This is the next stage of this adventure and the views and scenery make it all so worthwhile. The first Bivouac site is breathtaking - you will agree I'm sure. Looking for miles over the countryside, surrounded by sheep, cows, birds of prey, hedgehogs, squirrels, foxes and more... all seen in our first week!

We have met so many walkers, cyclists and explorers - I am amazed how popular this area is...

We are exhausted, there is a lot to do, but we are excited and enthusiastic about the place we now call home. And.. we can't wait to share it with you too!

15th July 2010

Expanding waistlines and bivouac family...

So it seems that Beth and I seem to rather enjoy all this baby business, and seeing as it was just recently Beths turn to bring us Baby Elsie, I thought it was now my turn! We will be welcoming a new Sorley into the Bivouac Team at the end of August! Baby makes 5 and probably complete chaos, but we wouldn't have it any other way...

Obviously all the questions about what size of car? How you are ever going to get everyone out of the house at the same time? If David and I will ever go out again or sleep through the night ever again? And where on earth we could go on holiday? are all whizzing around my head?

Now I am not sure I know the answers to all these questions, most I think we will learn on the job (i.e the hard way). But, the holiday issue, that I think I have got sorted. Being in the privileged position to be involved in bivouac planning, Beth and I can make sure that we (and others in the same life stage!) can still go on holiday to the bivouac with young babies and children AND it will feel like a Holiday!!

We have said that we are family orientated and the proof will be in the pudding. Many holiday companies say they are too, and yes there might be a high chair available or even a travel cot, but when you have a closer look, to use them comes with a lot of extra pennies attached.

At the Bivouac we are aiming high to turn this around, we want it to be a stress free break, not just after your arrival, before it too. We don't want you to have to choose between paying to use something you have at home or go through the nightmare of trying to fit a travel cot, dismantled high chair etc into the car. We want it to be there waiting for you.

Just think, you might not need to bring your roof box or trailer. We will have even saved you some petrol Money and the environment- just a little bit!



25th July 2010

Valid Planning Application – THANK YOU

The planning application for The Bivouac Swinton is now valid and being assessed. Wow, it has taken the combined efforts of dozens of people and I want to say a massive THANK YOU to them all.

So who are they?

Planning Consultants
AAH Planning
www.aahplanning.com

Landscape Architects
Smeeden Foreman
www.smeedenforeman.co.uk

Buildings Architects
Native
www.nativearchitecture.co.uk

Land Surveyors
CSL Surveys
www.cslsurveys.co.uk

Ecologists
MAB Environment & Ecology
www.mab.uk.com

Flood Risk Engineers
Peters Associates
www.petersassociates.net

Land & Geological Engineers
Dunelm Geotechnical & Environmental
www.dunelm.co.uk

BREEAM Assessors
Goring Berry
www.goringberry.co.uk

Other Valuable Contributors:
Rudi Meseg
Charlie Lusty
Sally Duguid

Massive thank you to all those that have contributed; I would have no hesitation in recommending all of the above... who's contributions to the project have been really excellent.

I also want to say an enormous WELL DONE to The Bivouac Team.

More information on the project to follow shortly!



23rd June 2010

Unique and unusual house builds....

We have an aga! (Tips on what to do with it - welcomed)
We have tractors...
We have kittens (Florence and Thomas)
We have woodland to explore
We have a driveway...

Life has changed somewhat since our shed days...

Its been the busiest season to date.. but an exciting one.

We're working very hard on our funding application... and we'll be able to offer more of us in August when this process is through.

Thank you to all the volunteers who has turned up each week to help us renovate and settle. What an amazing start to this chapter!



31st July 2010

Get Your Bike Out

It's been a busy week here at The Bivouac HQ so I thought I'd jump on my mountain bike and go exploring a little further than the next village... we've lived here for nearly 4 weeks now so it's about time.

I went out of The Bivouac Farmhouse, across the valley and within just a couple of miles I was out on top of the moors... WOW. It was absolutely gorgeous... I can't wait to get up and running and welcome other mountain bikers to The Bivouac... if you fancy a ride out anyway then get in touch. I'd love to point you in the direction of some good routes... maybe join you if my diary works out. Amazingly, much of my ride last night was in the clouds... it was raining as I climbed into the cloud line and then I was in a gentle mist on top of the moors for most of the ride... on the way back down I encountered SNOW! – Yes Snow... in JULY! Look closely at the picture above and you'll see it flashing past the camera!

I took the above picture on my Blackberry and this bike ride has killed it! Mist + snow + a jolly good shaking = dead Blackberry. Got a replacement coming any minute.

See you soon!

03rd August 2010

Ripon Rowel

Passes right through our door...

Ripon Rowel 80 km / 50 miles.

A route around the ancient city of Ripon, visiting villages, historic sites, wooded valleys, rivers, lakes and streams. The route on recognised public rights of way and permissive paths includes Markenfield Hall, the romantic and magnificent Fountains Abbey, Studley Water Gardens and Park and the beautiful St Mary's Church. There are visits to the tranquil River Skell's Valley of the Seven Bridges and to Eavestone Lakes, Dallowgill, Ilton-Cum-Pot and the quaint Druids Temple. On the return leg are the lovely valleys of the Rivers Burn and Ure along with Hackfall Woods and Ripon Parks with local fauna and flora.

10th August 2010

Loved this

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-8PBx7isoM>



12th August 2010

The Bivouac Swinton

We're now well underway with the planning process for The Bivouac Swinton.

We've recently attended the parish council meeting and done a further presentation in the village hall. It was a lovely evening with a good turnout and a great chance to answer questions, listen to concerns and get to know those in the area. Ahead of these meetings we circulated a summary document which gives an outline of the plans and shows some maps of the site. Do feel free to download this summary from the link below. Feel free to get in touch anytime... we love hearing from people and would be happy to talk anything through.

12th August 2010

New blood...

Sam and I have been on the search for some help... and we have had an amazing find...

Hey guys

I'm Jonny and this is my first Biv. Blog .

I'm a friend of the Hardwick's and I live about 5mins down the road (Masham) from Bivouac HQ. I've just started an internship with this awesome business and the equally awesome Hardwick's, so it's all very exciting!

Basically, I'm doing loads of cool random jobs in order to help out Beth and Sam so they can put all their efforts to 'The Bivouac' business. These jobs vary from doing research, taking phone calls and admin stuff to putting Myxomatosis rabbits out of their mystery and other onsite jobs e.g strimming .

This brings me on nicely to my next random mission for team Biv. – build a scale model of the Bivouac Shacks planned for the site. This model will be used for display purposes for the project etc. but if that fails it'll probably end up as the Hardwick girl's barby house or, on the bonfire.

I'm very happy to be given this job because it's right up my street. Being handed some of the architect's drawings excites me because it will call upon my engineering skills and I'm planning to have a career in engineering.

So I'll keep you guys up to date with how I'm getting on with this brill task.

So far iv got:

- The architect's drawings (I'm busy scaling the model to a suitable size)
- A big pile of scrap wood I picked up from the Masham joiners
- A big smile on my face coz I love doing these practical tasks (this is likely to a non smiley face if the model doesn't work)



14th August 2010

Free cycle

We use freecycle loads...

but we've just signed up to ecobees... which look great to...
Sign up in your area... www.ecobees.com

27th August 2010

Welcome Evie Faith!

When we said that Bivouac wasn't planning to expand...

We didn't mean that we weren't going to have more little feet... in fact... we plan to have loads!

We would like to warmly welcome Evie Sorley inot the Bivouac Team - born a few days ago... Claire and Dave now getting used to life with 3!

Well done team Sorley x x

Ps Lets see pictures soon!!



27th August 2010

The Bivouac Way...

The First rule is simply this:
Live this life and do whatever is done, in a spirit of thanksgiving. Abandon attempts to achieve security, they are futile, give up the search for wealth, it is demeaning, quit the search for salvation, it is selfish, and come to comfortable rest in the certainty that those who participate in this life with an attitude of thanksgiving will receive its full promise.

John McQuiston



06th September 2010

Planning update

Hi folks, just a quick update on the planning application for The Bivouac Swinton.

We've been working on the details of this project for such a long time that we hopefully had most angles covered... but a couple of consultees have raised some concerns. If you're not familiar with how the planning system works then here's the basics... we submit a planning application with loads of separate reports about all the details of our proposal. Those separate reports get duplicated and sent to all sorts of offices and experienced professionals who then comment on the overall proposals as well as considerations specific to their particular field of expertise. These different offices and professionals are referred to as 'consultees'.

Two consultees have raised concerns. We're now talking to those consultees to understand their concerns more fully and we are looking for ways to amend our plans to take into account the concerns raised. We've been given a bit more time to do this, so a planning decision is now likely to be at the end of September.

Thanks to everyone for your support and interest. Feel free to get in touch anytime.

28th September 2010

Another Little Update on the Planning Application

So... we were expecting a decision today on the planning application for The Bivouac Swinton; but we have decided to delay the decision. It's a shame as I feel like I have been working through loads of design detail for a very long time... BUT I realise that it's so important to get this stuff right. So we shall press on.

So, we have encountered a few challenges. Quick headlines...

The ecologists felt that we hadn't adequately surveyed the site for bats. We have therefore done another bat survey and submitted the results for their consideration. We've also given some extra thought to this special location... we are alongside a special moorland site which is home to some very special species of birds. – we've added a few details to make sure the birds are disturbed as little as possible.

The transport guys have some concerns. We have had a transport engineer get into the numbers, do some maths and look at the best ways that we can keep traffic to a minimum. We're passionate about sustainability so it's been great fun looking for ways to keep cars off the road and encourage guests to make responsible decisions. I'm hoping many guests bring their walking boots and mountain bikes!

The Landscape Architect has asked for a bit more info too so we're pulling that together.

If anyone has ever got any questions PLEASE feel free to get in touch – you'd be very welcome to the site to discuss plans. I have seen that a few people have written to the council with concerns where one or two their concerns are incorrect or misinformed. I'm saddened to see that people carry concerns about the project which are, in some cases, based on an inaccurate interpretation of the scheme.

Call anytime. 01765 535020



02nd October 2010

Go Beyond!

The Go Beyond runners have pitched their halfway station at the end of The Bivouac driveway and we've had dozens of endurance runners coming through the farm!

It's a lovely day here at High Knowle in Yorkshire. I have been out all morning mountain biking and when I came back up the lane there was a running check-in station set up at the entrance to the farm! I've grabbed a couple of photos and have checked them out online. They are an endurance running outfit called 'Go Beyond' and they are running the Ripon Rowel walk in a day. The guys at the check-in station tell me that the Go Beyond team are checking it out and might incorporate the event in to their annual calendar - It would be great to see this come through every year. Check out their video too.

http://gobeyondultra.co.uk/go_beyond/go_beyond_ultra

02nd October 2010

My latest obsession...

I have listened to these guys like an obsessed groopy for the last three days...

Mumford and Sons...

Amazing...

I could quote lines from every song which has had a significant effect on me... seriously check it out!

(Not sure if my blog is meant to have this kind of thing in it.. but who gives a poop when music and lyrics are as good as these!)



12th October 2010

I've been converted!

OK so a woman CAN change her mind...
The life of a dog owner aint that bad... infact... I kinda like it so far.

Little Nelson joined us two weeks ago. He is a scared little pup who had his early life with a cruel owner.. and now he craves calm, stability. Goodness knows why he ended up here then! But - he did.

He forces me out into the fresh air even more than I normally would which is great. He brings with him a nice full house feel which I love. He is no bother at all.

So - The Bivouac is now a dog owning company!

09th November 2010

Fire, food and friends....

We have just had a wonderful time in North Devon at Pickwell Manor... where my sister and family live and work.

The week ended with a fantastic expression of community as the village came together to celebrate shared food, fireworks and bonfire.

The week before visitors and residents at Pickwell made lanterns and fire torches and built a huge fire. Then on Sunday we had a feast of festive food and watched an amazing display of fireworks. My brother in law Steve is a bit mad for fireworks.. but he clearly has a gift! The crowd loved it..

We then followed each other through the woods to the bonfire and all the lit torches went on. Up it went... wonderful.

I am looking forward to the Bivouac Bonfire experience!



23rd November 2010

It started young!

I came across these photo's the other day. They are from the 80's when I was a youngster at a very cool school who took us into the woods each week to build camps and make fires.

Mudlarks... that's what our woodland afternoons were called. I was a camp leader that year... and this is me and my team in our shack.. which we made from all sorts of woodland debris. We made a fire and cooked on it... total bliss for a child's school days.

Can't wait to do that here at Biv.. with a mix of local children and guests.

Oh - I have slipped in another one of me next to a cow... I am the girlie one in the pink dress... with seemingly big green pants on under!! See... you CAN be an outdoorsey lass with style!

We're planning on getting more and more animals around here... I wonder if our girls will be as feminine as I clearly was?!



23rd November 2010

Yorkshire Life Magazine - December

Our keen followers will know that we haven't yet got planning permission. Thanks for your continued interest; we're hoping for a decision sometime in December.

Many of you will also know that we are working closely with the Swinton Estate and their senior team in bringing this vision into a reality. We're really excited about the partnership and it has enabled a scheme to come together which is rich with detail, linking into many aspects of estate activity.

Felicity Cunliffe-Lister at Swinton has recently been interviewed by Yorkshire Life Magazine and this has been printed in the December issue. This interviewer (as many do) has edited Felicity's comments a little and in doing so has slightly over-stated our current position in the project!

The text in the magazine reads "The temple is a fantastic site which we're keen to protect for future generations. In fact, we've just started developing "glamping" accommodation and café facilities there for spring 2011". While I would be delighted if this was the case, we are, of course, still waiting for the planning decision.

We have worked extremely hard to design a sensitive scheme for the site and are hopeful that permission will be granted, but we are also respectful of the planning process and confirm that we've not yet started any development work; indeed we don't intend to until full planning has been granted and other preparatory work can be completed.

Sorry for any confusion that might have been caused!

As always, we're more than happy to chat any time... just give us a call!

Sam. 01765 535020.



27th November 2010

Gearing up for the winter!

So... she arrived in June and it was love at first sight! ... however, the MOT was due in August and then my love waned a little.

But the dream stayed alive! – I was looking for the smallest, lightest 4x4 that I could buy... something that would be very fuel efficient and competent in thick snow... I didn't mind if I had to adapt it a bit.

I settled on a classic 999cc Fiat Panda 4x4. It turned out that it was so cheap because much of the floor had rotted out... yep... we were looking at more welding than most garages would do in a year. So I got in touch with my uncle who is a 4x4 expert... he's got several and is gifted with vehicles... especially welding. After a full weld-up, service, new door, brake strip-down and rebuild, spotlights, Lancia rally alloys and wide tyres (oh, and MOT, insurance and tax of course)... we're ready for the winter.

I might look like bit of a Wally but I'm pretty sure it is the most environmentally friendly 4x4 in Yorkshire. And the physics of this little beast means that I stand more chance than most when driving over ice to get to The Bivouac HQ!



28th November 2010

Check this out...

<http://www.coolcamping.co.uk/features/portable-camping-swiss-army-knife-style>

30th November 2010

Happy Festive Season from us at The Bivouac

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXh7JR9oKVE>

As we head for the planning decision and cram in loads of work for the funding push... and we continue to have faith in what we are building... we want to thank you for support this year and we'll be letting you know the outcomes this month and in Jan - as we begin the next stage... whatever that may be!

04th January 2011

Happy New Year!

2011 - the year you get to experience The Bivouac...

We would like to thank you for keeping up with us so far. This year we believe will be the year we get the planning permission, the funding sorted and the site will be ready by the end of the year to welcome you in. Just a small amount to achieve then!!

Keep checking in... give us a nudge if you want more detail and soon the picture will all become clear. I'll try and get more photo's up and about of the site for you to enjoy.

May this year bring you many opportunities to get out in nature and enjoy family, friendship and fun!



04th January 2011

Job Advert

We are looking for live-in help!

The Bivouac HQ is in need of some support this year probably for a year to 18 months. We are looking for the right person to come live with us here on site in the farm house. The role will be a mix of helping in the home with cooking, childcare and cleaning / washing... as well as taking on some Bivouac related tasks as the build begins. We are looking at five / six hours a day with afternoons and evenings mostly free as well as every weekend off. So plenty of time to get more work elsewhere.

There is plenty of room for your own privacy and space. All bills and food costs covered by us and we would pay you £70 a week plus any expenses.

It is an exciting time to live here and be a part of what we are doing. We would consider 9 months to two year contracts. Please email Beth if you want to hear more about this job.

beth@thebivouac.co.uk

04th January 2011

Earthquake at The Bivouac Swinton!

We had an Earthquake last night and the whole house shook!
– Amazing.

I went online first thing this morning to get the grid reference of the epicentre... it turns out that it is right underneath us... literally just three miles away! Take a look at this pdf from the British Geological Survey showing the details.

Happy New Year!

10th January 2011

Evelyn Faith Sorley 19/08/10

You will have noticed The Sorley's have been away for a while. This can be explained in part by the fact that I know the answer to the questions in my previous blog. Since the arrival of Evie, When I manage to get out of the house, it has taken me approx 2 hours to assemble everyone into the car before hand. Dave and I do "nights in" very well and he might be sleeping through the night, but Evie and I aren't!

Evie is now almost 5 Months old, she has certainly already made her mark! After a lovely arrival at home, we had a bit of a yukky time in hospital whilst Evie had an operation to correct a bowel problem. A month, and a slot on the local news later (!), we got home, much happier and healthier and the fun began!! We look forward to her being part of the Bivouac journey.



13th January 2011

Sometimes I just love being an urban- hippy- homeschooler!

Have a look at this. Fascinating info about how our brains love to be surprised by learning. Parents, it will make you feel a bit more relaxed about those days when, for whatever reason your children might not have your undivided attention and are wrapping themselves up in loo-roll, putting sunglasses on the cat, or bouncing around like loonies (not my kids obviously!!?). You can let them get on with it, they are probably educating themselves on the basics of pythagoras' theorem!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=upopmzRUe94

18th January 2011

What shall we do whilst the site is being built?

Seeing as planning is taking SO LONG...

We thought we might as well have another baby!!

Baby three due at the end of July... this time I think a home-birth on the hill is just about right.

Yes blessings all around and we are very pleased that baby will be birthed same time as the Bivouac site.

Will it be a pink or a blue? Odds are on for another pink....

Still looking for that special person / couple to join us!!!



27th January 2011

Choose2Reuse

I am often inspired by a lovely neighbour and friend Sue - who often is giving me home-made items for the body or tummy or home.. and this week she yet again failed to disappoint!

Sue reminds me of the life I had pre children and inspires me of the life I hope Bivouac will invite back!! Plus she is crazy.... so that helps me fit right in!

She had been to an event in Harrogate called Choose2Reuse... run by the council I believe. Inspiring folk were there showing things that they had made from junk, recycled and breathed new life and purpose to. Sue had made some gorgeous cushions from jumpers and was about to embark on another exciting project involving books and bags! If she allows I'll get a picture...

This got me thinking... Bivouac's main theme is recycle, reuse and reclaim... I want to know more about what folk are up to locally and nationally in this area of reusing stuff.

I can't wait to get some of my ideas here on site...

So - if you can help by pointing me in the right direction... please get in touch.

01st March 2011

It's all coming together....

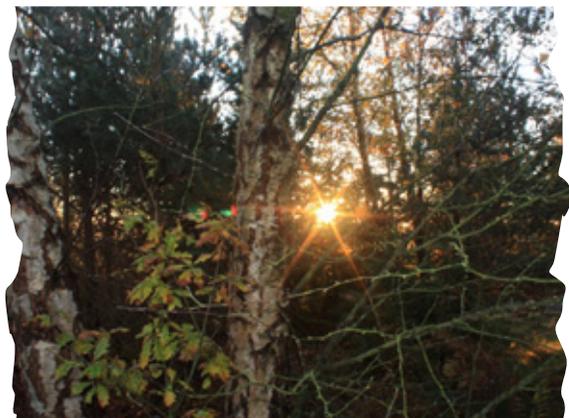
So this next six weeks is a busy one here at Biv HQ...

15th March we meet with Harrogate Planning Dept and hear the outcome of a very lengthy journey - a very BIG day for us!

We are interviewing and meeting potential interns to live and work with us on site in Yorkshire - and we are looking forward to a few folk joining us soon...

Not enough hands... lots of excitement...

Forgive any silence at this time... we are literally heads down and working harder than ever before... soon heads will rise and we'll be letting you in on a lot more of what we are up to!



03rd March 2011

GUTTED...

Planning Dept have delayed our decision date... April now!

Not happy - just as the next stage was in our grasp... another delay. Gosh we are learning patience!

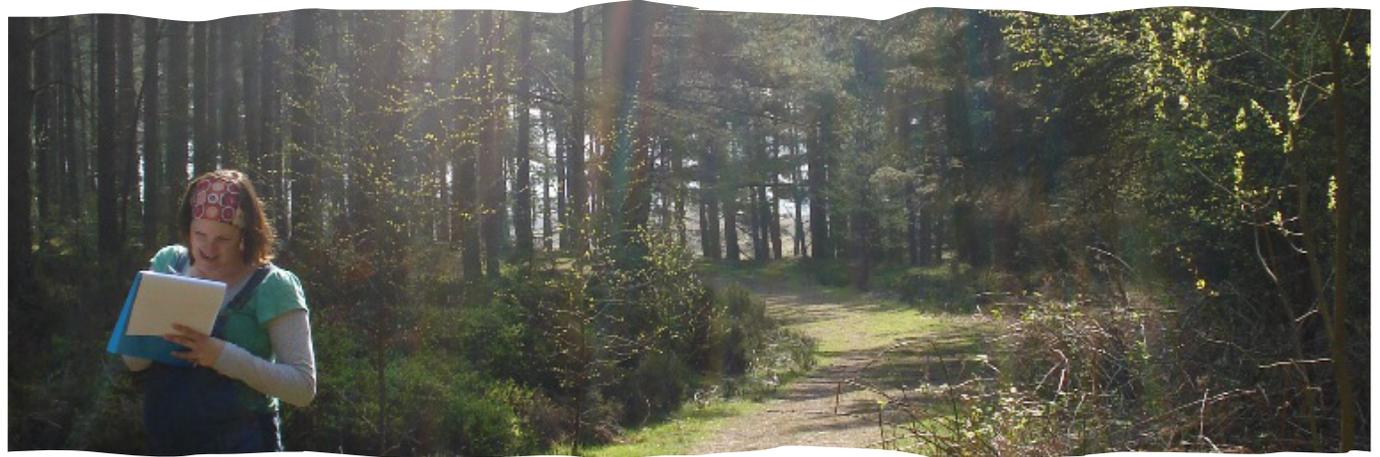


22nd March 2011

Seven Day Countdown!

We now have confidence that the planning decision will be made in just seven days time! - Tuesday 29th March 2011, 2pm.

It has been an incredible journey and this is the next big milestone. We approached the landlords here at the Swinton Estate back in the spring of 2009... now two years ago! Over the last two years we have set up the relationship with Swinton and been in continued discussions with the AONB and the local planning authority. The planning application was completed and finalised in June last year and submitted to the council. We have then been in very detailed discussions with the council since then... the planning application will have been live for nine months when we hear the final outcome.



23rd March 2011

Not sure Sam and I will ever be farmers...

Martha and I went on Lamb watch yesterday as our dear neighbour has given us charge of many lambs and mummies in our fields. So - we were walking the land, enjoying the sunshine (yes folks you heard me - hot sun at that!). Then we came across a lost lamb.. bleating away. We named him six (as he has number six on his back!) and Martha called him black bum.. as he did in fact have a black bottom. Round and round we went trying to catch the little thing.. to no joy. He escaped all our attempts.

We then spotted his mum - dead in the ditch. I gave Martha the talk on life and death in the best way I could... and we called for help. Rob our expert farmer mate came over and Sam came out from the office. We all had fun catching lost lambs and dragging dead sheep into trucks. Not something I was expecting - but I thoroughly enjoyed it!

Apparently though - Sam and I didn't show farming technique and we were not given any further employment by Rob - so perhaps we need to work on our skills. I wont show you a picture of the dead sheep - as that is just nasty. Instead - I'll celebrate a spring scene with you - this is how sweet life can get up here on our hill.

You must come and stay next year at Easter time... it is a true joy!



26th March 2011

We're in the local paper!

With the planning agenda going live on the Harrogate Borough Council website, we've attracted a little more attention.

The Ripon Gazette printed a small article on Friday. I have attached a pdf of the article to the bottom of this note.

For those that have just found this project; we are hoping to build a sustainable holiday site, built across two adjacent sites in the village of Ilton, just outside Masham; High Knowle (farm) and the Druids Plantation (home to the Druid's Temple). We submitted a planning application in June 2010 and after nine months of discussions and refining the proposals, the application is due for determination on Tuesday 29th March.

If you would like any more information on the project, please don't hesitate to get in touch; our office number here is 01765 535020.

27th March 2011

Busy weekend at Druids Temple

Although it is very busy up here... even in snow we saw several visitors arrive to enjoy the place... this weekend with the amazing weather brought more folk out from the winter hide-outs.

We've seen campers, cyclists, walkers, picnic hampers, children playing games, dog walkers... and who could blame them... it is a wonderful spot to enjoy from the scenery, the quirky stone monuments around the place as well as the temple itself.

The sad thing is seeing how can be left at times... only this last week me and the girls found so much rubbish from the roadside and right into the woods itself - I just wish these folk would love the place and respect it as much as the majority of visitors do.

It can feel like you have stepped out of the busy hubbub of life up here and found a peaceful spot to chill and find your breath again. I took a friend up to the woods a few days ago around 5ish and the sunlight pouring through the tree's mixed with the smell of the woodland and the birds singing their song - I felt totally privileged that we were able to share in this space for that moment.

Looking forward to summer... and seeing the colour's and bird songs change with it. Not sure I'd swap this for much right now...



28th March 2011

Cute little lambs - or annoying flower eaters?

So I spent ages planting nice flower bulbs and daffs in the vain hope that this spring and summer we'd be in flower heaven up here!

No such joy.. lamb mania.. they have left a trail of half eaten daffs and now they are dipping into my new bulb heads!

Do I need to get tough with these little lambs or say bye bye to all my flowers?

Farm life....



28th March 2011

Did someone say caravans?

It seems that many have interpreted Fridays Gazette article announcing "Holiday park set to be approved" to mean Caravans! ... Oh, dear. We'd have to camouflage them... like this budding Ray Mears...

The phrase "Holiday Park" isn't particularly helpful when applied to the vision we have for this site! If only these reporters would get in touch! All of our accommodation is handmade and sustainable... I'm hesitant to call them 'eco lodges' and 'eco tents'... but they are wonderfully environmentally sound, built using natural materials, many of which will travel less than 30 miles to be with us. We don't do plastic nor cheap... we're about high quality craftsmanship with the highest environmental conscience. Caravans indeed.



29th March 2011

After two years of hard work...

...we have been granted full planning permission!

THANKS - to everyone who has believed in us, supported us and kept the faith! What a journey.

Now the next stage can begin and a new kind of hard work begins...
Bring it on!

WOOHOOOOOO...

30th March 2011

We got it!

Yesterday the planning committee at Harrogate Borough Council voted unanimously in favour of the scheme.

The application was presented and discussed at the planning committee meeting yesterday afternoon in an impressive room with dark wood and leather seating in the middle of the council offices in Harrogate. After considered and detailed discussion the committee voted unanimously in favour. This is a real encouragement to the scheme! We have found many people in favour of the scheme including the Nidderdale AONB, Yorkshire Forward and Welcome to Yorkshire (www.yorkshire.com). Indeed most people that hear of the vision find it exciting. It is really encouraging to hear that the ultimate decision makers are in favour of the scheme... All of them! We still have a long way to go, but this is a significant piece of the jigsaw now in place.



Please join us in this journey!



30th March 2011

Practical or pampering?

Imagine you are staying at the bivouac for a week, you want to use the beautiful outdoors as much as possible and you want to make the most of our hot tubs and showers (that come with a surprise!) as well. What would you want or need with you on your break away in the way of toiletries?

It's all a bit "Hush hush" right now, but we are currently working with a very local company who make beautiful, luxurious, natural bath and shower products, to design and make our own 'bivouac' toiletries. We hope these little surprises, found in and around your accommodation will be part of completing the "bivouac experience".

We are designing products that will be 'just the ticket' after a day out walking, climbing or cycling in the Dales, things that wash away any aches and pains, and any dirt under your finger nails! But also things that look after your feet, hands and lips and, for those who want to pamper themselves, there will also be some luxurious treatments to try out!

The company we are working with are great, the philosophy behind their products fits really nicely alongside the bivouac's ideals, respecting the environment and creating products with ethics. This, in "product form" we believe will give us even happier baths, showers and skin! More updates to come on the progress of this soon.

So, returning to the original question... do let me know! You never know, you might even find some in your yurt!



30th March 2011

Yes please Father Christmas...

I'd like a Bell Tent and one of these please...

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zs_EqDq65gw&feature=youtube_gdata_player

09th April 2011

Gems...

Being a busy mum I get little time to actually stop. But I have just stopped for a few moments to enjoy a site my brother James sent me. It is really inspiring and has given me some great idea for Bivouac.

Have a look...

Sam, Martha and I lived in a garden shed for a while... when Elsie was born we not long moved out... but we still remember those days as some of the best. I am very tempted back to tht way of life...

<http://thistinyhouse.com/>

Enjoy!

Please excuse any typo's - I am always rushing and can't spell in any case!

18th April 2011

Hard work

Planning... Tick! So, now the hard work continues



26th April 2011

Bespoke Woodland weddings...

Are you looking for something a little bit different to celebrate your special day?

The day you say 'I do' and enter into a partnership with your loved one - should be the most memorable occasion you have engaged with yet (aside from giving birth perhaps!)

It should not only be one day but a few days of relax, build up, celebration, friends and family.

The WOW factor - something outside the box...

Here at The Bivouac we are setting up this very unique opportunity to celebrate all you are in the glorious outdoors with the attention to detail to be a one off amazing event...

Our venue is incredibly special and a breath of fresh air in the current wedding market.

We are taking enquiries from May - so spread the word and get in touch.

Heather 01765 535020

24th April 2011

How do you say Bivouac?

OK so we chose a crazy spelling word for our business! But it fits so well who and what we are about... so I am on a mission to help all those who have not been able to speak this word out.

This is how..

BIV...OU...ACK

Now say it fast...

Or try this..

BIV...O...WACK

Or

BIV...OOO...ACK

Say it fast... now enjoy it.. it actually is a great word to say!

Our three year old can say this now... so there is no excuses OK!

28th April 2011

Sheep

Bob's sheep help keep our grass short. This one is a Bivouac Favourite!



28th April 2011

Friends

Best Shared with friends

This is one of the lovely photographs taken by Giles Smith during our first Bivouac team meeting. The view is on of the north side of the Bivouac Swinton.



29th April 2011

Early Evening Stroll

Took a stroll up to near where the cabins will be situated... Lovely isn't it?



30th April 2011

Standing stone

One of the many amazing standing stones at Bivouac Swinton



01st May 2011

Tidy

So a few spots still need a tidy!

But there is always some treasure to be found.



02nd May 2011

Something Missing

Oh, it's the yurts!

Can't wait until Spring 2012!



03rd May 2011

South side

Lovely view from the south side



22nd May 2011

Bivouac is out and about Sunday 29th May...

Swinton Park Hotel are hosting Alfresco this weekend... and it should be a great event to attend.

Bivouac are planning to be there all day Sunday in our home made tent... and with a few things which set the scene... we will be wanting to meet folk and tell you all about The Biv and what we are up to. So, if you are around Masham this weekend - pop in and come and meet us.



30th May 2011

Summer Solstice

We are no longer going to do something as Bivouac this 21st June... sad but true. We are bombarded with really important work which needs to be tackled for the site development - and this is taking our time, attention and creativity just now. All good - if we want to make this a really great place to come and hang out in!

But, we'll take a picnic up to the woods, have a story time together and a forest school session for the kids... and chill out amongst trees - weather allowing - and just love the area. So if you are around you are welcome. But just note - this is not a Bivouac event... that comes next year! Woohoo...

31st May 2011

Bivouac @ Alfresco

Our home made tent...

Some quirky engine fires / stoves...

Some bits and bobs creating a bivouac feel... (sort of)

Info about us to give out...

Dave, Claire, Steve, Sam and me giving it the chat...

We had a great day at Alfresco on Sunday.

Thanks to everyone who came to meet us and find out a little more about who we are and what we are up to. We had conversations all day and already we are hearing back from some of you which is really nice.

The sun finally made an appearance and we left dry and satisfied!

Little Evie - Dave and Claire's youngest, was such a good girl all day chilling in the tent...

Where next? Anyone want The Bivouac to host a set up at thier event or festival.. just get in touch!



26th June 2011

Summer Solstice

Thanks to everyone who turned up for a chilled out picnic and woodland fun last week. We really enjoyed it - and it seems you did too! Jen did an amazing job with Forest Frog activities... and we look forward to more of what she will be up to over the year ahead. The woodland was lush and green - a few bites from hungry creatures - but sun shining through the trees and fires to keep us toasty - it was a nice start to Bivouac adventures.

Keep your eye out for next years solstice plans... we are already getting plans underway to make it a memorable one!

Little Evie - Dave and Claire's youngest, was such a good girl all day chilling in the tent...



26th June 2011

More pictures...

One of Joy giving us some story time too... thanks Joy! Great poem about midgies!



05th July 2011

Tinkering School

We've been having lots of discussion about health and safety at the Bivouac.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=hvHViFc0ekw

We wondered what you thought of the Gever Tulley and his Tinkering School... We love it!

05th July 2011

Slowing down and speeding up!

I am in the middle of two worlds just now... and at times it feels exciting to be in that place and at others very scary!

My bump - is now making its way south - ready to make an entrance to the world! This is my time to slow down, nest and focus on mind and body.

The Bivouac however, is at the most exciting stage as everything is speeding up a pace and each day we see new folk arrive to start the build or we take on new folk to work with us helping to get this show on the road.

I want to slow down and nest...

I want to speed up and enjoy the buzz around the place...

Hhhmmmm...

I think I'll do a combination of slow speed!

Praise be for nice weather and a great team growing

around us to be a part of the ever changing animal.

Next chapter - we welcome you!

This photo is from last weekend as we set to on preparing the ground for shack one!

WOOHOOOOOO...



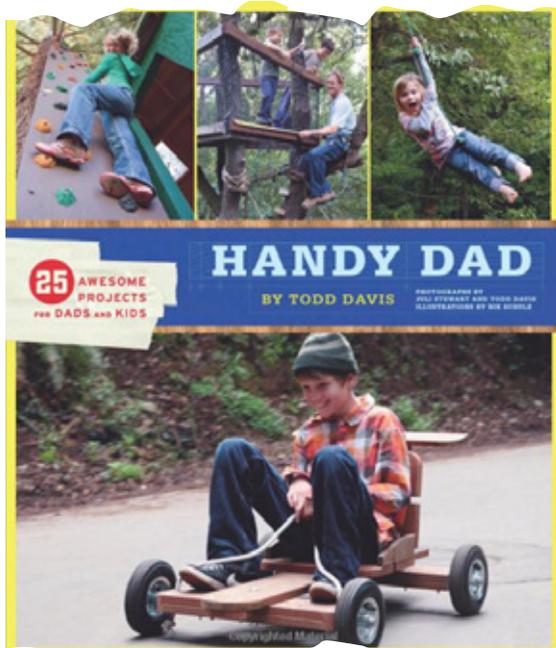
14th July 2011

Handy dad

Sick of buying plastic toys that only last five minutes? Have a go at making your own with this ace book

I just ordered this book by Todd Davis. Can't wait until it drops on the doorstep.

Handy Dad: 25 Awesome Projects for Dads and Kids - http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/081186958X/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=httpwwwcather-21&linkCode=as2&camp=1634&creative=19450&creativeASIN=081186958X



24th August 2011

Getting back on line....

Since we were granted planning permission and funding our house has been alive with activity and we have not seen our feet hit the ground. It is all go in Ilton - and will be for many months ahead. This is one of the reasons for our blog silence... for which we are sorry. September will bring two new Bivouac team members.. and we will pick up the communication again and give you and all the in's and out's of what we are up to. I am sad we have let this slip.. but I am excited to show you and tell you what's been happening and what is going on. We'll be introducing all of the team as well... over the next couple of months...

24th August 2011

Florence Briah

On July 28th I had an amazing labour - and gave birth to a gorgeous little girl, called Florie Briah. For 7 days we loved, kissed, played, learnt, lived, slept, fed, dreamt.

On July 28th I had an amazing labour - and gave birth to a gorgeous little girl, called Florie Briah. For 7 days we loved, kissed, played, learnt, lived, slept, fed, dreamt. On the seventh day our dear Florie got poorly very quickly and was flown to hospital.

The next day after a good fight, she left her body and us here on earth.. and she now is playing a new song in heaven. This has obviously been a real hit for us... a painful journey began and we are still in baby steps with our new song. But we are peaceful... and we are supported and loved.

Bivouac has taken a second seat for a while... not to say we are not giving the vision our attention... but maybe not as full as it was and will be again.

The Bivouac is an expression of many things we are and have experienced in losing Florie... I am looking forward to this place being somewhere where people leave better than when they arrived... whatever that looks like.



29th August 2011

Reclaiming the land...

Over the last few months Sam and I have been working hard to try and clean up the woodland here. In and around Druids Temple - we see many visitors come and visit the site. Most folk are here to enjoy the woods and the folly. Sadly however there are those who come up at night to abuse this space. We now cannot count how many times we have been met with car racing teens who are over the limit... out of control fires... parties which get out of hand... rubbish all over the woodland, broken glass, cars broken into and wallets stolen... and more.

To be honest - having to go up to the woodland every night - sometimes more than three times... can get a bit tiring. Mostly because these night callers are not the folk who are here to love but to abuse or at least to abuse us!

This site is private land. There is a policy clearly signposted which states that there is NO CAMPING and NO FIRES to be lit. The Bivouac now manage this area and we are keen to see this place loved, used in the right way and celebrated. We are not trying to be party poopers... or ruin plans for a nice night away. We simply cannot have one rule for one group and another for others. It won't be long before you can camp here - in the appropriate way.

This weekend we met a group of four family's who camped here. When at five pm I told them that by nine pm they would have to leave...

they laughed at me and totally ignored me. They told us that they had camped here for years and they were not leaving. They lit fires and carried on doing what they wanted. We found them to be rude, self centered and in total disregard for us, our aims on this site and for our management. It is a very tricky thing for us... we love folk to go camping and enjoy the outdoors. BUT how can we manage this site with people like this thinking they can behave in this way?

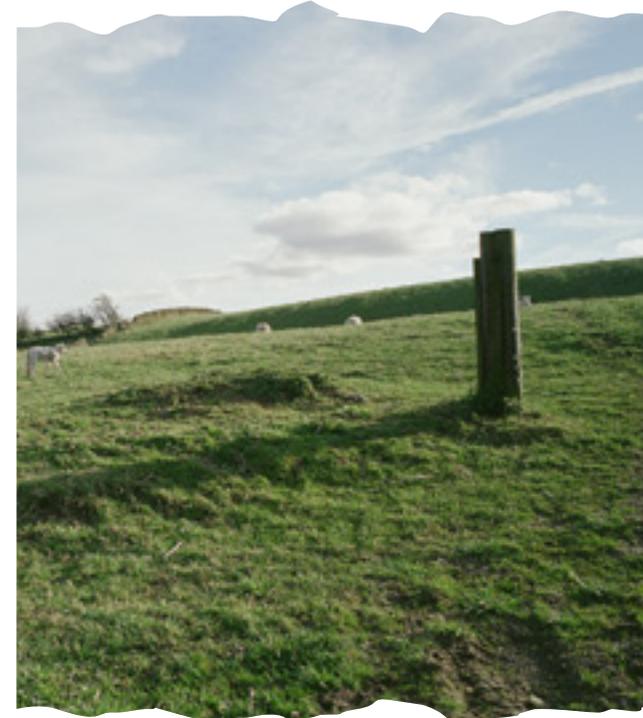
It made me mad. I am grieving the loss of my daughter right now... this journey is not one I have any control over. When I was met with this behavior this weekend - something inside flipped. It took all I had in me not to go up there and scream at them... and tell them of my pain, my loss, my reaction to their ignorant, selfish behavior and the lessons they are teaching their own children.

Instead I had to take deep breaths and grieve quietly here at home.

On their departure - a few days later... they broke open our locked gate, stole one of our bins and left us a LARGE BUCKET OF HUMAN POOH! Nice... what kind of people leave their own sh.. in a bucket for others to deal with?

Sadly these people and many more.. have now made it even more difficult for us to be as open and flexible as we'd like with this space. We now need to tighten the rules and go against our ethos... whilst we are developing this site for the celebration we know it will be.

So - if you know of anyone who comes up here to abuse this area... or folk who think they can behave how they want with no regard for others... just warn them will you - that there is a grieving woman here who has had enough of people like this...!



30th August 2011

Builders and rain!

I think our builders are having too much tea! They might say it's the rain but I am sure big burly Yorkshire builders should be used to working in the rain?

Mind you - they are doing a great job... I've been very excited to see the developments today (having hidden away for a few weeks). Sam calls me Alan Sugar as I crack the whip... I think that is a little harsh... but I won't be cracking this whip just yet.. as there is much evidence of hard work around this site.

The cafe barn is coming along... the toilet block is looking restored and the shop and reception area is now dry!

Just at the tip of the iceberg as they say... but I am encouraged.. if not totally overwhelmed!



09th September 2011

New recruits at The Bivouac HQ

Hazel and Andy arrive and the shack gets walls...

Hello! I am here to introduce Andy and myself, two new(ish) Bivouac recruits! Andy has been working here for a couple of months now, and I just arrived last weekend.

So, I'm Hazel and have been living in Lincoln for the last 10 years, working as a Project Co-ordinator for a charity. I am now living on site at The Bivouac and have already started getting stuck in to rural life, driving on windy roads and permanently sporting my wellies.

Even since I have been here, the site has developed loads... the shacks are being cladded, the camping barn has studded walls and a floor, and the toilet block is coming on! My role here is pretty varied, ranging from helping to organise the camping village, organising events, and helping with general everyday stuff as The Bivouac site progresses.

Andy has moved here from Newcastle, he is living in Masham with his wife Sarah, and 2 children, Alfie and Zac. Moving from being a Furniture Sales Consultant to getting involved in all areas of the build at The Bivouac, he has hit the ground running. "What I am enjoying most about working at The Bivouac is the variety, learning and doing different things everyday!"



10th September 2011

On my Wish List...

I'm adding this brilliant "mini-bivvi" sized tool box to my wish list for our family...

Have a look at this! Its from the Play Merrily Toy Shop (run by a fellow home-educating Mum).

As most kids, ours could always tell the difference between real and pretend tools and always want to get involved with any D.I.Y going on at home. We decided we might as well teach them to use the real ones properly and they now regularly have time with Daddy, wielding some sort of power tool!

This tool set looks great though. Clearly real tools (with sharp edges and everything!) but in a much more manageable size for smaller hands. Should bring the health and safety risk down a bit!

I'll be sending them up to help the shack building team. Might as well get them working.

19th September 2011

Extreme knitting, wind and cladded shacks

It's been another busy week at The Bivouac.

Shack number one has been completed on the outside, ready for some internal fixtures and fittings. Sue, a local seamstress has been practising some extreme knitting using walking stick sized knitting needles to make us some throws and other soft furnishings for the shacks. The wind has been gale force (pretty much) and details are falling in to place.

This kind of sized project is massive and there are so many different parts to it. We are working as a team, and involving anyone who wants to get involved,

ensuring everything gets done in the right order. It has come to the point where we have started sorting out the small details, the things that are going to be in the shacks, the places where the electric sockets are going in the barn and the type of flooring we're having throughout. It's strange making these decisions when they seem so far off, but it is all coming together at quite a pace at the moment. Sue has been making some extreme knitting samples for our soft furnishings in the shack. Extreme knitting uses massive needles and multiple strands of wool to create comfortable, luxurious textiles. We have been gathering fabrics and wool for her to make some

more. If you have any old fabrics or yarns you would like to donate, we'd love to have them, we are all about reusing and recycling!

This morning the office and house is very quiet as the shack team have headed back down south to start making the frames for the next couple of shacks. The other builders are cracking on with the cafe, shop, showers and toilets on site and have been amazing as they have been battling with the elements in the past week whilst redoing the roofs! At one point the trampoline flew across the garden, yet the builders continued throughout!

11th September 2011

Events @ The Bivouac

Two shots from our last event here at The Biv... this event was organised in a week! So just think what we can do if we had more time...

I am looking for a someone... can you help? A chap called the office a month ago asking about events here... I want to call him back but the number I have for him is wrong!

So for any local folk... if you know of a Gary Biddlescombe from Kirkby Malzard... can you ask him to call us? I'd love to have a chat...

Thank you!



23rd September 2011

A Photographers paradise

The Bivouac is situated in some of the most beautiful natural surroundings in the UK.

800 feet up, we have some great views. On a clear day, you can see all the way across to York and Roseberry Topping (over 40 miles away)! With all this flora and fauna around, we are never short of scenes worthy of being captured on film.

There are landscapes, and then there are landscapes not to be missed. The Bivouac is one of them.

Depending on the time of year you visit, you are likely to come across wildlife, mushrooms, heavy snow, crazy winds, powerful rains, glorious sunlight, lambs, cows, tractors, wild flowers... it's one of lifes natural beauties, we may be biased, but why not come up and see for yourself.

Gary Keat (www.garykeat.com) is a local photographer. He says "I have been using photography as an art form for many years, inspired by the light in landscapes, natural surroundings and the people and places I visit and live amongst." Gary has been taking some photographs from around our site, all of these are from within 3 miles of The Bivouac.

Within the Bivouac site sits a Druids temple, a folly created by William Danby of nearby Swinton Hall in 1820, the gates to the carpark are open from 8am - dusk everyday, and from here there are many



walks you can go on in to the woods and explore this wonderful landscape.

The Ripon Rowel Walk, a well known 50 mile walk starting at Ripon, runs by the Bivouac, leading up to the Druids Temple. If you are doing this any time soon, you can have a look at our progress on the way past, and soon (2012), you'll be able to stop off in our cafe for a cuppa!



25th September 2011

Does anyone know what these are?

ACER / ILEX / QUERCUS / CASTANIA / SAMBUCUS /
TILIA / CORYLUS / PYRUS / SALIX / CARPINUS /
CRATAGUS / TECTONA / POPULUS / ULNUS



First one to get it right wins a prize

03rd October 2011

Foraging for food

Foraging for food in the woodland at The Bivouac...

Foraging is the act of searching for food. I love the idea of foraging for wild food as it is free, local and fresh! The woodland at the The Bivouac is full of delicious wild treats, including blackberries, mushrooms and sloes.

Despite our strange weather relapse, it is now Autumn, and looking out the window, the leaves are flying off the trees. Autumn is a great time for rooting around and seeing what we are growing unknowingly on our land.

Last week I picked a load of blackberries from the area around the Druids temple. I made a blackberry crumble with them which was really easy. (I admit, it wasn't the best crumble I have ever made, I'm going to blame the scales for the fact I put too much sugar in) There is a certain sense of satisfaction from having made something to eat from fruit that you have picked!

I have also been on the hunt for sloes and came across a load last week, a short walk from the Bivouac site growing in a hedgerow.



You're supposed to wait for the first frost before you pick sloes, so they lose their bitterness, but from previous experience, I've found if you wait until then, they have either been eaten by birds or are a bit past their best. My cheats way of making the sloes think they've been through the frost is to stick them in the freezer overnight.

There are a few things you can make with sloes, but my favourite is of course sloe gin. There are loads of different recipes for this, but this is a good basic one I have used the last few years - http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/sloegin_7722

So, my sloes are now sitting in their demijohn having a great time, waiting for Christmas when I am going to let them out!

If I knew anything about mushrooms, I'd be having a field day in our woods right now, where there appear to be hundreds of varieties - I'll have to book myself in on one of our foraging courses we are going to be holding in the woodland next year!

10th October 2011

Autumn Larder...

The bivouac larder is filling after reaping the rewards of the abundance that autumn foraging has brought. The trees and bushes just keep on giving long into the autumn and as the warmth of summer begins to leave us as the first cold snaps are an ever so prevalent reminder of last winter's chill. But I know we are on the way to filling the larder store for those long cosy nights relaxing in the warm light of the fire. I am looking ever more now to spicing those evenings up with our wind fallen apple chutney as is jarred up and slowly maturing. There seemed to be a record number of apples this autumn with bags full being exchanged between friends and family of the bivouac. Another of the autumn favourites of mine, known mainly for its flower petals being used in many different products, is the elderberry. The elderberries make a simple but wonderful cordial packed full of vitamins to help fend off those sniffs and snivels. You can add it as a mixer to any of your drinks be it alcoholic, hot or cold. If it manages to survive lasting the winter through to summer it can be most appreciated simply mixed with water and ice for a real refreshing juice.

I was extra excited this year as my forage for sloe berries not only yielded mass amounts of a bumper sized crop but also some hidden wild plum trees with branches fully laden. Once upon a time I imagine they were part of a managed orchard but now sadly the land has mostly given way to pasture for cattle but these remaining beauties still survive and seem to be thriving. Both the sloes and plums have been added to the bivouac stores as Sloe gin and 'wild' plum jam.

I can not wait to sample these free delectable delights that this autumn has thrown up.

14th October 2011

The birthing of our yurts...

All the way from Devon our yurts have started their life and will soon be making the journey up North to The Bivouac!

After lots of researching and talking to yurt people, we have decided on our yurt suppliers. Wanting to get them made in the UK, we have gone with Kevin, a guy who lives in South Devon and is going to make our bespoke yurts to fit in with the landscape at The Bivouac! We are really excited to be working with Kevin and his friends who will be hand making all our yurts. Production will be starting this week, with the finished articles heading up North early next year ready for opening.

Dan and his team up here are getting ready to start building the bases for the yurts to sit on to help keep them weather proof. The site is rapidly transforming!

Here is a sneak peak at an example yurt Kevin brought up to show us on site last week... we can't wait to put the first one in place!



20th October 2011

Raising money for the Play park...

We are amazed at how many folk are helping us raise money in memory of our daughter Florie. The Bivouac team are so excited to see this happen and we all want to thank you so much for your help. Keep it up! Want want to raise £25,000 to get the best in keeping natural play area here for families to enjoy for years to come.

Check out facebook page - 'Florence Briah Play Park', as well 'Gifts for Florie' and help us spread the word and raise funds.

THANK YOU FOR RAISING £1,400 SO FAR!

20th October 2011

Wanted - Chef for The Bivouac Cafe

The Bivouac Cafe could be looking for you...

The Bivouac is looking for a Chef for our Cafe. You would be involved in the design and set up of this area, from kitchen set up to opening to the public.

Our theme is hand-made, local, reclaimed, recycled, Rustic! Simple!

We love 'Bills' café down South for style, feel and food... look it up on line.. there is one in Lewes down South and Brighton, Jimmy Doherty's cook books and food,<http://www.leonrestaurants.co.uk/nutrition/> their language, feel and food. Have a good look into these – and form your own reflections.

Check out the Job Description below if you would like to hear more, pass on to a friend or get in contact with us yourselves.

We look forward to hearing from you...
Download catering_job_advert.pdf - http://www.thebivouac.co.uk/images/uploads/catering_job_advert.pdf

31st October 2011

Volunteer Days at Bivouac in March 2012...

Bivouac are organising a weekend of volunteer activity, with tasks such as building log stores and painting furniture - to helping with some finishing touches on the interiors of the shacks and yurts. We'd love you to get involved!

As the Bivouac site progresses, we look to Spring next year when we will be getting ready to welcome our first visitors to the site! Our team here are busy working away hard to get everything ready.

Some of the jobs we need to do to spruce the site up can't happen until the Spring, and we'd like to open this opportunity up for anyone to get involved!

For people that would love the opportunity to be a part of getting the Bivouac off the ground, and would enjoy some team building in the Yorkshire Dales, we have some dates for your diary...

Dates - Thursday 1st March - Wednesday 7th March

All guests are welcome to camp in the field here, we'll provide shower and toilet facilities and there will be a camping kitchen set up next to the house.

Feel free to come and get involved in a day or stay for the whole weekend, everyone is welcome!

Here are a list of the types of jobs we will be doing over this weekend...

- Building a log store
- Planting
- Clearing areas of the site
- Hanging signage
- Building some recycling bins around the site
- Starting to dig a veg patch
- Building a compost
- Setting up and finishing off the internals of the shacks and yurts
- Painting and restoring pieces of furniture
- General moving of items around the site
- Making food and drink for our volunteers
- Creating a coal stock shelter
- Fixing some dry stone walls
- Tidying up the gardens
- Fixing up some shelves
- Interior decorating throughout the barns and accommodation

If you're interested in joining us and getting involved then please fill in the form below and e-mail to Hazel@thebivouac.co.uk

Download volunteer_weekend_interest_sheet.doc - http://www.thebivouac.co.uk/images/uploads/volunteer_weekend_interest_sheet.doc

31st October 2011

The birthing of our yurts...

We are BUSY!

Running around like headless chickens we are... the office is never empty and the site has more mud churn than our wellies can cope with!

But it is coming together and we are loving this weather... it does not feel like winter yet? Maybe I am speaking to soon...

A few pics to share with you...



06th November 2011

Bivouac Bonfire

Fire

Friends

Marshmallows

Rum hot chocolate

Thanks for those who came - watch out for next years Bivouac bonfire!



14th November 2011

Holidays are coming...

In a matter of weeks our new booking system will go live, and you'll see our new and improved website appear and our first yurt will arrive - holiday (makers) are coming!

Dan and his team are busy building our yurt bases ready for the yurts, these pictures show the round wood posts which will support the base. Currently looking like we have had some space ships arrive on the field, soon this area will be transformed!

Also, with more members of the Bivouac team working in the office, we have now rejigged the office around and fitted it out with some desks and shelves to fit us all in and it is looking pretty smart, we are all enjoying our first day in it today!

The pointing on the front of the reception/shop barn has now been completed and is beginning to look very inviting...

This weekend the shack team moved back up from Sussex to begin building the next 5 shacks - it is all go up here!



08th December 2011

Battling against the elements...

Snow, hail, ice, wild winds and rain...

Our icy driveway!

Sat on a hill in Ilton, we have appreciated pretty much every form of weather (apart from the sun) this week!

We have had snow, hail, ice, wild winds and rain. Today we have had both crazy winds and rain, so much so, various bits from site have been flying around the countryside and we have spent much of the afternoon fetching it back (I say 'we', when actually I was manning the office inside).

It has been a tough and challenging week as far as working on site goes.

BUT, at the same time, it is amazing to see so many things coming together...

- Our first wood burners have arrived for the first shack and the first yurt
- Our main cafe and shop doors have arrived
- Our 4th and 5th shack frames are starting their journey up from Sussex
- The car park is nearing completion
- Our first yurt base is almost complete

We are so thankful for everyone who has been pushing on through, despite the horrendous conditions!

We have been so busy I can't even believe it is December already and Christmas is fast approaching. 2 weeks to go... eek!



21st December 2011

An afternoon in wellies

On Sunday we had the privilege to meet a lovely family who wanted to come meet us, see what we are up to at Biv and ponder on what connections there might be for further thought. Jo, James, Oscar, Annie - joined in the fun around site for a few hours before heading home. Jo wrote a blog entry for us last night - made me shed a tear I have to admit! I thought you should get to read it...

Thanks Jo x

This afternoon we braved the wintery weather to make a trip to North Yorkshire to meet Beth & Sam, the inspirational husband and wife team at The Bivouac.

Armed with directions we headed north of Ripon, turning left when we got to the market town of Masham. As the lanes got narrower, we got more excited about what we'd find at the end of the road. We headed uphill through woodland towards the Druid Temple and hung a left into the farm, at least that's what the directions said, but we parked up on the road deciding that if we parked in the field we may never get out again!



We donned our wellies and with our 18 month old ensconced in the backpack, we squelched towards the farmhouse, with our 5 year old saying 'I love slippy slidey mud, I think I'll call it "fun mud"!'. As we arrived at a long stone building, debating which door was the door to the farmhouse, there appeared Beth to greet us and welcome us into her home. And welcome us she (& the rest of the team) did! The minute we arrived we were made to feel at home, the kettle was on, and the kids ran off to play with Beth & Sam's kids.

Around the big farmhouse table, over tea and cakes, we met Hazel, another member of the Bivouac team, and Georgie, a family friend who was up for the weekend. Following a sharing of our stories – what had brought us together – and some time spent hearing Beth & Sam's vision, Hazel and Georgie kindly offered to keep an eye on the kids whilst we had a tour of the site.

Wow! The vision was impressive, but seeing the vision coming to life was even more so. After spending only a couple of hours at The Bivouac, I'm not sure I'm qualified to successfully convey the vision – you'd be better talking

to Beth & Sam for that, but here's what we found so impressive...

Amongst the mud (of which there is much) there are "shacks" as Beth and Sam term them, being put up in the woods. "Shacks" really doesn't do them justice... they're round cut timber cabins sleeping up to 7 with verandas, en-suite bathrooms and wood burning stoves. As we viewed the impressive timber framed, wooden clad structures, Beth shared with us a story of the happy times she and Sam and their eldest daughter had had whilst living in a converted garden shed!

The tour took us to see the bases for the yurts which will soon be arriving onsite; a number of barns which are taking shape as: a camping barn; a shop and reception; housing for the biomass boiler which will heat the main buildings and a 60 seat café with additional outside space in the courtyard and walled garden. All of which sits in a fantastic location looking out over the valley with views stretching over 40 miles on a clear day to York and Roseberry Topping – a hill which, incidentally, I spent many a happy childhood hour climbing!

As Beth and Sam, talked of all the people they were working with to make the vision a reality – investors, suppliers, partners, volunteers, locals – it stuck me how brilliantly they epitomise true partnership working. They know that collaboration is what will ultimately deliver their vision.

Returning to the farmhouse and back to the farmhouse table to warm ourselves by the fire and for more tea and cakes, we had a further chance to hear of the current challenges The Bivouac team

are juggling... meeting the needs of multiple stakeholders; recruiting and motivating volunteers to help them develop the site; project managing multiple teams who are all working on site concurrently; preparing all the elements of the site (shacks, yurts, camping barn, shop, café, road, car park, landscaping, etc.) to be ready for visitors in April 2012; recruiting staff to run the site post-April; sourcing reclaimed and recycled furniture which can then be renovated and used on site; developing relationships with partners to provide different offerings enhance the guest experience. And these are just a few of their challenges – there are many more besides!

Following further talk of next steps in our exploration of how we can work together, Beth, Sam and the kids along with Hazel & Georgie dashed to the local church for the Christingle service as we squelshed our way back to the car reflecting on Beth and Sam's drive, focus, commitment and courage to make their vision a reality. Their values of sustainability, family and connectedness really came across to us in the short time we spent with them and we saw how their creativity, ideas and energy along with their openness and desire to create meaningful relationships will make The Bivouac an amazing place to be enjoyed by many people. They're a genuinely visionary couple who are making a difference in the world. As we drove back down the hill through the woods at dusk, we were blessed to see a deer cross our path. It was a magical moment. The deer embodies many of the principles of The Bivouac... love, grace, peace, beauty, humility, creativity, spirituality, happiness, a keen awareness of environment, connected, trusting, co-operative and 'homonym' the Chinese word for deer which means abundance. But as we drove away I wondered whether the deer appeared to remind us of all that The Bivouac symbolised or as a message to us to trust our instincts and be enticed into a new adventure...

03rd January 2012

Happy New Year!

Its the New Year and its back down to business here at Bivouac Swinton! Everything is really starting to take shape and we're feeling incredible excited about this next chapter.

Although a few Christmas dreams may have been disappointed by the lack of snow, here at Bivouac there is an audible sigh of relief that the white stuff hasn't made much of an appearance - allowing work to carry on!

With the fourth Shack frame raised and standing in what has to be my favourite place, the Shack team are making good progress. Not content with all the amazing building thats going on for the project, they've also been busy on their days off building their caravans impressive porches to provide them with a barrier of sorts against the mud. The array of materials and items used is a testament to the resourcefulness and imagination these guys have. Makes me smile every time I walk past!

The Yurt bases are moving forward too and we are getting our first Yurt next week. I'm sure we'll be posting up pictures of our new arrival in no time at all. The doors and windows are in place around most of the reception and cafe area and the painting of the internals is starting this week.

If you would like more in-depth news about whats happening on site or want to find out more about the people involved in making this happen, why not sign up for our newsletter? Just click on the 'Our Newsletter' button at the bottom of the page and fill in your details.



08th January 2012

Snow, wind and rain stop nothing!

The weather has continued to throw itself at us over the last month or so, you'll be glad to know it's done nothing to stop us! This is a little video snippet showing a snowy day back in December.

<http://vimeo.com/33658479>

Shot by the lovely Giles from Box-head* - <http://www.weareboxhead.com/>

Music by the ever talented Hunting Bears - <http://huntingbears1.bandcamp.com/>



16th January 2012

Microholding!

Whilst getting our next newsletter ready to send out, I spent some time chatting to the guys working on the Shacks. We did a little Q&A for the newsletter to give people an insight into the building of the Shacks and while we were chatting away Andy mentioned he had a smallholding back in Sussex that he and his partner started five years ago. Their approach to it and what they have achieved is really interesting and so I thought I would share it with you!

Andy and Kate call it microholding because the plot of land they have is so small. They wanted to have their own workshop and grow their own veg so five years ago they bought a house and transformed the garden. It was the first time either of them had attempted something like this, but with a lot of common sense and some gardening know how they have created a successful site for organic food production.

They have tried to make their small holding have a low environmental impact and re-use and recycle where possible. The electric fence which keeps the pigs in is powered by a second hand solar panel, they collect rainwater from all their roofs and have used coppiced sweet chestnut for various structures around their garden.

Currently they grow a range of vegetables year round, have a selection of different fruit trees and bushes,

keep former battery chickens and quail for eggs and have started breeding pigs for meat. The majority of the food they eat has come from their own hard work and the only produce that they need to buy from the local store is flour, bread and oil!

As they both have jobs that take them away from their smallholding for short periods of time they have designed it to be a low input system. The chicken run is completely fox proof and is set up so the chickens don't have to be shut in at night, but can let themselves in and out. They grow their vegetables hard which takes more time but means they need less attention and in Andy's opinion taste better too!

Any smallholding will need attention though and in April and May Andy and Kate are at their busiest sowing and planting, keeping birds away and picking slugs off their plants. I asked Andy when his favorite time of year was, June and July was his answer, when the gardens ramm full of produce ready to be eaten. The winter months were less rewarding as the root veg which is associated with this time of year such as carrots, parsnips and squash, take more work and are less fun.

In November 2011 they won Smallholder of the Year, an award given out by country smallholding magazine and Kate has gone on to write articles for them. They also make a range of products such as table lamps, wine racks and outdoor furniture from reclaimed wood in their workshop to sell. If you are interested in finding out more about them why not look them up on the permaculture association website:

<http://www.permaculture.org.uk/people-projects-places/kate-and-andys-microholding>

or have a look at the fantastic things they make in their workshop:

<http://www.phoenixwoodcrafts.co.uk>

16th January 2012

Our First Yurt

Our first yurt arrived last monday...

Getting things ready I couldn't help but notice the wonderful view

I spent the afternoon helping Kevin from 'The Really Interesting Tent Company Limited'. I thought I would Share some of the pictures with you!



19th January 2012

Tree Bog building workshop this Easter!

Learn some new skills and meet some new people at our Tree Bog building workshop this Easter!

Help build something that looks a bit like this in the Bivouac woodland...

TREE BOG BUILDING WORKSHOP

7th & 8th April 2012, 9am - 4.30pm at Bivouac High Knowle, Knowle Lane, Ilton, Masham, North Yorkshire HG4 4JZ

Have you ever wondered about what to do with human waste?
Ever wondered about an alternative to using your flushing loo?
Want to know about composting toilets?

If so, come along to our Tree Bog building weekend!

You will:

- Learn the theory of composting toilets - how they work, different types, why we need them etc.
- Learn specifically about the Tree Bog (a type of outdoor, above ground composting toilet that is simple, cheap and effective).
- Join in practical sessions to build a Tree Bog in the woodland.
- Meet lots of new people.
- Get involved in team working.
- Stay in a newly converted modern bunk barn for 2 nights.
- Have 2 evening meals in our rustic cafe.

The cost of the Tree Bog workshop weekend is £95, which includes your accommodation on Friday 6th and Saturday the 7th in our bunk barn, 2 evening meals, as well as the exciting experience of learning and getting involved in building a Tree Bog in the woodland!

For more info and to book your place on the workshop email Hazel@thebivouac.co.uk or call 01765 535020



27th February 2012

The Kiwi Tub comes to Yorkshire

Imagine having the luxury of a hot tub, with the adventure of heating it up naturally and the beautiful view of the Yorkshire Dales... by day or starlight...

Ever since the first idea that Bivouac was becoming a reality, we have always wanted to make sure that we provide a 'rustic chic' experience, including the luxuries that come along with that, including the hot tub!

Bivouac was born in New Zealand, when Sam and Beth were on their honeymoon, staying in a sheep shearers shack. 4 years on and the idea has evolved, and is now just 4 weeks from opening, with bookings coming in thick and fast. It's really very exciting, scary and all part of a massive adventure that we are on, and that we have now joined Sam and Beth in...

The hot tub that we have chosen to use is the 'Kiwi Tub', and was road tested by some Bivouac-ers during their travels in New Zealand.

It uses tap water or clean spring water and can fit up to six people. It's very comfortable.



There is a company in Devon that has just started selling the Kiwi Tubs, which is where we got ours from, check it out for more info: www.kiwitubuk.com

Our hot tub is available for hire for any of our guests on site... just get in touch if you would like to book it!



08th March 2012

Volunteers' Week at Bivouac was amazing...

For the last 7 days we have had 60 volunteers come along and totally transform the Bivouac site battling through snow, wind and rain and a few rainbows... we can't thank them enough...

We would like to say a massive THANK YOU to all the volunteers who have been up to help us at Bivouac in the last 7 days.

Together we achieved amazing things - to name a few... a great fence up in the woodland (built in the snow and very wet rain!), erected all the bunk beds, made shoe racks, painted and decorated the shacks, painted furniture, designed and made a hot tub area, kitted out the yurts, painted a wonderful tree mural in the cafe, painted the toilet block, painted the utility and staff area, tiled the showers in the shower block, organised storage areas and created some great wood stores (and lots more).

We couldn't have done it without everyone's help! We are so grateful for the time and effort everyone gave us over the last 7 days.

We look forward to welcoming you through the doors of Bivouac next month!

14th March 2012

Our beautiful location

Win a beautiful photographic print...



Looking on to Druids temple © David Sorley

David has been around and about taking photographs of our site the old fashioned way... Film, not a memory card in sight.

We have three of David's prints to give away. To be in with a chance of winning one of the three 10" x 8" prints, you need to answer the following question:

What is the name of the man who built the Druids Temple folly?

Clue... The answer can be found by having a nosy around our website.

Please submit your answer, along with your full name to hello@thebivouac.co.uk

The three winners will be announced on Friday 23rd March. Your information will not be used for any other purposes than the competition entry. Only one submission per person.

23rd March 2012

T - 10...

So with 10 days to go until our grand opening, things are steaming along on site. In the last week, it has really been transformed, with all the finishing touches going in to place.

Fencing in the courtyard, paintings on the barns, the reception desk, the cafe counter, the kitchen and the gardens are all bringing together the finishing touches to the site.

It's amazing how far we have come, from all those many months ago when the build began last summer. The weather has been uncannily kind to us so far this year, meaning we have had very little hold ups to the schedule. Amidst this marvellous weather, it has been easy to remind ourselves the beauty of this place when the sun shines upon it.

We've all been mucking in and getting involved in all areas of the build to get it ready for our first guests in just over a weeks' time. Take a look at a glimpse of what the courtyard area between the shop and cafe currently looks like... we can't wait for you to see it for real!



30th March 2012

Our new cafe is opening on Monday! Team jobs

Come and grab a coffee in Bivouac's cafe this Monday! Opening April 2nd...

Bivouac is opening! April 2nd sees our first guests arriving for the kick start of our new business. Alongside our accommodation, comprising of 6 bespoke woodland shacks, 8 luxury yurts and a modern bunk barn which sleeps 12 - we are also opening our brand new cafe/restaurant set in a refurbished barn. We have lovingly put it all together, caring about the detail and feel of the space. The cafe has been designed with recycled, reclaimed and refurbished items.



The main cafe area looks out on to the courtyard (which is a suntrap!) and out the other side there are amazing views of the Yorkshire hills with outside seating and a fire pit for those cold evenings. Upstairs is an adults only mezzanine level with a cosy wood burning stove, perfect for snuggling up with a good book, or enjoying a coffee with friends. Downstairs is our family room, child friendly, with room to play, an ideal place for bringing your small ones to - which leads on to another outside area with yet again, stunning views!

Maybe I am biased, but I for one cannot wait to frequent our cafe, sampling some of the great food I have been tempted with on the menu!

The cafe opens at 2pm this Monday... and will be open all week. Come and check us out!

25th April 2012

Team jobs

At Bivouac we offer our guests a unique holiday experience - luxurious rustic shacks, romantic yurts or a cosy bunkbed in our camping barn - and welcome walkers and daytrippers to share our breathtaking views, tuck into our delicious cafe food and visit our converted farmhouse shop. We are recruiting dedicated, friendly people for a number positions. We would love to hear from you if you think you have what it takes to join us.

Cafe Staff

We need experienced cafe staff to join our expanding front of house team. We have part-time, full-time and bank positions available. You will need to be self-motivated, enthusiastic, always ready with a warm welcome and available to work some weekends and evenings.

Change-over Staff

Our shacks and yurts need to be changed-over for new guests every Monday and Friday between 9.15am-2.45pm. We are looking for experienced house-keepers, either available on call or for regular weekly shifts. You will be fast and efficient, proud of your high standards, passionate about hospitality and ready to go the extra mile to make Bivouac a really special experience for our guests.

For more details about either role or to apply, contact Beth Hardwick by emailing beth@thebivouac.co.uk or calling 01765 535 020.

02nd May 2012

Building Bivouac

Here is a little video showing some of the craftsmanship that went in to the build for our Woodland Shacks

<http://vimeo.com/37239957>

24th May 2012

Workshop at Bivouac

Nature, Nurture or Trauma?

- What effects do a child's early experiences have on their ability to learn and 'succeed' in life?
- Why do some children struggle and fail to even begin to tap into their potential?
- Why do some children's behaviours appear to be 'out of control'?
- How can teachers, support staff, parents, carers and others help to make a difference?

This inspiring and practical workshop, led by experts in the field of Early Trauma and Attachment will look at and answer these questions and more, which will give greater understanding, confidence and skills in working with vulnerable children and students.

There will be fresh new insights based on the latest research on brain development and trauma as well as practical strategies which can be immediately implemented to help in working and living more successfully with the most challenging children and young people.

Previous delegates have immediately been able to begin applying the learning's, seeing valuable improvements including greater understanding, more harmony and rapport between pupils and staff in schools and enhanced relationships within social environments.

This workshop will particularly benefit Teachers, SENCO's, Learning Support Mentors, Nursery School Staff, Social Workers, Youth Workers, Police, Doctors, Health Visitors, Family Solicitors and those working in charities and other agencies as well as parents and foster carers.

'Children are not slates from which the past can be rubbed by a duster or sponge, but humans profoundly affected by what has gone before.' John Bowlby (1951)



FRIDAY 22nd JUNE 2012
BIVOUAC, ILTON, MASHAM, N YORKS
9.30am – 3.30pm
COST : £60 to include lunch
For further information contact Ruth or to book
contact Bivouac 01765 535020
or Ruth Adams – 07946 612480
www.in-your-element.co.uk
ruth@in-your-element.co.uk

10th June 2012

Tom Copson Gig 23rd June

Just occasionally, amidst all the dodgy Beatles cover versions and taped backing music, you come across a busker who's so good you have to stop and listen!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zfq2Xh3yokY>

We are very lucky to be able to put on FREE gig up here at Bivouac with Cambridgeshire singer-songwriter Tom Copson. His Debut album 'Woven' was released on Monday 4th June and this summer he will be performing at Hop Farm, Cambridge Folk Festival and Secret Garden Party festivals. So book a place as space is limited or make an evening of it and book a table if you want to experience dinner at our quirky cafe as well!

The bar will be open all evening and we know it will be a fantastic night of good food, good music and brilliant company! Check out the video to hear for your self how amazing the music will be and call 01765 535 020 for more information or to book.

12th June 2012

Meet Jo Borg...



Here at Bivouac we offer massages for guests and locals alike on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The lovely lady from Leeds who provides them is called Jo and we thought it was about time we shared her with you, just so you could see how great she is and get a better idea of the massage she provides and the ethos behind her work!

Q: First things first, tell us what made you become a massage therapist.

I trained over a decade ago but it wasn't until I moved to Yorkshire that I took the opportunity to change careers. I've enjoyed the other jobs I've had but always knew I'd return to massage eventually.

There's a Chinese proverb that goes 'Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are.' It makes sense to me that when we're relaxed and replenished we are the best version of ourselves. We're more patient, more generous and better able to take advantage of the opportunities that come our way.

Rather than being somewhere to go to retreat from the world, massage can act as a touchstone to help us navigate our way back to that feeling of peace in our day to day life.

Q: What style of massage do you offer to our Bivouac guests?

I practice a massage style called Lomi Lomi. It originates in Hawaii and is characterised by long flowing strokes. It's very relaxing and also allows for deeper muscle work - it's the best of both worlds!

Q: What do you use to massage?

I use fairly traded organic coconut oil from Shea Butter Cottage. They source their ingredients directly from farmers, producers and community projects and donate to workers co-operatives to pay for health insurance and build facilities like toilets. All their products are vegan-friendly too which is an added bonus.

Q: What's the best thing about your job?

I love thinking of ways to make my clients feel treated. I heat my massage table before appointments, warm up my massage oil and wash clients feet with hot cloths.

Q: Tell us a bit about how you got involved with Bivouac.

We met on Twitter. They wanted a chef, so I offered to massage instead. I came up for a visit on a wet and windy November evening and fell in love with the place and it's people.

At that point the site was still a work in progress, and there was lots of mud. I came back again in spring for their volunteer weekend - I was tasked with painting the shack walls and furniture - so I got to see how things were taking shape before it opened. I'm so proud of how Bivouac has turned out. It's gorgeous!

Q: What's the best thing about working at Bivouac?

I love being surrounded by nature. Being able to walk out of the massage room onto the hilltop and see for miles across the valley is incredible.

Q: If any of our guests are thinking of booking a massage and would like to find out more, where should they look?

There's more details about massage at Bivouac on their website. They can also take a look at my own website, friend me on Facebook or follow me on Twitter.

I'm currently available at Bivouac on Wednesdays and Saturdays and it's best to book ahead to make sure that there are appointment times available.



Q: Over to you for the last word ...

There's a poem by Miller Williams called 'The Ways We Touch' which I hold as my manifesto.

'Have compassion for everyone you meet even if they don't want it. What seems conceit, bad manners, or cynicism is always a sign of things no ears have heard, no eyes have seen. You do not know what wars are going on down there where the spirit meets the bone.'

Heres a few helpful links if you like what you've read...

Jo's website <http://www.lomimassageleeds.com>

Her Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/lomimassageinleeds>

and Twitter <http://www.twitter.com/ilovelomi>

Shea Butter Cottage <http://www.akuawood.co.uk>

14th June 2012

Bread-making at the Bivouac!

We're really excited to introduce Susannah Vickers, a local artisanal bread-maker, to Bivouac.

Come up and indulge in one of her bread-making courses; forage for ingredients and cook on a home made camp-fire!

Gain an insight into bread-making from start to finish, using local and seasonal ingredients and cooking on an open fire!

Susannah's philosophy is based on a fun, shared experience and getting people enjoying bread-making by learning the skills in a friendly environment. Her passion for sustainable living runs alongside this, using locally-sourced ingredients to flavour the breads and eco-friendly cooking techniques.

A 3-hour session includes: making the dough, building a camp fire, kneading and shaping the dough, topping with anything from wild garlic to nettle and chive oil, then baking on a stone on the open fire.

Our introductory price for these exciting courses will be £15 per head.

We will also be selling the "Kneaded Starter Pack" in our Bivouac shop, which contains everything you will need to continue making bread in the comfort of your own home.

Visit Susannah's website for further details:
www.thekneadedexperience.co.uk

19th June 2012

Toddle Waddle

Weekly walk around the Druids woodland

...do you have pre-school aged children?
...want to meet some new people?
...fancy a weekly walk around Druids Temple?
...or perhaps to experience Bivouac's quirky new café?
...are you free on Fridays?

Sarah and Jo would love to meet you at their friendly and welcoming Toddle Waddle.
No need to book – just turn up!

10am at the Bivouac car park for the "Toddle Waddle" or 12 noon in the Bivouac café for lunch.

We go out in all weather, so bring wellies and waterproofs.

01st July 2012

And the award goes to...

We are thrilled to have won the Tourism Award at the Dalesman Rural Awards. A lot of hard work has gone into making The Bivouac, so it's great that all our efforts have been recognised.

The award was presented to Sam and Beth at Utopia, Broughton Hall by Mr Geoff Cowley, MD of Dales Holiday Cottages/Hoseasons who sponsored the award.



We are really delighted to have been awarded the Tourism Award, which recognises our commitment to creating a unique holiday experience that respects the landscape and supports the local community.

15th July 2012

Bivouacs First Music Event

Tom Copson Kick starts Bivouac Music Evenings

Well I had the opportunity to sit back, relax and enjoy the evening with our good friend Tom Copson the other week. I had the weekend off work but Sarah and I decide we would come along to what was promised as a great evening of friends, food, some amazing music and inevitably a few beers too! It was great to be able to see how this place worked from the other side as a paying customer and what an evening we had!

Tom Copson came to kick off the start of Bivouac Live Music Events and I can safely say what a pleasure it was to be in the presence of this young up and coming musician. I personally had never heard of this musical talent myself but his new album 'Woven' is now a regular in the Robinson house hold.

The bar which was being looked after brilliantly by James, Bee and Harriet was busy all night and I have to say I enjoyed sampling the local beers that were in stock. The ancient recipes for 'Crack Shot' and 'Ripon Jewel' (recipes were found in Ripley Castle and Ripon Cathedral) went down particularly well brewed by Daleside Brewery in Harrogate. There was of course the usual local beers brewed in Masham which need no introduction and went down in equal quantities just as well.

I am looking forward to the next music event with local singer and song writer Roger Davies who sings of his northern upbringing so endearingly. Going from my experience of Bivouacs first event I will most certainly be in attendance!

22nd July 2012

Roger Davies Gig

Next week we are having a Yorkshire night with a big Yorkshire buffet and the one and only Roger Davies, an entertaining contemporary folk singer/songwriter!

The gig is on Saturday 28th July at 7:30pm, priced at £20 (buffet included).

The old saying "you can take the man out of Yorkshire but you can't take Yorkshire out of the man" certainly applies to Roger Davies.

Like a modern day musical L.S. Lowry, Roger Davies writes songs that celebrate the places and people he has grown up with, having been born and raised in Brighouse. (The West Yorkshire town is renowned for its world famous Brighouse & Rastrick Band with whom Roger collaborated on his previous album *The Busker*)

Roger began to draw upon his love of Yorkshire as the inspiration for his songs while living in Brighton between 2005/2006. Here he underwent a bout of homesickness so acute he soon returned to his hometown and began composing songs such as *Brighouse on Saturday Night*, *Huddersfield Town*, *Peter Brook's Paintings*, *Bradford Girl*, *White Roses* and *Into the Sun* which have helped Roger to establish himself as one of today's most entertaining contemporary folk singer songwriters.

Many of Roger's songs are set in and around his native West Yorkshire, as he explains; "I need a backdrop, a landscape in which to place my characters and stories in order to make them believable, which of course they should be because I only use true stories and real experiences as the basis for my songs in the first place."

Come and relax with friends and family with great food and entertainment for the evening.

Please ring 01765535020 to book your tickets now!



07th August 2012

Thornborough Cider at Bivouac

"I am a cider drinker..."

The Bivouac bar is now serving Kingsley Ash's Thornborough Cider which has just taken second prize at the 2012 Three Counties International Cider and Perry Competition in Herefordshire.

The North Yorkshire sparkler beat off competition from producers named 'Best' in Herefordshire - a sweet victory over one of the country's main cider producing regions.

Made in the village of Thornborough near West Tanfield, Thornborough Cider is a dry, sparkling cider made from hand-pressed apples. It is crafted from over twenty different kinds of apple, including Ribston Pippin and other old Yorkshire varieties.

Every autumn, Kingsley and his family press apples from their own orchard along with fruit from local tree and orchard owners. They would like to thank all the local apple tree owners who contribute fruit and encourage anyone with spare apples to get involved.

We hope you will come up to the Bivouac and enjoy a refreshing, locally produced cider – lovely and cool on a summer's day!

If you have spare apples this autumn and want to join in Thornborough Cider's success and receive some prize winning cider in return or would like further information, please contact Kingsley on 07712 64 94 75 or 01677 47 01 70 or atkingsleyash@gmail.com

09th August 2012

Lizzie Sykes

Another amazing evening at Bivouac

Last Saturday the weather was beautiful, the sun was shining and I was working on the bar for the first time with the bar manager Bee (the cocktail queen)! We had set up for the evening at 7pm when people started arriving. I had put all the seating and tables filtering out of the cafe on to the veranda and court yard so guests could sit out in the sun with their refreshing drinks listening to Lizzie sing. 10 minutes later the weather turned from lush sunshine to a rain storm, we all tried grabbing everything from outside, the lights were flickering and we were left with only candle light for a few minutes.



People starting coming in fast and we had a full cafe by 7:30pm ready for Lizzie to start, the large glass doors were shut and it felt so cosy and warm inside the barn with candles lit on all the surfaces. Looking through the glass to lightning and rain we listened to Lizzie's acoustic set. As soon as she started the whole barn fell to silence, her voice was beautiful and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it.

This was Lizzie's first gig on her own without her band playing with her, singing recognised songs with a twist; my favourite was the theme tune of Prince of Bellaire! Lizzie has also written a lot of the songs she sang which were all beautiful.

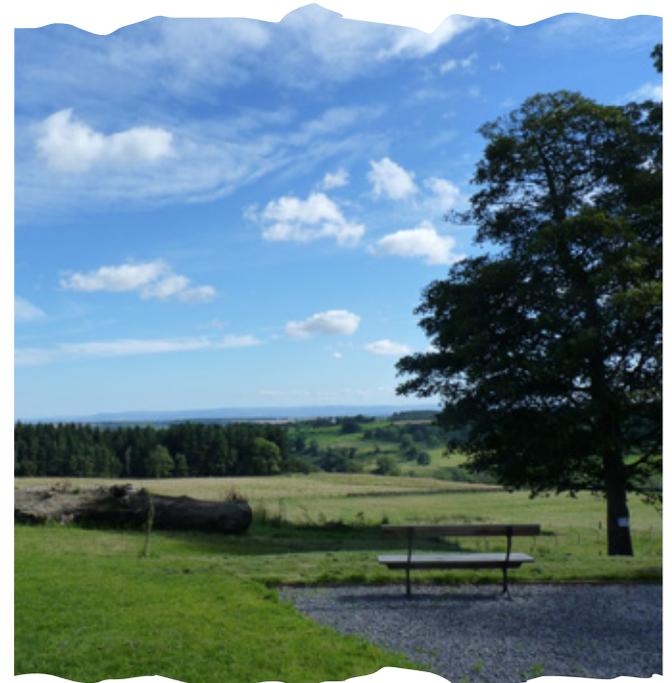
Can't wait for the next gig now! Only a week to go...

31st August 2012

The Sun is shining – the world is sweet!

Let's celebrate this gorgeous day at Bivouac – I think it should be enjoyed with Tea and Scones in our lovely cafe.

More guests are arriving today and they're in for a real treat this weekend... fire pits are ready, the hot tub is getting warmed up and our gorgeous shop is looking amazing with new features and irresistible gifts to indulge in! Come up and see us on the hill!



02nd September 2012

The big shop re-fit!

What a busy weekend it's been at Bivouac

We've had loads of guests enjoying our woodland shacks and meadow yurts, indulging in the café and they've all been really patient with us in the shop, whilst Martin has been fitting some gorgeous Oak shelving... it looks truly gorgeous and it is such a great space to work in and spend in... we hope you'll enjoy it as much as we do!



15th September 2012

Yorkshire Dry Stone Walling Guild

The Yorkshire Dry Stone Walling Guild are working really hard this morning on fixing a few walls around the Bivouac site and we're really grateful

They're helping us out in a big way doing all this work voluntarily, again showing that community and friendship are at the heart of Bivouac. Thankfully the sun is shining for them today, which is keeping them all smiling whilst they work. Hopefully the bacon sarnies at lunch time will keep them going too!



25th September 2012

Best In Show

The Bivouac team are celebrating as we have been presented with the Conservation Award 2012 from the AONB.

Receiving this recognition at a very damp Nidderdale Show was a delight for Sam and Beth who collected the award from Chair of the Friends of Nidderdale AONB, Louise McManus.

Bivouac's ethos of caring for the natural environment has meant that the barns have been restored in a thoughtful and practical way to create the rustic yet inviting setting that has been crafted up here on the hill! Our eco credentials are not just skin deep, with our Reedbed cleaning all the nasty's out that are flushed through it, our woodchip boiler heating the site, the chef sourcing local produce to serve in the café and the fair trade goods we lovingly stock and display in the shop, all work together to create Bivouac. All of these elements combined have enabled Bivouac to be presented with the Conservation Award from the AONB and we are all really proud.

<http://www.nidderdaleaonb.org.uk/nidderdale-74>



06th October 2012

Bivouac are stocking up the trophy cabinet!

Bivouac has scooped more awards! Sam and Beth Hardwick, owners of Bivouac attended the Ripon Civic Society Awards last night and received four awards throughout the evening.

They received recognition throughout the business, receiving awards for Best Restoration Project, Sustainability, Best New Building and Best Project 2012 and Winner of the Helen Whitehead Salver. The Bivouac is founded on the firmest environmental principles, with an unwavering commitment to sustainable tourism.

Bivouac at Druids Temple opened in April this year after a hard winter of building. Several teams came together to create a wonderful place for locals and holiday makers to enjoy. Six woodland shacks, sleeping up to seven, off grid yet very comfortable. Built by Rudi Meseg (www.roundwoodcraft.co.uk) with his team of craftsmen. Eight meadow yurts, sleeping up to five, with luxuries most tents don't have. The couple also converted five derelict barns with local building firm 'M&A Developments' into a bunk house, a massage room, a wonderful cafe and facilities for the guests. It is these buildings and structures that has seen them win these awards this week.



Beth Hardwick, owner of Bivouac said: "We are extremely grateful to receive these awards and recognition. We must share these with a fantastic team who worked ever so hard throughout a tough winter as well as thank Swinton Estate for taking such a risk on us. Each area of Bivouac has been carefully designed to care about community, environment, locality and future. We hope in time everyone will come to know and love this special place"

Bivouac is open all year round and now taking bookings for Christmas and new year.

Bivouac have plenty of events throughout the winter months, please see the website for details.

12th October 2012

Christmas update!

We're planning a pretty special Christmas at Bivouac.

From making beautiful Christmas crafts on 9th December to special festive events on Friday 14th, Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th December, Christmas at Bivouac will great fun!

We'll be serving delicious food and drinks, making arts and crafts with the kids, telling festive stories, face painting, warming around the fires, toasting marshmallows and roasting chestnuts – we have even got a Christmas wishing tree.

On Boxing Day, we're taking a leisurely walk around the woodland, spotting the hedgehog trail and looking for the golden money! Then back to the café for a nice warm fire and festive snacks.

To round off your Bivouac Christmas you can join us for an afternoon of board games from 2pm on 27th/28th, you can bring one of yours or play one of ours. Choose a table and enjoy the warm fire.

Please see <http://www.thebivouac.co.uk/seasonal/christmas> for more details.

13th October 2012

Our Christmas wish list

The mornings are turning crisp, the leaves are beginning to fall and we're all looking for our favourite woollies, winter is certainly on it's way! This gets us thinking about the festive season and the big question hanging over Christmas of what to get everyone!

So we thought we'd give you a helping hand with our Biv Wish List!

1. A beautiful toiletries hamper filled with Bivouac hand lotion, handwash and towel all wrapped up and filled with scented flowers and popcorn! Gorgeous. From £20.

2. A Bivouac Bread making course with the family. Courses can be booked in advance for groups, just contact reception. From £15pp

3. Essential Body Maintenance Massage – 60 minutes of pure pleasure, leaving you relaxed and rejuvenated. Massages from £45.

4. An alfresco hot tub – enjoy being lovely and warm whilst watching the world go by - well the fields and spectacular views! £60 per day.



5. The Bivouac Gift Voucher – available in £10, £25 & £50 which can be redeemed against accommodation, used in the café, towards an event or activity or spent in the shop! Always useful for the one that has everything!

6. We've even got socks – some are thermal and some hand knitted From £4.95.

We hope this gets the festive juices flowing – oh and just to let you know we will be offering a gift wrapping service too!



25th October 2012

Cakes made to order!

Do you love our homemade cakes and want to take one home with you?

Just let one of our cafe hosts know which cake you love, when you want it and our very talented chef Graham, will do the rest!

Graham is currently making these cakes to order:

- Carrot & Walnut
- Rich Chocolate and Orange Cake
- Tunisian Orange Cake
- Fruit cake
- Lemon Drizzle
- Brownies
- Blondies
- Rocky Road Cake

From £15 a cake.

So if you're having a party, marking a special occasion or you just want to indulge, make sure you remember to order your Homemade Bivouac cake.

Cakes made to order are subject to availability, minimum of 5 days notice is usually required so we can source all the yummy ingredients!

You can also order by calling 01765 53 50 20 or email: cafe@thebivouac.co.uk

20th November 2012

Forest Foraging Fun!

'The only source of knowledge is experience'
Albert Einstein

Last week I so excited that I got to go on one of our own Foraging courses and I was not disappointed! Chris Bax and his colleague Coco, from www.tastethewild.co.uk took a small group of us out for the 'last forage session of the season'. Chris told us that it was quite late in the season for foraging but we may find some small delectable delights to munch on the way round.

We headed out to the Druids Plantation (our woodland) to a spot where there had been a sighting of some ground activity and we were not disappointed! Within the first 15 minutes of our walk we had shouts and cries of 'found another, can I eat this one', 'how about this, what is it?' 'there's another under that tree'. It was brilliant what a start, but then, Oh dear, it's a Greasy Tough Shank and a Rusty Wood Rotter. Chris and Coco pointed out that the first foray we had found were inedible. Chris on the other hand was very excited and hopeful as were there is good growth there are bound to be some good eaters nearby. He also encouraged us that we should get familiar with the inedible as well as the edible mushrooms that grow in our woods.

A Short venture further into the woods and sure enough, good to Chris' word, we found a good'un, a Wood Blewit (*Lepista nuda*) and nearby a Common Puff Ball (*Lycoperdon perlatum*) and a STINKHORN (*Phallus impudicus*)! The Blewit was quite large and had a beautiful violet colouring to it but more importantly... this was the first of many to make it onto our dinner plate alongside our little Puff balls. The Stinkhorn also known as Witch's Egg (and no I am not making these names up) was edible but had passed its best by the time we had found it.

As we walk Chris and Coco just littered us with their endless knowledge of wild flowers and trees, of how generous nature can be if we are careful and take only a little and spread our harvesting too many areas so our impact is minimal. In most cases this considered behaviour can encourage more growth. This way we are living along side, almost with nature in the great cycle of life.

I could have stayed out there all day but we had to return back, though now with a basket with enough foraged food for Mushrooms on toast with a micro salad of Wood sorrel.

After a day like this I think I have to agree with Albert, after all he was seldom wrong.



21st November 2012

Lewis Todhunter Gig 16th Nov 2012

We had a full house at the weekend for our latest gig, with every table booked for dinner & people travelling from as far as Brighton to hear Lewis Todhunter & his guitar.

Lewis was our guest for the week staying in one of the woodland shacks & had spent the day relaxing & baking cakes in the wood burning oven! His two sets had the café hypnotised with his smooth guitar & laid back lyrics, my favourite was his cover of Sunday Street by Dave Van Ronk.

The atmosphere was great & the bar was busy with mulled wine & Druid's Tipple in full flow! There were many at Bivouac for the first time & even though it was a chilly evening there was always a good crowd around the fire pit in the courtyard.

In the kitchen Tim excelled as always running a few specials for the first time, pan fried Dover sole with hand cut chips, peas & tartar sauce & fresh mussels with Thornborough cider, leeks & bacon were the popular choices. Tim didn't get to take it easy after dinner though as there was a big demand for bar snacks from those who didn't manage to book a table.

Next live music event in the café is our New Years Eve party with the Ouse Brothers band & DJ set from Kingsley Ash. See you soon...

23rd November 2012

Conservation Mad?

AONB help tidy our woods

We had the pleasure of being graced with the presence of the Nidderdale AONB Conservation Volunteers (many of whom are also part of the Nidderdale AONB walling group too!) on a beautiful sunny day mid September.

We had tasked them with helping clearing some of the newly created pathways around the Druids Plantion, with some Stump grinding and Tree trimming and a bit of general tidying too and they had happily agreed to help where they could. We were told that the number of volunteers varied from activity to activity and of course the volunteer's availability.

What a surprise to us when early Tuesday morning not a small group of volunteers turn out for a hard days labour but an army! Once the debrief had been given these guys were off with no questions asked and a true spring in their step. They were all in high spirits and had great rapport with each other. After all it was a beautiful dry sunny day and looking at some of the work these guys do, I think I would be more than pleased to have turn up to work and to just be dry!

Throughout the day we kept checking in on them to make sure everyone was alright and they were happy and to deliver some well earned tea and coffee at dinner time. (I am glad I got to deliver it because I tasted the most delicious Flapjack oat cake EVER! Big thanks to Audrey) I have to say the spirit and happy attitude had not waned by the end of the day.

We are now rabbit wire fencing free with trees beautifully trimmed and clear walkways for everyone to enjoy all thanks to the wonderful AONB Conservation group. It was really a pleasure to have them here helping as we have to remember that the AONB Conservation group do this not for any monetary gain but purely out of a love for their surroundings, seeing things are right for everyone's enjoyment but more importantly for Yorkshires heritage to long continue.

Please check out the great work these guys are doing in our area and if you happen to have a spare Tuesday whether rain or shine I am sure you could lend them a hand.

<http://nidderdaleaonb.blogspot.co.uk/>



04th December 2012

Christmas is coming...

It's the 4th of December & the team have been busy in the café getting ready for all the Christmas action that is happening at Bivouac cafe

The team have been busy making decorations in true Bivouac style we are using natural resources & repurposing. Check out Brenda's snowflakes made from an old table cloth & some twigs, and Bee and Erin's vegetable nativity! All the practice should come in handy for the Christmas craft day next week on the 9th & 14th, 15th 16th December. The Christmas playlist is all ready to go on the Ipod, looking forward to Fairytale of New York & some good joyous carol singing, my kids will be sick of me singing Little Donkey by the 2nd week of December!

In the kitchen Tim & Zanna are preparing for the Christmas rush & will be running seasonal specials throughout the month, lookout for spiced apple & parsnip soup, hot turkey ciabatta's, as well as special Christmas treats mince pies, Xmas pudding & more. If you having a night out with friends and still need to book then get in touch we have tables available most weekends in December for small or large groups. At night we will light the fire in the courtyard & there will be chestnuts & marshmallow to roast & toast while you enjoy a glass of mulled wine.

Look forward to seeing you in the café soon, James



05th December 2012

Photography Competition

Do these beautiful winter days bring out the creativity in you?

Next time you are with us here at the bivouac, why not bring your camera and try and capture something special, enter our great new competition and be in with a chance to win a midweek stay in one of our amazing yurts.

Spend a frosty morning in the woodland waiting for that perfect shot, or why not involve the children and get them to hunt out natural treasures.

Discover the abundant wildlife we have here at the bivouac, or why not try your hand at making the stunning views your own?

For a chance to win a fabulous prize of a mid-week off peak Meadow Yurt break please send your entries to:

hello@thebivouac.co.uk

Just a few simple rules...

Photographs must be taken on our site here at the Bivouac (including woodlands and Druids temple)

Closing date for entries is 30th April 2013.

You happy for us to use your entry in our promotional material



18th December 2012

Our in-house artist is creating a masterpiece

The baby change/disabled toilet is having a new look for 2013.

Jon Cambuel, an incredibly talented local artist from Masham is creating a truly beautiful piece of art on the walls of the baby change/disabled toilet. He's created a design, pencilled in intricate detail his vision on the walls and he's now beginning to add touches of colour.

It really is a must see, so next time you are passing by make sure you call in for a look even if you don't require the 'facilities'. From the barn owl to the field mouse there is so much to look at and spot peering out from the walls. Watch this space to see Jon's progress of the artwork.

21st December 2012

Christmas Craft Weekend

The fires were roaring, the Crooner was crooning, and the marshmallows were toasting (good work Sam!) as good Christmassy fun was had by all at the Bivouac Christmas Craft Weekend.

Brenda's pom-pom's and Bee's pottery decorations drew crowds of young and old alike, whilst Druids Tipple on draught flowed plentifully from the courtyard.

Tim's special Christmas Event menu was enjoyed by the many visitors, the Sausage Casserole and the Vegetable Chili being particularly praised, and festive gingerbread men and mince pies kept any customers (and café staff!) smiling.

Tiny tots and some not-so-tiny members of the species listened intently as 'Dangerous' Brian Gregg spun tales of wonder and magic down in the family room. Children snuggled down into enormous bean bags and were served with the traditional Nativity story, alongside English folk yarns and tales from Africa.

Up on the mezzanine fingers became wonderfully messy with Zannah, our talented artisan bread maker, and her rustic edible treats, and the Biv was overrun by superheroes, fairies and other fantastical creatures as Erin daubed faces with paint and glitter, the proceeds of which went to Florrie's Play Park.

There was also... festive hot toddies, roast chestnuts, traditional candle making, Christmas cake, giant chelsea buns, fish and chips, and much, much more! check out the pics and reserve space in your 2013 calendar for next year's truly magical Christmas event!



27th December 2012

Boxing day walk

It was gorgeous up on the hill for our boxing day stroll.

We had a great turn out for the walk up and around Druids, good to see some familiar faces as regular café customers, Christmas shack guests & first timers up to Bivouac all got in the mix. There was no need for all the new Christmas scarfs, gloves and hats... so mild (12 degrees!).

Sam led the walk to find the hidden chocolate coins and hedgehogs, not sure who got the most coins, but competition was strong! Everybody had worked up an appetite & after the walk everybody headed for the café where the kitchen had produced some amazing pies for the occasion as well as a seasonal vegetable soup with the obligatory sprouts yum, yum!!

We are now looking forward to an afternoon of board games on Thursday & Friday in the café

See you soon



07th December 2013

New Years Eve

We wanted to create an extra special atmosphere for our first New Year at The Bivouac... It is fair to say we certainly succeeded!

The Ouse brothers welcomed everybody in and started the party off with their warm blues and happy and convivial evening began! It was a great mix of people, some regular faces and some brand new ones! People came from far and wide, New York, Edinburgh, London, Ilton

Champagne cocktails went down well and the many handmade canapés made by Tim & Zannah were fabulous (especially the chicken parfait ones!) A gorgeously mild evening and starry night meant people flowed in and out of the café between various fires outside.

Kingsley the DJ came on at about 11 and the whole place started bouncing And after Mojitos, Moscow mules, pink gins, a few tequila slammers and a flaming Sambuca or two everybody still remembered all the words to Auld Lang Syne...

All the Bivouac team enjoyed the night as much as the guests and we would like to wish you ALL a VERY wonderful, loving, peaceful New year and look forward to getting back to it in February when we reopen (6th Feb)

The Café team xx

11th February 2013

Bivouac girls get creative for the day at ArtisOn!

What a treat...

Sat 9th Feb... a date we have been looking forward to. A rare day out for us girls at Biv... Amber, Emilie and Beth left our hill for the day and headed down into Masham to the ArtisOn studio. We have been wanting to join in on some ArtisOn action for ages... And when this chance came up, we grabbed it!

Silversmithing! We signed up for a ring making course for the day, making two rings with the intention of giving these away to our loved one for valentines day! The honest truth is, we ditched that idea and made our own... Well... If you can't spoil yourself every now and then...

What a wonderful day ... From start to finish we were utterly pampered. The bright, colourful and warm space instantly puts you at ease and made us feel welcome. Gaynor and Sue hosted the space so well, offering home-made treats, refreshments and a gorgeous lunch - we honestly could not have asked for more. All day you felt able to have a snack or drink - which is so important when you have us three girls, one with a bad cold, one eight months pregnant and the other who just needs the blood sugar regularly topped up!



Our course tutor was wonderful. How she managed to get eight of us to finish two rings each I will never know! She was fun, relaxed, helpful, clear and she made our nerves wash away. It was great to have a laugh with the other ladies in our group too, from all over the country which was a nice added interest.

When Cheryl almost set her sister's hair on fire and set off Braxton hix contractions for our mum to be... We all fell about laughing... Such a relaxing day out, we didn't think about anything but what we were doing on the workshop.

Thank you ArtisOn for a wonderful experience. We are already looking at more of your gorgeous creative courses for our next girls day out!

Just a few miles from Bivouac... This place is WELL worth a visit.

11th February 2013

Biv's First Ever Quiz Night!

A great evening with friends and families filling the beautiful Cafe Barn

The Cafe was cosy with candles lit around the room, the fire roaring and the sound of laughter between friends and family. What a great atmosphere!

Our lovely Quiz Master Ian Whittaker took stage with his microphone, laptop and lovely assistant to welcome everybody to the quiz and gave out our answer booklets. The quiz was divided in to eight rounds; Numbers in the answers, food and drink, famous faces, British geography, the arts, what comes next, general knowledge and music.

Everyone got their drinks, finished eating their hearty pie, chips and peas and the quiz began.

These were the 7 teams: Sean and the sheep, The dogs dinner, Femdom, Adults, The glamour moon pigs, Ilton cum potters and The Kids!

We came second!!! ... Second from last place. I must admit, I only knew one answer to the whole quiz but thankfully everyone else on my team did a lot better than me!!!

Well done to Sean and the sheep's team! You beat everybody with a whopping score of 113 out of 160!!!

I hope to see everyone again on the next quiz night, Elise my lovely colleague will be taking stage on the 22nd Feb- Don't miss out!!



11th March 2013

Story corner

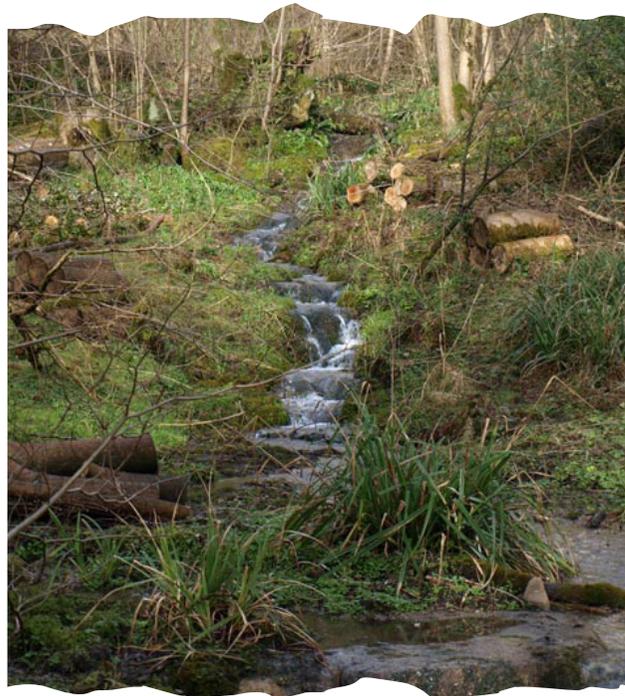
This week Storycorner was all about seeds. We are embracing spring time and celebrating this time of growth and expectation.

We had two great stories. One story followed the journey of a tiny seed which despite the odds grew into a magnificent giant flower. The other story was about a magic seed that turned into a tree of wonders.

Then we made some bird feeders made of seeds and hung them up on a Bivouac tree.

Come explore the trees around the Bivouac cafe for some good bird watching – try to spot them munching on their tasty treats!

Sannah x



30th March 2013

A day Woodland Printmaking at Hackfall!

We went for a great day out at Hackfall on a Woodland Printmaking Course

Bee and Sanna went on a wonderful woodland printmaking course. We are both involved in craft activities with children at The Bivouac and this course was truly inspiring.

We went on a snowy walk around Hackfall, learning from Woodland Trust's Paul Mosley about how to enhance children's experience of nature. One particularly interesting thing we

learnt from Paul is how to make a Journey Stick: take a stick along with you on your walk and attach treasures you find from your walk to the stick (using rubber bands or wool). This is to remind you of the trees and sights you have past and to map your journey.

We also learnt a variety of print making techniques from Hester Cox: monoprinting; plasticine printing; foam printing; sun printing; relief collagraph. We especially enjoyed making old-style photographs on the beach by using sun paper, sunshine and river water.

Bee and I are now buzzing with creative ideas and ready to share all this lovely outdoorsy artiness with children in the Bivouac Cafe, the druids woods and in storytelling sessions on Thursdays.

Read more about what you can do at Hackfall on their website with loads of up and coming events there is sure to be something for you! <http://www.hackfall.org.uk/>

06th May 2013

Jane Corbett Makes Bivouacs Spring Time Wishes Come True

Bivouacs first woodland ceremony and the flowery loveliness that helped make Chrisi and Tim's wedding day one not to forget...

This weekend Bivouac had its first wedding of the year and it was glorious, truly perfect! The sun was shining, love was in the air and there were flowers everywhere. The lovely Emma Willoughby did an amazing job arranging flowers and greenery provided by Jane Corbett.



Jane Corbett, a local florist and friend of Bivouac, provided us with an amazing selection of flowers that caused the ceremony to overflow with colour and spring time beauty. Following the winter and the snow having only just left it was quite a surprise as to what she was able to produce. Jane has been working in horticulture for over fifteen years and takes her inspiration from working alongside the seasons and in harmony with nature. Two years ago she opened her own natural flowers company called 'Blooming Yorkshire' to reconnect people with nature, have a look at a little more of what she can do on www.bloomingyorkshire.co.uk. Jane grows all of her flowers with an abundance of love and care.

Working with Jane was effortless as she really understands what Bivouac is all about and her beautiful floral decoration went in perfect partnership the gorgeous bride and groom Chrisi and Tim!

Jane's growing season starts at the beginning of May and finishes when the first frosts arrive, usually around mid-October. As the flowers are all grown naturally it will depend upon the season as to what is available. May the sun continue to shine on you Jane and we look forward to our next bundle of flowery loveliness.



08th May 2013

Bivouac Loves... Curious Handmade...

Bivouac loves all of the lovely guests that walk through our doors... each one bringing something a little bit different and special to share with us.

There are many things that we love here at Bivouac, one being all of our wonderfully colourful guests that walk through the doors. It is amazing the amount of talent you can cram onto one hill... but there is always room for more.

Recently we had a lovely guest called Helen Stewart and her family stay with us, you can read all about her Bivouac experience in her blog...

<http://www.curioushandmade.com/glamping-at-the-bivouac/>

Helen is a London based designer who has a love of creating gorgeous knitwear pieces that are inspired by England and the culture within it. She believes the most important thing when creating your own piece of knit wear is to make something you are proud to wear or give to someone as a gift.

Helen is an example of just one of the guests that wowed us with her talents and we look forward to seeing her and her lovely family again sometime in the future.



15th May 2013

And the Winner is...

The winner of the photography competition is announced!

Last year we challenged you to get out your camera and spend some time at Bivouac to see about capturing that amazing Winter shot.

Many thanks to all those who entered, we had some great shots of Bivouac, showing us what a creative bunch you are!



The top six images can be seen on our gallery page on our website, but an overall winner had to be chosen so Beth and Sam. They set about choosing the image they felt summed up Bivouac this Winter. So many congratulations to Adam Berry for his 'Standing Stones'. The prize for coming first is an Off Peak Midweek Stay in one of our lovely Yurts .

The other top 5 images were taken by Tristran Chantler, Hilary Clayton, Jo Napthine, Anna Etchells and Brian McDermott.

16th May 2013

Foraging with Taste the Wild

Wednesday morning up on the hill & it felt more like February than middle May & springtime, however with Chris Bax guiding our foraging course we found around 6 salad ingredients in a 2m square patch of grass verge for our lunch!

Chris Bax is a chef turned forager & runs courses most weekends from his own private woodland near Boroughbridge. Chris's approach is to only eat the things that taste good & not the foods that merely sustain you! One of the first things we tried was possibly the most surprising of the day, spear thistle has a texture much

like asparagus once you have removed the needles & peeled the skin a little. From the same patch of grass we harvested ribwort plantain which tastes much like mushroom, pineapple weed which can be used for infusing into desserts like ice cream, chickweed which was growing in abundance & nettles. All this & we had hardly left the car park...

Up at the woods we learned about using pine needles for infusing syrups, chocolate & alcohol, & tried a few larch needles straight from the tree. As with many of the things we picked pine needles are packed with vitamins, super foods for free! Further into the woods we found

wood sorrel, sheep sorrel & cleavers – the sticky weed that children have endless fun throwing at each other & hog weed. With a bag full of leaves & roots it was time to head back to the café for our foraged lunch. Our 3 course lunch for free was:

- Nettle & cleaver soup
- Chickweed bhajis
- Spear thistle & hogweed tortilla with wild herb salad

Everything went down well & all the guests on the course cleared their plates, the freshness of the salad a particular highlight. Hopefully later in the year Chris & his Taste the Wild team will be back at Bivouac to do a mushroom walk or maybe a wild berry walk one late summer evening.

19th May 2013

Bivouac jobs

At Bivouac we offer our guests a unique holiday experience - luxurious rustic shacks, romantic yurts or a cosy bunk bed in our camping barn. We always welcome walkers and day trippers to share our breathtaking views, tuck into our delicious cafe food and visit our converted farmhouse shop. At the heart of Bivouac is our team, making it a place that people want to visit again and again. We are currently recruiting for a couple of vacancies, please see below for more info!

Passionate about food?

The gorgeous Bivouac cafe is looking for a jolly good cook or two to join our lovely team. With

a new menu about to launch, a fresh wave of Biv charm and enthusiasm, could this be the right place for your creativity to be released?

Call Zannah or email her for more details.

Email: susannah@thebivouac.co.uk

Tel: 01765 53 50 33

Fancy joining our bank team?

We are also recruiting dedicated, friendly people for our Change Over Team (bank positions available). We would love to hear from you if you think you have what it takes to join us!

We are looking for staff to join our House & Change Over

team which is responsible for the refreshment and preparation of our accommodation and site for the arrival of new guests.

We have a number of bank positions available. You will need to be hard working, enthusiastic, able to work in a team and be available to work primarily on Mondays and Fridays.

Experience is desirable, but not essential as full training will be given.

Please contact heather@thebivouac.co.uk or call 01765 535020 to apply.

Thank you!

30th May 2013

Bivouac does Purple Ivy

Here at Bivouac we are approached constantly by people wanting to share their creativity with us and we love to see what is next to be brought through our doors.

Recently we have been showcasing the talents of a husband and wife duo, Richard Cowling and Catherine Cowling. Catherine with her impressive felting art work and Richard with his pallet based rocking chairs. Richard is one of our regular Bivouac team and everything about their work expresses what Bivouac is all about. Each of them have raised a huge amount of interest around the work they have produced and Bivouac are very excited to see what is on the cards next for this gifted couple.

A little bit from Richard

So many everyday items are discarded and thrown away without a second thought. My passion is to breathe new life in to tired and worn out objects that are destined for land fill. From a washing machine drum to a car suspension spring, from a small baked bean tin to a set of old step ladders, they all play a key role in my philosophy and creations.

My designs are as varied as the materials I use. As a qualified engineer I delight in inventing and constructing objects of both aesthetic and practical worth. With the artistic input from my wife, together we develop a range of



sculptures beyond description! My recent enthusiasm has revolved around the adaptability of the humble wooden pallet. Often found broken and neglected they are unquestionably one of the most versatile items I have worked with. The finished objects that have evolved seem to have sparked great interest and fascination. The Rocking Chair Family (each chair is made from a single pallet) has generated a lot of interest and plenty of smiles. Although the chairs are designed for true comfort they slightly play with your mind!

Enjoy!!

All commissions welcome. The Bendy Roof Squirrel is always open for a chat and for a chance to throw some ideas around. Please feel free to contact me at: purple_ivy@outlook.com

A little bit from Catherine

I am a predominantly self-taught artist, and I love to get involved with a whole variety of arts and crafts. I have an absolute passion for colour which naturally emanates from all my creations. My inspiration quite simply comes from all that is natural. The splendour and beauty, the humorous and eccentric, the surreal and bizarre, the elegance and sophistication, are all gifts of our surroundings and of our interpretation of what can be seen around us. What more inspiration can anyone ask for?

I am renowned for my large painted canvases on which I use acrylic paints and other mixed media. I love to experiment with texture and light to enhance an image or pattern and to work with a client to incorporate as much or as little detail as required. I particularly enjoy creating a piece of art work for a specific room or space. The challenge of incorporating all the surrounding elements into the final brief is fascinating and exciting and the end result is often a harmonious blend of light, reflection, mood and colour as well as the desired image or design.



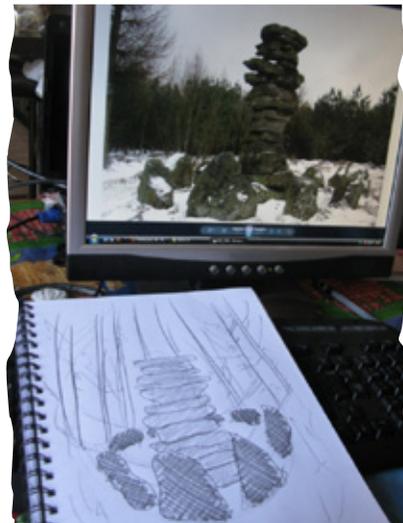
Within the Purple Ivy Studio I embark on all sorts of artistic endeavours. I have recently finished a sizeable lino print project, for which I resurrected an old mangle as a printing press. Depending on what commissions I have and what spare time I am blessed with I can be found painting anything from glass and silk, making batik fabric, wet and needle felting, making all types of mosaic pieces, sculptures and taking umpteen photographs. I simply love to try out all sorts of techniques and methods, either conventional or off the wall. Combining traditional skills with my own unique methods is often a winning permutation.

My mind works like a firework display on bonfire night, full of colourful ideas, exploding in what can be perceived as an uncontrolled and random manner. After the thoughts have fired up and danced around for a while they then

simmer down and smoulder in my subconscious whilst I choose how I am going to convert the dissipated light display into a solid design. I soon become enveloped by the magic of the Purple Ivy Studio, a wooden workshop nestled at the bottom of the garden, embraced by plants, ornaments and natural curios. The enchanting space allows me to create, think and construct whatever is being worked upon.

I work closely with my husband Rich, a skilled and enthusiastic craftsman whose passion, amongst many things, is making dynamic and innovative furniture from the humble wooden pallet. We live with our 2 dogs, 5 cats, 9 modern game chickens and 2 runner ducks.

A website is on the horizon but, in the meantime; if you would like to contact me please drop me a line through my email account: purple_ivy@outlook.com.



05th June 2013

Summer Solstice 2013

Come and experience the summer solstice at Bivouac's very own 'Stone Henge'.

The summer solstice on the 21st June and is the longest day, when the sun is at the highest point of its yearly cycle. This was a time of tremendous importance to our Neolithic ancestors, who built Stone Henge and other monuments to align with both the summer solstice sunrise, and the winter solstice sunset, as primary markers in the solar year. Later throughout Britain, the summer solstice was celebrated with huge bonfires and community celebrations. This year Bivouac is holding its own summer solstice celebration in the Druid's woodlands, Druids Dance.

Druids Dance will be a chance for everyone to gather together in our own celebration, accompanied by music, food and friends. To hear more about Druids Dance follow this link http://www.thebivouac.co.uk/experiences/outdoor_activities/druids_dance.

The summer solstice is one of three great spirit nights of the year; a time spent connecting and there's no better way to connect than through music. Let us all stay up late in this enchanting location to see the twilight; enjoy music, or seek a special place within the woodlands temple which is especially 'alive' or magical, and sit in vigil as the night gathers, after a long day of laughter and feasting. Join in with the fun of Druids Dance and show thanks for the blessings of the summer just gone.

Come and experience the summer solstice with us... Druids Dance, 21st June 2013.

15th June 2013

A 50th Birthday Celebration!

A lovely email from Kate Lindsay who enjoyed a 50th Birthday Celebration at Bivouac.

"Just a quick note to say a really BIG thank you to the team for Sunday. It was lovely. It went really well - just as I hoped. Everyone was bowled over by the whole afternoon - the walk, the weather, the location and of course The Bivouac Cafe. The team that looked after us were great - the food was fab and we all fitted into the cafe perfectly. The cake was brilliant - what a great idea! We had a chat with the lady who made it and she explained that the cake stand had been made by her husband for the occasion - I felt quite humbled - I hope it gets good use in the future - it certainly goes really well with the cafe 'brand'. The idea of the 'big pot' of lamb worked really well too, it provided the relaxed atmosphere that I hoped for.

Without exception, I have had texts and emails from all my friends to say what a lovely afternoon it had been, how much they enjoyed it and that they will definitely be back to The Bivouac either to stay or for a meal. The most common question I had was "how did you find this place?!", the next most common comment was "I didn't realise the countryside was so beautiful up here". I think I may have secured you a few future clients!

Please pass on my thanks to everyone. What a great way to end one half-century and start the next!

Best regards,
Kate"

22nd July 2013

Summer holidays...

The summer holidays at Bivouac cafe are set to be busy, fun and full of sun!

On the 4th August at Bivouac birthday we have a chance to celebrate our first chapter with our community. We will be saying a big thank you to Beth and Sam, the founders of Bivouac and a welcome to Heather and Graham, our second chapter and everything that may bring. Festivities start at 6pm, with music from Pip Mountjoy, a bbq, outdoor bar & more so please join us for a great occasion for all the family!

From the 5th August we will be launching our new, longer opening hours. We will be open...
Monday - Saturday 8am-8.30pm
Sunday- 8am-5.30pm
all through the summer holidays untill 2nd September.

Our popular quiz nights will be moving to Wednesday evenings every other week from the 7th and will be combined with our community meal from 5.30pm (quiz to start from 7.30pm).

Keep an eye on future blogs and on our social media pages for more information on our events around the Bivouac site!

Please call 01765 535033 for enquiries and bookings and we look forward to seeing you soon!



Sunday 4TH August 2013
Celebrations start from 6pm

24th July 2013

Saying goodbye and saying hello.....

Five years ago Sam and I had a vision for life together. That vision grew and was birthed in April 2012 in the North Yorkshire hills. Bivouac @ Druids Temple was and still is something created and developed by many people. It has been a huge success winning many awards and interest and we are very proud of what everyone has achieved here. From a run-down farm on the side of a hill, we have grown a place worth visiting.

Using sustainable principles and quirky design, we have pulled together what a community of Bivouackers could offer.

The time has come where we are ready to take on the next challenge that life offers us... and come 1st August Bivouac will be run and managed by Heather and Graham, who as we speak are rolling up their sleeves and getting stuck in. We wish them so much success as they bed into this hill...

For us, we begin the next adventure. It could be taking us anywhere... We are mulling, looking at the possibilities and building ideas. So watch this space.

We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have birthed something like this with such gifted and generous people. Right at the beginning Dave and Claire Sorely... Steve and Heather Hardwick... Hazel and Ray Gaydon...



Andy Robinson, stood by us and gave us the beans to make this happen... We are incredibly grateful for this, thank you.

So, over to Heather and Graham - enjoy the summer and brace yourself for winter, we wish you all the best as you grow this vision forward.

Take care everyone and thank you so very much x

Follow this link to have a look at how it all began, <http://vimeo.com/71169365>



WHY ROUND IS NO LONGER SQUARE

THE Bivouac shacks were inspired by the traditional timber framing revival happening across the country and designed using the round wood timber framing technique. The term round wood is a reference to the wood used for the frames being left "in the round" which not only cuts out the wasteful industrial process

of squaring the timbers but also means frames can come from coppicing a tree that will continually regrow.

Sam Hardwick says: "We feel using round wood timber framing provides our guests with an antidote to the harsh angular structures we're surrounded by in every day life."

■ Bivouac, Swinton, tel 01763 153024, www.bivouac.co.uk

built by Sam's grandpa, who helped make them because in a hundred years it was used as a fire. The buildings are made from recycled wood from the forest, plus a ground floor sleeping compartment and three raised bunks accessed by a ladder.

"The idea is that it feels like you are camping, so beds can pop out of the bunks and talk to each other," says Sam.

"You have to work a bit harder because you have to light fires and you have to wrap up yourself but it's all part of the fun."

A touch of luxury comes from the wood-fired outdoor hot tubs and for those who don't camp, we offer a comfortable bed, there is a hot tub on the premises and the