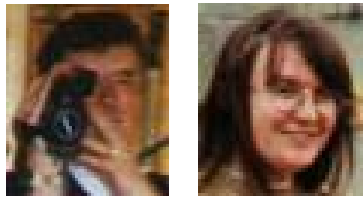


# The story of the house we built.







In February we 'broke ground' on the plot when we needed to take soil samples to send to a laboratory.



We wanted to take soil samples from 2.8m down so Roger ("Phew!"), our builder, climbed down the ladder into the hole and worked up a sweat hammering sample tubes into the heavy clay.



We filled the hole back in so no one would fall in!

Then, on March 10<sup>th</sup> we started building.



It was a dull day and all very strange to see lorries on the plot. The digger seemed HUGE!



It all looked under control, they used the digger to pull back the topsoil.



The first thing to be done was to build the drains.



Then the cellar was dug



The bits started appearing. The spoil from the drains and the cellar was heaped up in the back garden.



It made quite a mountain! Jax and I were both very impressed by the thought that the dump trucks had been driving up it!



Jax was quite anxious to rescue some of the plants before the spoil heap was levelled out and we planted some fruit trees.





When we came the following week, the cellar had a concrete base, the kitchen and dining room had foundations and the spoil heap had been levelled out.



We got bricks, the brickies got a toilet. There was a lot more stuff there and Dominic, the chippy, had been building walls.



We all went and had a good look at our new moonscape.



The next time we saw the plot, the brick layers were busy bringing the foundations up to damp proof course level. The cellar walls were being built. Two layers of breezeblocks with reinforcing steel in between. The gap is then filled with concrete.



The moonscape had acquired a layer of topsoil. There are a couple of loads left over to go around the house later. Although Andy was busy decorating, Amanda and Thomas came to see how things were coming along.



Rebecca did some inspecting too. By the following week, the cellar walls and the fire place foundations were being filled.



A week later, the cellar had a ceiling and the whole area of the house had a block and beam floor. Each room was marked out with a single layer of bricks. The wooden walls sit on top of the bricks and the floor brought up to the level of the bricks when the under floor heating is laid in the concrete screed.



The cellar looked beautifully large, the windows open wide for cleaning or tilt for ventilation.



The girls were more interested in playing in the dirt.



Walls were stacked everywhere.



Our new shed arrived, ready for the 'sit upon mower'. Good wide doors and a concrete base.



The first floor walls went up and were waiting for us by the next weekend and the garage had a concrete base.



It's really beginning to look like a house.



Jax likes the look of her new kitchen.



The gap around the basement is now full of sand forming a French drain. A land drain pipe at the bottom takes the water off to the sump at the back of the house where it's pumped up to ground level where it joins the normal drains. Good job too, the next time we saw it it was raining.



The garage is rising and the first windows go in.



The swimming pool was begun on Thursday and had got to this by the weekend! We could get a much better feel for where rooms were going to be. Jax wanted there to be a floor upstairs so she could have a closer look.



The rain we've had this weekend is the first we've had for 54 days, immediately after we dig the hole for the swimming pool!



A crane lifted the rafters up to the roof in very strong winds, the workmen nearly decided to stop because it was too dangerous.



We arrived to see the scaffolding going up.



The roofers and brickies will use the scaffold.



The swimming pool began to look like a pool. The bricks started to climb the outside of the house.



It wasn't long before the rafters acquired felt and batons around the attic's Velux windows.



The swimming pool progresses steadily, the underwater light appears and rainwater provides for a paddle.



Tiles appear on the roof and the escaping cows are found next door.



The walls and the kitchen chimney breast start to rise. They'll have a nice view at the top.



The main body of the house got its roof but the garage still needs finishing.



The stairs for the staff quarters arrive and decking is laid in the attic to make sure no-one lays cables or pipes into the loft because they don't expect there to be a floor. The view from the basement straight up through the loft hatch is a longggg way!



The floor joists have pre-stamped holes which simply have to be knocked through so wiring or pipes can pass through.



The swimming pool gets a room.



The temptation to have an explore upstairs was too much



The verdict from upstairs was 'Good!'



The view from the garage is still a building site!



Dominic the chippy puts up a bit more of the roof over the plant room, the pool room looks good.



Dominic gives the house some perspective.



The view from the dining room is improving slowly.



We sprout security and mains cabling.



Jax keeps an eye on the brickies.



A week later the progress is steady.

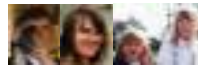


OK the garden's nothing much, but the view *is* improving.



We decided to take a break from the house and work, so we took advantage of the bank holiday and went camping. The kids had a wild time.





By the next week there was no access for deliveries of sand and cement to the back so the front got a lot messier. Not that the back got tidier!



Heat exchanging ventilation



Sprinkler system pipe

Security cabling

Mains electric

Data lines for 'phones, hifi, computers etc ...



There was so much TV cabling it had to go outside!



Lights

Hot & cold water supply

Under floor heating pipes



The bricks crept up to the top



A sensor in each room controls the temperature via the motorised valves in the manifolds dotted around the house.

The underfloor heating has aluminium sheets that help spread the heat more evenly.



We were longing to walk around upstairs



The nanny flat was taking shape



At last a floor! The cabling began to find a home too.



Jax was desperate to get up into the loft, but she was too short and had to make do with poking her head and shoulders in through the hatch... a picture of frustration.



I could imagine some good uses for a loft this big.



Jax had to stand and watch.



The bricks were getting to the top



and we had a lot of insulation to go in.



The bricks were going slowly



but progress was being made.



The mixer went constantly



and the work went on.



The dry lining went in in just a few days



There were rooms upstairs



So alf wanted to see them!



There wasn't much to see though!



Wind had had it's wicked way with some polystyreen.



Jax and Bekta enjoyed the birdsong.



Someone put the air vents in a dum place!



The chimmies would both need cutting through



The gutter was in for a shock



The lounge!



We were growing a fireplace and the fireproof flew ceramics were ready to go in.





The dining room bay window was taking shape



The brick work was coming on too.



The cows were oblivious to the state of the nanny flat! Coming on lovely!



The kids were evaluating the garden's potential



So were the cows.



Rebecca and Alison were enjoying the space and the mess, better than London!





The chimney was sorted out



The stairs arrived.



Yet another new place to race round!



The stairs went down as well.



Jax takes her first paddle in the pool!



Walls were growing around the pool.



In just a week the roof had been set and tiled, and the windows were in so the brick layers could work up to them





The swimming pool has a cathedral roof



The scaffold is coming to the top



The cellar is lined with mastic



Some of the scaffold comes down



Its looking good



The sump at the rear needs pumping out



Someone has to hold the pipes in place



While the water flows down the garden



There's still plastic in the windows



The pool gets its dry lining



More pumping with the pipes wedged



The bay is beginning to look good.



Doors are arriving



The laundry chute



The Nanny stairs are still a chasm



The pipework is still ...



The Nanny flat is coming on



Rebecca is pacing in the study



The front door has a canopy but no step



Steady progress



The rain drains at the rear



The rain drains at the front



Ooo look, no scaffold!



The klargester arives



No scaffold in the pool.



The pit for the pool cover is dug



Still a building site



The weeds at the back are in for it.



Rab and Alf take care of the other plant



Rab is spooky in the cellar



Polystyrene and wire mesh go down for the underfloor heating and the first downlighter is fitted





Bathroom equipment arrives



We get the front drive back again



The klargester is bedded in



The garage door and opener is fitted



The Nanny apartment stairs arrive



Skirting boards and the loft ladder are ready



The hall is screeded



The master bedroom window is all in



We get the front door step



The pool cover pit progresses



Some of the big builder's heaps go



The back begins to look better



The pool gets its lining undercoat skim



The heating pipes are buried in screed held back by the board



The cellar gets its dry lining, screed and wet coat of plaster on the walls



The dining room, lights hanging down.



Jax does battle with flat pack units in the laundry.



Rab, Marilyn, Rachel and a bar-b-q



Amazon Alf sniffing around



The Chinese slate arrives in crates



We camp in the study to get the bathrooms going, the downstairs loo is fitted.



Denis, the foreman.



The pool is screeded



The kitchen begins to go in



Hot water tank and plumbing



We get doors, door frames and skirting boards



Its Rab's birthday.



The kitchen gets an island, we're going to put a tiled top on it.



The place starts to look like a home



A lick of paint, carpet and furniture in the lounge.



We're still laying the slate though.



The computers hard at work in the undecorated study



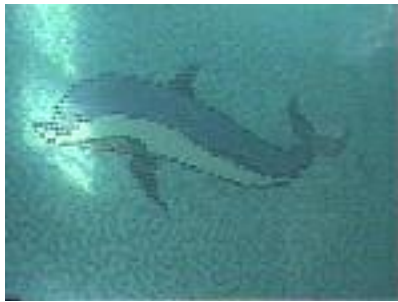
Wood stain on the door frames, most of the bathrooms work now.



Carpet tiles and tele' in the play room but still bare plasterboard.



We're still laying the slate in the pool room. The pool cover is on.



A dolphin in the pool.



Rabbecca is wondering what Daddy is doing.



Alf is ready to go to school, bye bye!



Amanda, the nanny, puts the kids in the car for the trip to school.



Rabecca chose the colours, her Mum did the stripes and flower stencils, her Dad did the yellow bit.



The landing with woodstain and paint



Marble on the floor and some tiles on the walls



Slate on the hall floor is still being grouted



Our oil tank needs regular filling!



A chiller unit to cool the air on hot days.



The swimming pool plant room.



Amanda has settled into the nanny flat



Today we have daffodils in the garden and a pea gravel driveway. Frank, the gardener, is planting to obscure the Klargester and working on a lawn at the back of the house. Its spring again and he'll be planting blue bells in the wood at the bottom of the garden for next year. The sheep and lambs are yelling in the field at the back and the sound of birdsong is all about.