

Our £1m boat house



OLD ADDRESS: Balmory Hall on Bute, run as a five-star B&B

Or how we left our old home and shipped in a new one...



EIGHT-DAY WONDER: Beryl and Tony Harrison and their new German flat-pack home

IT'S a house that cost £1 million... and it arrived by boat. For Beryl and Tony Harrison's dream home is the first ultra-luxury kit house to be built on a Scottish island.

After a 1,000-mile journey from Germany, including a crossing on a CalMac ferry, the 'flat-pack' house was erected on the Isle of Bute in only eight days.

The couple's retirement home was built so quickly that the local postman, who had merely been away for a week's holiday, could hardly believe an extra address had been added to his round.

Last night, the delighted homeowners, who lived formerly in a 19th Century country mansion, praised the efficiency of the kit house company in building their new home so rapidly.

The kit house was constructed by the German company Huf and began life in a factory in Hartenfels in Germany before travelling about 1,000 miles to Bute.

The final leg of the journey could only be completed with the assistance of CalMac, whose ferry The Argyle brought the first-ever Huf Haus to a Scottish island.

The Huf Haus won many admirers in the UK when it featured in the Channel 4 series Grand Designs, when an elderly couple in Surrey had one of the 'instant homes' built in 2006.

The cameras saw workers arrive in a sparkling vehicle to do a precision job. If the tiles in the kitchen did not line up perfectly, the Frankfurt foreman ordered them to be ripped out and replaced.

Captivated by the programme, the Harrisons vowed that when they gave up work they would take a dramatic leap of faith. When their new home was wind and watertight in eight days, they felt it was justified.

It was achieved by an army of tradesmen who descended for a few days from Germany, Poland, Russia and Turkey, and has created a lot of local interest.

'I think the Huf Haus is something of a novelty here,' said Mrs Harrison, 68, a retired teacher. 'We have had people come up our drive in their cars to have

By **Paul Drury**

a look. At night, it looks even more dramatic. Some people say it looks like a spaceship.'

Yet it is only a stone's throw from their previous home, Balmory Hall, an Italianate mansion dating from around 1860 where for 12 years they ran a five-star B&B.

After selling the house, they kept five acres of its grounds to build their new property. The local council refused planning permission but the Harrisons won on appeal to the Scottish Government.

Inside the new house there are few distinct rooms. The kitchen gives way to the dining area, which in turn sits comfortably with the living area and gives stunning views to the Firth of Clyde through enormous windows.

A battery of 51 solar panels on the giant sloping roof can capture enough energy, even on a dull, Scottish day, to

'You either love it or you hate it'

provide more electricity than the energy-efficient house can use.

In the basement engine room, Mr Harrison, 69, proudly shows off the equipment that stores electricity and then sells the excess to the national grid.

The former senior manager with ICI said: 'It is the first time in our married lives we have had an ultra-modern property. Every one we have had has been very old.'

'We had a 400-year-old barn and cottage. You get to the stage where you say "been there, done that". We now have somewhere we really enjoy living in.'

'When Balmory was built 150 years ago, it made a big statement. It was a house that was right for its time.'

'Well this, in a way, is also a house for its time. You either love it or you hate it.'

SAS 'secrecy order' lifted

AN SAS soldier accused of sexual offences against children can be named today after The Mail on Sunday overturned a draconian order preventing the public finding out about his alleged crimes.

Corporal Ian Tuckley faces 31 charges, including raping and indecently assaulting girls as young as six. The soldier, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, is in custody and awaiting trial.

He could not be publicly identified until now because of a rare 'secrecy order' imposed by a judge at the request of Government lawyers.

Neither the Crown Prosecution Service nor Tuckley's own defence team had sought the order. It was applied for by an unnamed 'interested

By **Martin Delgado**

party', understood to be the Ministry of Defence.

Bizarrely, a second defendant in the case was not granted anonymity.

Tuckley, 31, from Walsall, West Midlands, allegedly carried out the assaults between 1997 and 2010.

He and another man, Martin Finney, were arrested last October.

Finney, 40, a former paramedic with St John Ambulance, is charged with 24 sex offences, including the rape of a schoolgirl.

The pair, who deny the offences, are due to stand trial next month.

An MoD spokesman said: 'We do not comment on Special Forces.'

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