

FFWPU UK: Cleeve House - Taking Care Of The Roof Over Our Head

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Cleeve House

It's now been more than half a year since the new management of Cleeve House settled in, so let's take a look at the restorations taking place. Simon C. gives us an update on the roof and improvements that have taken place.

"I don't like work - no man does - but I like what is in the work - the chance to find yourself. Your own reality - for yourself not for others - what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means."

Joseph Conrad: Heart of Darkness



Over the last 6 months we have made a lot of progress inside the house. But even more important is the outer fabric. Yes! You are reading about a roof, you may find some of the information useful one day.

All of us want a roof over our head, and we just assume it will be there because we need one, even though we don't take much interest in them, or understand how they work or the technical terms to describe how they are put together. Cleeve House has 16 roofs.

Living on site I am learning that the most important things in life, like trust, are often taken for granted, until they start leaking. It is often only when we determine to solve one problem do we discover even more challenging ones hiding in plain sight:

We started with Room 9 - it is a bedroom with an ensuite bathroom that had been out of action for a good couple of years. It had become a storeroom for junk. And for an extended period of time two buckets collected the rainwater from the bust box gutter on the roof above it (pictured right).

A well recommended local roofer, Chris K., came in with his team to fix the box gutter, and soon it was all done, we could then proceed to remove the junk from room 9 and fix up the ceiling and this is what it

looks like now thanks to Vadim Z.'s attention to detail. It once slept two, for a while none, and now can sleep three as can be seen below.

However, while we were up on the roof doing the initial works we had to cross over the flat roof above the ceiling of the main stairwell, and we noticed an issue. The wood under the rubber was all soft and rotting away. (pictured right)



We checked and the previous job on that roof had been done just 4 short years ago. Chris K. had also quoted in 2019 but missed out on the job, however he happened to have kept on file the quote from the company who had done the job, as he had been shown their quote by us.

One of the main issues was no ventilation which meant all the moisture inside the building was getting trapped in the wooden structure of the roof. Last week, after a particularly wet summer, we managed to finally strip out the previous work and properly replace the flat roof - not a moment too soon. The furring boards were rotten and the

structural joists holding the roof up were not in good shape. There was no insulation either between the rafters or the furring boards and there was mould. Because of that, a lot of wildlife got stuck into the rotten timbers.

The roofers soaked the wood we could keep, with chemicals to prevent any further wood worm, and then got on with restoring the flat roof without damaging any of the new plaster and paint on the ceiling on the other side, firstly putting in the new timber and insulating.



I spent time documenting the work they did, the different materials such as the Restrix rubber that they put down to replace the cheap poor-quality rubber used four years ago. There is a joy in watching people who take pride in their trade doing a good job and listening to them explain how and why they go about each task in a particular way.

For example, the Restrex course the main roofer and his assistant went on, cost them £600 each and two other people sent by their boss from a roofers in London were not given a pass at the end of the course and were told the firm would not be getting the required paperwork to use their product. That's certainly one sure way to create higher standards in a trade, while building trust in your brand.

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Redecorated ceiling of the roof above the main stairwell and the moment the soft wood was discovered

