

Simon interviewing Sam at Moulin de Buisson, Merleac

Simon: OK so I'm talking with Sam at Yoga at ...

Sam: Moulin de Buisson

Simon: Moulin de Buisson which is in Merleac and you've been here how long?

Sam: Since December last year.

Simon: Since December. So, tell me, tell us, why here and what brought you here?

Sam: Well, we both had, me and my partner both had busy lives. I'd just moved down from Manchester to Devon and we fancied somewhere out in the countryside in our own little bubble where we could create a business and help us sustain a life style that we wanted that we couldn't achieve in Devon.

Simon: And it's yoga - it's, tell me a little bit about what you do.

Sam: Well, at the moment we offer yoga. Weekly yoga. But I also do holistic therapy, including raiki, Indian head massages and so forth, a few beauty treatments. But in the future, with the mill and the land that we've got around the mill we're going to be offering six bell tents so it's going to be like a glamping site with the treatments added in. So we've got the yoga treatments and the camping and hopefully we'll do some retreats, some yoga retreats but also there's a lot of scope for doing events so we're looking maybe to do week-ends or Northern soul or scooter rallies. That kind of thing, as well as the yoga weekends.

Simon: Yeah.

Sam: So, we're quite excited; quite up-and-coming.

Simon: (Laughs). So why Brittany? What brought you here? Did you, sort of, look in lots of other places?

Sam: Luckily, the property belonged to a friend and we got sent the link. At first we thought it's a bit too big, too much to set up to start on. But then we came to view it. I fell in love with it straight away. We didn't actually see another property because I wanted this one.

Simon: Tell me about the mill because it's got a bit of history, hasn't it?

Sam: Yeah. The mill was occupied in the Second World War. They cut off all the electricity for the village.



Simon: It's a very old mill, isn't it?

Sam: Yeah. It is a very old mill. But the water used to produce electricity for the village.

Simon: Right. OK.

Sam: So when it was invaded in the War they stopped the electricity and it's never been up and running since.

Simon: Right, OK.

Sam: But since the War then, the commune bought it and tried to maintain it but it's such a big building to maintain and the commune did the rooves, luckily, on the mill and on the cottage. The cottage used to be like the staff room. So the workers from the mill used to take their breaks here so it was never lived in....

Simon: Right.

Sam: ..up until recently. I say recently - it's probably about 10 years it's been turned into a home and a half. The miller's daughters still lives across the way - the sisters they still live there. So they give us lots of history about the place. They've got pictures of the place which is absolutely lovely to see. We need to get copies so we can put them on the wall. We've still got some sacks from the flour in the mill, in the top of the mill, the Moulin de Buisson, which was used for the mill. Part of the mill was a bakery, which was this side and there was the blacksmith on the other side of the mill.

Simon: OK. And the mill still works, do you know?

Sam: No. Unfortunately, a lot of the innards were sold off.

Simon: Right.

Sam: We've got some machinery still in. The wheel's no longer there, the big wheel's no longer there, but some of the inner wheels are still there.

Simon: Right.

Sam: And there's three floors to the mill. So from every floor there's a bit of equipment left but they're not connected up.

Simon: Right. OK.

Sam: All the bits of the mill that we have found, the original workings of the mill, we've re-used. So not only just for decorative pieces. The stones, the keystones from the bridges, we've actually made a stone circle in the camping field with a fire pit.

So the stones are actually set round in a circle so our friends can come and light a fire at night time and sit round the fire. So, yeah, we've tried to re-cycle and use all the bits that we've found original to the mill.

Simon: So, the wheel, you think the mill was working as a flour mill before? Before it became....

Sam: Yes. It was definitely a flour mill. Yes, so, the turbines - EDF was quite interested because of the flow of water that still goes underneath the mill. EDF's been interested in putting turbines in to create some energy, some clean energy so that's something we're definitely going to look into in the future.

Simon: So it could be that your mill is actually back in commission creating electricity for the grid. Is that what you're saying?

Sam: Yes

Simon: That's amazing, isn't it?

Sam: Yes. 'Cos they'll give you then a wage like for the electricity. Which would be great if we could achieve that.

Simon: Yes - and you wouldn't have to worry about boiling a kettle anymore!

Sam: Exactly! (Laughs).

Simon: And tell me about - there is a piece of wood isn't there? That you, tell me about the history,...

Sam: Apparently there is a piece of wood, at the edge of the building - well you can see it on the entrance - it looks like, what, a 12 foot beam of oak that apparently we've got to keep, that's protected. We don't really know what it was used for.

Simon: Right.

Sam: We're guessing the wires for the electricity to the village was attached to it at one time. But now it's not, it's just there. It's just a 12 foot oak beam stuck up in the air. We have painted it to protect it but it's still there and hopefully it's going to last a little longer. But yeah, it does look a bit odd, just stuck out, but it's the history to the mill.

Simon: Thank you very much Sam for talking to us.

Sam: No worries!