

Stained glass and eco houses

Written by John Eager

Sunday, 21 September 2008 16:38 - Last Updated Wednesday, 01 October 2008 11:13



Rowan McOnegal is a contemporary stained glass artist. She works at her studio in Putley, which is next to her custom built eco house, designed and partly built by husband Pete Johnson.

Rowan is trained in fine arts, printmaking, photography and herbal medicine, but her passion for the last ten years has been stained glass. Having practised as a medical herbalist for 15 years, plants and botany now dominate to form a recurring theme both in her stained glass and her photography.

Rowan sells her work in galleries, but also takes on local commissions to fit specific windows or freehanging panels.

www.rowanmconegal.co.uk

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This is the beautiful house that Rowan and Pete have had built. Originally on the site of a barn, the couple bought the land and completely recycled the barn. Their initial plans were, of course, refused by local government planners (who must be trained to reject everything), but with perseverance and a year's building work they got the job done.

Being a countryside warden with the National Trust, Pete is experienced in working with wood. He felled and worked the local oaks himself, while local builders from Garway Hill built the house.

The house itself is oak framed with a softwood shell and oak cladding. It has "thick insulation of Warm Cell recycled paper, solar panels to heat water, underfloor heating and, of course, a wood burner. Pete told me with the tremendously efficient insulation the house needed very little heating in winter.

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It's a beautiful looking house both inside and outside and, although he says it had never been a dream of his to build his own house, it must feel like a dream come true for Pete and his family.

