

Building the Dream

In the next instalment of her rebuild diaries, Jane Smith and her husband Richard attend while the lorries arrive with the timber beams that will form their new house's roof...



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Richard, the roof beams have arrived! It was April 4th and two huge lorries were inching down our narrow driveway, laden with 39 beautiful timber beams. They were enormous and would form the internal (and visible) skeleton of our roof. The on-board cranes lifted three at a time and our team gently manoeuvred them into roughly the right location before unshackling the webbing straps. It took three hours to get all 39 beams up onto the roof zone. Our team then manually slid, rolled and nudged these heavy weight beams into their final positions. This work took two days to complete, then each beam was pinned in place and the gaps in between were filled with blocks and cement to create a nice flat roof edge.

At this point the beams looked new, fresh and very square-shaped, but once in position one of our team took a chainsaw and sander to them to knock the sharp edges off and make them appear more irregular and therefore old. It was an amazing transformation and they would be changed again when we eventually gave them a light whitewash coat three months later.

While the roof work was underway a large digger moved into the garden to commence the building of the pool. We needed to dig a hole 2m deep by 11m long and 7m wide in readiness for the pool to be constructed, but first we had to move a 4m olive tree to a new location 3m away from the pool. Thankfully the digger made short work of that move! We had chosen to use a Dutch pool system of zinc plates bolted together, surrounded by a

back-fill of gravel and cement. It would be very strong and was cost-effective compared to some Italian quotes we had received. Of course, when digging such a large hole, the earth has to be removed to another location – or taken offsite at huge cost. Thankfully we were able to identify areas on our land where we could redistribute the soil. We levelled two car park zones, evened out a steep slope in one field and raised the base of a small enclosed area which would later become our chicken run! A good result.

While the weather held the team nailed together a tongue and groove ceiling above the roof beams then covered the whole lot with plastic sheeting – we didn't want this nice timber roof to get stained should it rain. This plastic would also give the team protection from any bad weather so they could get on with internal jobs without interruption – laying the cement base floors, constructing the two internal staircases, finishing the exposed stone walls in three rooms. The remaining roof work would be finished when the sunshine returned.

We were now getting close to the time when a plumber, electrician, floor-layer and plasterer would be needed. We had gone out to tender for this work during the winter and had pinpointed the guys we wanted to use. It was the end of May and a whole new part of the project was about to commence. ■

