



MADE IN LITHUANIA

MADELEEN AND ROGER WILLINK TURNED TO LITHUANIA TO SOURCE THEIR OAK FRAME HOUSE WHICH OCCUPIES AN ENVIABLE SITE ON THE EDGE OF ASHDOWN FOREST IN EAST SUSSEX

Ordering a house from Lithuania is not the usual way to build your own house in this country but if Madeleen and Roger Willink's experience is anything to go by it could become the norm.

Roger and Madeleen bought a 100 year old dormer bungalow on the edge of Ashdown Forest in East Sussex in 1994 and lived there for about five years while Madeleen's parents lived in the cottage next door.

"The house was in a beautiful position and having my parents nearby was wonderful," says Madeleen, "but the house was a series of sheds and barns that had been cobbled together and it needed constant maintenance.



My parents moved away because the cottage was so small and damp."

By 1999 the Willink's had five children and the house was simply too small for them. They decided to buy a larger house and rent out the old one.

It was Christmas 2002 that decided the fate of the old dormer bungalow. "I had a phone call from the tenants asking us to do something because there was water coming up through the ground," Roger recalls. "We decided the only thing to do was to pull the house down and rebuild. We couldn't continue to rent it in that state," Madeleen adds, "We could have sold it to a developer but it's such a wonderful site."

STORY: PAT GADSBY
PICTURES: DAVID GADSBY

LEFT The Willink family from left to right Geesham (13), Madeleen, Alexander (21), Roger and Joe (19). In front are Tara (9) and Charlie (3). Dorian is missing from the photograph.