

Delia's Classic Christmas

FREE INSIDE ON SATURDAY

24 pages of
festive delights
from Britain's
favourite cook

Delia's
**Classic
Christmas**
A fabulous collection of foolproof recipes
from Britain's all-time favourite cook

24
PAGES OF
FESTIVE
RECIPES



Yours for £50, B&B with NO mod cons!

... And the 'en
suite' is, well,
a local stream

By **Julia Horton**

IT sounds like the holiday let from hell – a 'rough as guts' croft house with no running water, meaning guests are invited to bathe in a freezing cold stream.

The centuries-old bothy has a corrugated iron roof, a rickety sofa bed on a concrete floor with no insulation – much less WiFi – while a trip to the toilet requires a trek across a farmyard.

But to the owners' amazement their new Highland bed and breakfast is a major hit with tourists from around the world, happy to pay £50 a night for a 'taste of the 1800s'.

In a twist on the region's occasionally poor reputation for hospitality, Robin Haig and her father Niall decided to be brutally honest about what they were offering.

Their advert for the croft near Dornie in Ross-shire on accommodation site Airbnb states: 'The old croft house bothy is rough as guts. It's luxury but not as we know it. No fluffy white towels here.'

Inviting guests to 'escape from it

**'Luxury but not
as we know it'**

all and get back to basics', the listing continues: 'Do not expect this bothy to be like a normal B&B. It's basic: an old croft house made of stone walls, concrete floor and a corrugated iron roof, with some furniture in it.'

'It is not insulated so feels more like camping. But it has a charm of its own and is in a beautiful spot – that's what makes it special.'

Their gamble with the truth has paid off spectacularly. The father and daughter team report that they have been booked up since the B&B opened in August.

Miss Haig, 35, who combines crofting with filmmaking, launched the unusual B&B to help make a living from the land she loves.

She said: 'I thought people were going to hate it but we're getting



Cold comfort: Heating is provided by a log burner



Surprise success: Robin Haig and the holiday bothy

ridiculously good reviews. They are absolutely loving it.'

One of the biggest hits is Mr Haig's breakfast of homemade bannock bread every morning.

A recent guest review read: 'It's magical because it's so simple and real. The log burner you have to light to get warm; unbelievably delicious bannock breakfast served with tiny flowers and jam; a garden with the view to end all views; washing in an ice cold mountain

stream.' And an American visitor said the B&B gave modern-day tourists a little taste of 'what travellers might have experienced in the 1800s'.

Guests are advised to bring warm jumpers, socks and slippers, a hot water bottle and a torch. They are welcomed with a 'wee chat', a quick tour and invited to explore the beauty of their surroundings with Miss Haig or Mr Haig.

Father and daughter are on hand



Travel light: What furniture there is will be rustic

to light the fire if needed and, in the absence of cooking facilities, visitors can bring a camping stove or follow the family tradition of using an old wheel rim on the croft as a makeshift barbecue.

Money from the B&B will help Miss Haig's latest project – turning her Bafta-winning short film, Hula, about a divorcee in the Highlands, into a TV series. The feature is being shown at the Cromarty Film Festival this weekend.

Call to fill rural GP vacancies with Army doctors

By **Catriona Webster**

DOCTORS working in the Armed Forces could be seconded to rural GP practices struggling to fill vacancies, a Conservative MSP has suggested.

Finlay Carson said practices in his Galloway and West Dumfries constituency were 'in crisis', with fears some may have to shut.

Health Secretary Shona Robison has said she would be happy to discuss the idea.

In response to a question from the Tory MSP, she said only two out of six GP speciality training places in the Dumfries and Galloway region had been filled, despite the posts being eligible for a £20,000 bursary.

The Scottish Government advertised the positions in August amid growing concern about staffing shortages in general practice, with the financial incentive

**'Practices
are in crisis'**

offered for trainees taking up posts in remote and rural areas.

Mr Carson said: 'In Galloway and West Dumfries, rural GP practices are in crisis. GPs are working longer hours than ever, practices are being forced to merge and there is a fear in communities that some practices will close.'

'Will the Cabinet Secretary meet me to discuss the possibility of giving the Galloway Community Hospital in Stranraer training hospital status and explore the possibility of seconding Armed Forces doctors to ensure vital GP services can be delivered in rural areas?'

Miss Robison said: 'I'm certainly happy to meet with the member to discuss any of these ideas. Obviously we would have to look at whether those ideas were practical and deliverable.'

'I would point out that we have a huge amount of work under way to improve the position within primary care, a £500million investment over the course of this parliament and some short-term measures to stabilise the position and address recruitment and retention issues.'