



PRESS RELEASE

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SCOTTISH COUPLE WIN TOP SELF BUILD AWARD

A Scottish couple that built a low-cost straw bale house have won the 2012 Murray Armor Self Builder of the Year award.

The award is aimed at people who have championed the cause of self build and have managed to deliver their project 'against the odds'.

Willy and Wendy Graham from near Aberfeldy, about 30 miles north west of Perth, beat off stiff competition from around the UK.

The four other finalists this year included mother and son team Mark and Betty Evans, who spent 10 years building their log house near Hastings; Nick and Patricia Forsyth, who built a barn-style oak framed house to suit the specialist needs of their disabled daughter near Hook in Hampshire; Keith and Chad Young, who built an ultra contemporary house near Fishguard in West Wales; and Sue and Ian McClung, who built a future-proofed eco house near Gloucester.

For the last few years the National Self Build Association has made the annual award for Britain's most determined self builder, in memory of the famous self build author Murray Armor.

Judges included TV builder Tommy Walsh, TV presenter and architectural designer Charlie Luxton and Daily Telegraph journalist and serial self builder David Snell.

Willy and Wendy Graham's home stood out because it used mostly locally sourced, natural and recycled materials. The Secretary of the National Self Build Association, Valerie Bearne, said: "What shone through was the commitment the Graham's had to the sustainability agenda. They could have built something very conventional; but they were determined to construct an innovative and very ecological home for themselves."

"They employed novel methods of construction and were heavily involved themselves in both project managing the development and with much of the on-site work too. They also went on a number of special training courses to ensure they understood the fine detail of the construction of their new home. In the end they have a wonderful, snug and very environmentally friendly home that cost them around £200,000 to build. And in the future they'll have very low fuel bills".

Willy Graham said: “Building with straw bales is a very enjoyable thing to do, and fairly unskilled. You get to the stage of having walls very quickly – and it’s much cheaper than using many other construction methods. We see it as a method for people that don’t need, or don’t want to know a lot about complicated building methods. We are delighted with the house. Different bits appeal at different times of the day and the year, we know we’ll stay here forever.”



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