

ST AGNES

ICE CREAM



There cannot be many finer locations for a campsite than that of Troytown Farm on St Agnes. Bordered by ancient stone walls that stand barely a few feet from the high tide mark, the campsite takes in a view that sweeps from Tresco and Samson across to Bishop Rock. Between these points lie Annet, Mincarolo and the multitude of jagged granite silhouette's that make up the Norrard Rocks, which break through the surface of the vast expanse of sea. The campsite's fields look out in a westerly direction, so not only is the view breathtaking, it is also the perfect spot for watching the sun sink into the sea at the end of the day. Mind you, were Troytown Farm Campsite not situated in an astonishingly beautiful position on one of the most gorgeous pieces of unspoilt Britain, it would still be worth a visit. In fact, if this campsite was actually overlooking an industrial estate in Scunthorpe, it would remain a desirable destination because Troytown Farm is home to some of the most delicious ice cream ever made.

Tim and Sue Hicks took over Troytown Farm and Campsite in 1982. The surname Hicks is one of those synonymous with St Agnes. Tim's family have lived on the island for untold generations but his is the first to live at Troytown Farm. After ten years in the Royal Navy, it was time to return to Scilly and the lease for the farm just happened to be available. The farm was



then producing flowers and early potatoes, along with three holiday lets and the campsite. In October 1982, as Tim and Sue took possession of the farm, they invested in their first cow. After three or four years, they decided to give up the potatoes and in 2002 the flowers were also abandoned as an uneconomical crop. The cattle, on the other hand, slowly increased. Tim and Sue now have twenty-five beasts on the farm.

For many years, the Hicks sold unpasteurised milk, cream, butter and yoghurt from the farmhouse door for campers, guests and locals alike. It was not an ideal retail outlet but the investment required for a separate shop could not be justified without an expansion of the business. Sue explained:

“We had spoken about the possibilities of ice cream making and spoke to some business advisors. One of them rang us back out of the blue and told us about a firm called Farmhouse Ice Cream. This company believe that the best ice cream is made with the best ingredients and where do you find better quality ingredients than on the farms themselves? They have provided us with a machine that can take our lovely cream and milk, pasteurise it and turning it into ice cream all in one, without requiring mass production.” Each batch is only about three and a half litres, all of which is hand packed. The finished product is superb. “We have both Jersey and Ayrshire cows on the farm. Without the Ayrshire milk the ice cream would be a little on the rich side.” said Tim.

Tim is not wrong, as it is difficult to imagine eating a more creamy ice cream than that made by the Hicks'. It is not simply the quality of the cream and milk but also the other ingredients, as sampling the splendid Vanilla Madagascar proves. Flecked liberally with vanilla pod from Madagascar, this is simply the best vanilla ice cream I have ever tasted. The flavours are not limited to the old favourites, however. Grand Marnier, Ginger and Banana, Baileys & Cinnamon are some of the less common of the twenty or more flavours on offer at Troytown Farm, along with ten different sorbets.

Tim and Sue only began producing ice cream in February 2006. They are clearly born to it. Their son Sam, with his wife and new baby, is returning to St Agnes from the mainland to help run the new business. If success has anything to do with excellence, then Troytown Farm and the Hicks' family should surely flourish. If you are planning an ice cream related trip to St Agnes, then I can recommend the Vanilla Madagascar and the Coconut and the Hazelnut, of course, and the Ginger's delicious and the Coffee is fantastic and the Lemon is really very good and the Forest Fruits... ■

For further information about Troytown Farm, Troytown Campsite and self-catering accommodation: www.troytownscilly.co.uk



Above:
Troytown Campsite and the wonderful views from St Agnes.

Left:
Tim and Sue Hicks and some of their mouthwatering produce.

