



HELEN & SCARLETT (HAYBABY NO. 1) VISITING JIMMY'S FARM & WILDLIFE PARK BACK IN AUGUST 2020

THE GUINEA PIG VILLAGE

PART 2: SECRET SHOPPING, PIGGY PUNS AND THAT RISQUÉ CHURCH SIGN

Who's been down to Jimmy's Farm & Wildlife Park this summer? It's a grand day and you'll get to see the amazing Guinea Pig Village yourself. Keep your eyes peeled, as you might even catch a glimpse of the talented HayPigs® duo, Rik & Helen, or the park's very own Jimmy wandering around the mini piggy village. Now, get ready for an exciting read as we present you with Part 2 of Naomi's interview...

Hi guys! Let's pick this up again. Tell us what it was like working with the team at Jimmy's Farm & Wildlife Park.

R: It was great. From the get-go, we were connected with Lauren, who's the head of marketing, and she immediately said, "Fabulous, yep, let's make this happen. Let us know what we can do!"

H: Yes, really positive with a 'can-do attitude.'

R: Absolutely, which is what we need. But it is also very dangerous to tell me the world's your oyster without any restrictions. I tend to just go all out, which gets me into trouble! But it's been wonderful getting to know Lauren and the people that we've seen regularly, like some of the other rangers and the people who work with the guinea pigs

every day. Getting to know the guinea pigs themselves and some of the personalities we've come across at the village. And then, when it was finally unveiled for Jimmy himself to come down and do a little video with the village introducing it and for him to get excited about it for the first time, that was all very rewarding.

H: Yeah, it was.

R: I think we also got a cheeky comment from Jamie Oliver when it was first unveiled on social media. He thought it was great as well, so those little things are all really nice.

H: And I think the rangers have loved it because it has freshened up that particular enclosure. I know they've recently had fun putting a little path in between all the buildings, which is really lovely. So,

they're getting involved, and they clearly have so much love for the animals they're working with.

R: But actually, the best feedback is when you just sneak up to the village and sit on a bench...

H: Yes, we sat and had our lunch there the other day, didn't we? And just people-watched...

R: Watching them turn up, seeing how they react to things, obviously grimacing when somebody says "hamster."

H: "Oh, are they hamsters?"

R: & **H:** NO!

R: But yeah, it's really good fun as people go around and spot things. "Mummy, have you seen that? Have you read that?" "Look, they've got little trolleys!"

H: And we just quietly sit there with our sunglasses on, like secret shoppers! No, it's great. That's the joy, isn't it? That's the joy when you see people enjoying the attraction and interacting with it. I think that's the whole point. That's why it's there, isn't it? So that people get joy from it, but also, in the process of enjoying something, they're learning about different animals and appreciating them. I think that's really, really important.

R: Absolutely. »

JIMMY'S FARM & WILDLIFE PARK

— Share the good life —

JIMMY GIVES US HIS THOUGHTS...

AN INTERVIEW WITH JIMMY DOHERTY

Hi Jimmy, thanks for taking the time out to chat with Guinea Pig Magazine! We are guessing you must have been excited when you first saw the new guinea pig village. What were your first impressions?

It was such a pleasure to finally see the Guinea Pig Village revamped after years of it needing an upgrade! When we first came up with the idea, it was known as Guinea Pig Island, and it was just a shell of what it has grown to become. When HayPigs!® came in as our official sponsor, we knew our guinea pigs were about to get the best treatment possible.

Do the guinea pigs enjoy the village? We can imagine the pub gets busy!

The Guinea Pig Village has been so crucial in the enrichment and development of our pigs, and that's all we are about here at the farm – providing the best conservation for species of any shape and size. We've definitely had a few guinea pigs with sore heads and coming out of the salon after a good spruce-up!

What do your visitors think of the village, do you get much feedback?

Our launch last summer was accompanied by many members of the public who were astonished with the look and quality of these buildings, we have had nothing but great feedback on how stylish and creative

the village now looks, from kids and adults alike.

What's your favourite building?

The Pigpost post office is brilliant! The attention to detail is incredible, from the little signs for opening times to the guinea pig-sized shopping trolleys – they even have a grass licence!

What's the next building you'd love to see added?

I think our guinea pigs have somewhere to drink and eat, shop and get pampered up, but they would love somewhere to party!

Ha, ha! Does it sound like the village might be about to get its first nightclub?!



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...CONTINUING OUR INTERVIEW WITH HELEN & RIK OF HAYPIGS!®

Rik, Helen - do you have a favourite building?

R: I have elements of every single one that I really, really like. That's not a cop-out. From a technical point of view, the build of the pub is the most complicated and was the hardest to put together. But because of that, I really appreciate it because I know every little nook and cranny of that pub... But purely down to the joy of the fact that the church is better viewed by a guinea pig than a human, I just love that. I love the fact that there's so much work inside the church, and no one knows about it. We also designed a set of church signs. I think there are six or seven of these signs so you can switch them, and they say different things depending on when you visit Jimmy's. They're all really funny. One of them is particularly close to the bone and a bit risqué, but I had so much fun coming up with those...

H: Was that the hamster one?

R: Ha, ha - yes!

Can you remember any of them?

Yes, here they are:

"Whoever stole our peppers, keep one it is hot where you're going."

"God needs spiritual fruits (and veggies) not religious nuts."

"Whoever keeps praying for rain - we're impressed, now pray for vegetables!"

"Church parking only! Violators will be peed on."

"Staying in bed eating carrots does not constitute going to church."

"Lord. Help us to be the piggies our humans think we are."

H: Yes, and the hamster one, please cover your eyes now if you are easily offended...

"I kissed a hamster and I liked it then I went to hell"

R: Sorry, mum!

Helen, tell us what your favourite building is?

H: Oh, it's really hard because, like you say, I think there are lots of lovely elements in all of them. I think the pub is really beautiful, but it was the most stressful, especially when we thought we were going to break it trying to put it back together. There are all the little details in the shop signs, for example. They even have a little advert for Guinea Pig Magazine in the corner shop window. But I think, at the risk of just being matchy-matchy again, I think I'm going to have to say the church. Partly for the hours that I spent on that last day or two painting it, but also because of how beautiful it looked when we had finished it. It was just glorious seeing it in situ, standing on that little hill with its sign. The fact that I felt that sadness when it went, I think I would have to say that the church is my favourite.



ENJOYING A SPIRITUAL MOMENT IN CHURCH (AND THE GRASS)

“MY FAVOURITE ROAD SIGN IS “RUMBLESTRUTT ROAD” BECAUSE THAT’S WHAT THE GUINEA PIGS DO WHEN THEY’RE GETTING A LITTLE BIT FRUITY, DON’T THEY!”

A PIGGY RELISHING THE FREEDOM OF FORAGING OUTSIDE



And you had some fun street signs as well, right?

R: Oh yes, “Vegetable Gardens.”

H: My favourite road sign is “Rumblestrutt Road” because that’s what the guinea pigs do when they’re getting a little bit fruity, don’t they? Or when they’re annoyed with each other! They run and wiggle their bottoms from side to side.

R: I like “Peru Avenue” and “Poop Place.” I love a pun!

H: If you hadn’t noticed, he’s the king of puns!

We need to know, are there going to be any opportunities for other buildings?!

R: There are certainly opportunities, yes. It will just come down to time and finance. Those are the two critical things. But we have some ideas and plans. For now, it’s about taking a breather first. But yeah, I don’t think we’ve finished yet.

H: We would love to do some more, and I think the whole point was that we wanted to sponsor and be invested in the guinea pig village because we love what they’re doing over at Jimmy’s Farm. It gives us an outlet for a project that is a little bit different from what we’re doing in our day-to-day life with the businesses.

R: And we’re just sad that we don’t have a set at home because that would be cool...

H: That would be amazing. I mean, I’m not sure where we’d put them...

I think a lot of people would like a set!

R: We had many inquiries. But we had to respond, “We’d love to make them for you, but they are one-offs.” They cost a fortune to make, and they nearly killed us...

H: And that wasn’t really what we set out to do. I mean, it would become a full-time job if you were looking to do that for other people, and they would be very expensive. But I’m sure there are plenty of people who would love to have their own little guinea pig village! They can go and make their own! Ha ha!

R: Just use cardboard...

H: Yeah, you can do it on different levels, can’t you? It doesn’t have to be as all-consuming as ours was, but for what they needed at Jimmy’s, they had to be sturdy and strong and work outdoors for the majority of the year. That’s why it was such a difficult process.

Let’s find out about the piggies. How do they find their outdoor environment?

R: That’s an interesting thing, and people ask that question when they see the village. They get really freaked out that the guinea pigs are outside in the open, right? It’s sometimes a comment that we see on



Rumblestrutt Road, one of the many fun street signs in the village



THE GROUNDHOG INN IS RARELY EMPTY!

some of the posts like, “Oh my goodness, you can't have the guinea pigs in there, the prey animals are going to get them - it's so dangerous!” Now, we understand that, and when we have our guinea pigs out at home, they're always in an outdoor run that has a roof on it so that we know they are safe. But at Jimmy's, they have a very secure setup. They have what I call a shed, but it's a purpose-built area where they will sleep. They can come out of the little door when it's opened, but they won't open it if the weather is really bad or if it's too cold. They also securely shut them away at night. When they do open it up and the guinea pigs come out, that's when the park is open, so there are always people around. Because of the noise and bustle of the park, it's very unlikely that predators are even going to want to come close. Even if they did, the guinea pigs are very swift at getting to cover, particularly with their wonderful village where they can dive into all the houses...

H: Yeah, they've got so many points now where they can go and shelter and also make their way back to the shed if they want to.

R: But fundamentally, they have a really good life. They enjoy it. The enrichment values of being outside, it's not just grass, there's other vegetation that grows there...

H: All the natural foliage, plants, nettles, and dandelions that grow in the grass are great for the piggies to eat. They

also have chunks of wood and things to gnaw on too. From an enrichment point of view, they have such a gorgeous environment to be in, with places to shelter and all that yummy goodness to eat with the grass, etc., and it's all really important for them.

R: And then we have seen guinea pigs in other places, like some petting farms, where they are a bit 'wrapped up in cotton wool', you know. They're a bit restricted, maybe they're always inside or always in a covered enclosure. When you see those guinea pigs, they tend to be a bit lethargic and often carrying a little bit more weight than they should. The pigs at Jimmy's are all super fit and super lean...

H: And it's just so gorgeous to see them enjoying the natural environment, which is what they should be doing! Everyone should do their best to provide these animals with the right kind of environment, and we really feel that they do that at Jimmy's, don't they?

R: It's all about balance, but these are prey animals at the end of the day, so they spend their lives being alert. Every time we rattle some keys, or a bird sings



The piggies heading out for a late-afternoon nibble

(usually the smallest bird), it freaks out our guinea pigs! It's not even the big birds; it'll be the tiny, tiny little chirpy great tit or robin that really freaks them out. Cats, they're not fussed about.

H: The dog, they're not fussed about either! I mean, I think our dog gets more freaked out by our guinea pigs than the guinea pigs do by our dog!

R: Airplanes!

H: They do not like airplanes. Nutmeg hated airplanes... anyway, that's another story for another interview!

R: But all in all, it's a great enrichment environment, and they're living their best life.

Finally, go on, tell us what the next building is really going to be...

H: Well, I know what I want it to be! Because I had the best idea...

R: Here's the world exclusive... the next building will be... No, we're not going to tell you. Of course, we're

not going to tell! It will be good, it will fit with the existing buildings, it'll be something new. But we can't tell you, and there's also a chance that we'll change our minds before we actually go to print, so...

H: Not if I get my way, we won't! Ha ha!

Thank you to Jimmy's Farm Wildlife Park & to HayPigs!® for chatting with us, it's been fun!

Haypigs X

HAVING CUDDLES WITH THE RESIDENT PIGGIES



HELEN READS "CHRISTOPHER NIBBLE" BY CHARLOTTE MIDDLETON TO THE CHILDREN. THE STORY OF A GUINEA PIG IN A TALE OF DANDELION DERRING-DO!



A QUICK WORD ABOUT OUR SUPPORTED CHARITY, ACHING ARMS

As mentioned in part 1 of our Guinea Pig Village feature, HayPigs!® and Jimmy's Farm & Wildlife Park hosted a 'Be Together' event for an incredible charity called Aching Arms. The event was aimed at bringing bereaved parents and siblings together following the loss of their baby. On the day, Helen read some beautiful stories and helped the children make Superhero Guinea Pig Potatoes, whilst Rik and the handlers at Jimmy's Farm led a guinea pig handling session. It was such a wonderful day and provided valuable support to the families involved. You can find more information about Aching Arms and the support they offer at achingarms.co.uk. Aching Arms are here for anyone effected by the loss of a baby. Thank you once again to all those involved in making it such a special day.



It's a superhero guinea pig potato!



Aching Arms®

Registered charity number 1153296

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Visit the Aching Arms website by scanning the QR code here

