

Pictures: NICK READ



# Riverside rectory is a rural idyll near the city

By CAROLINE CULOT

Its owner calls it a "rus in urbe" and if you know your Latin, you will appreciate that this charming Queen Anne rectory situated on the edge of the city in secluded gardens leading down to the river Yare is indeed just that!

Okay, if your Latin is not up to it (and I admit I had to check myself) it means a haven of peace and quiet in an urban setting which describes the Old Rectory, Colney, perfectly.

The Old Rectory, Colney, is for sale for £1m with Fine & Country.

The property is tucked away in more than two acres, just past the turn-off for the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital as you head out of the city. You drive down a little slope and then suddenly you see the rectory with its marvellous Dutch gables emerge. And I have to say, I had great fun on my visit because the owners are wonderful, full of life and could tell me fascinating stories about their time there. The property, which dates back to 1715, has seen some great occasions – the owners do a lot for charity and have staged plays in one of the large rooms, where 100 people were seated. At one party in 1977 for the Queen's Silver Jubilee, the couple even gave their guests red, white and blue sausages to eat! So the house has really seen some fun over the years and still does. It has also been the base for the Takeheart health clinic.

The property bears a foundation stone above its front door with the initials TC 1715 – representing Thomas Clayton, the rector who shared the living with St Michael at Plea in the city and who lived to a great age. There was also a rector called William Ripley, who married one of the Gurney



family and went to live at Earlham Hall, leaving the rectory empty. Apparently, it was then let to visiting missionaries from India, China

and Uganda. Later, in about 1898, a two-storey, clapboard extension was added. This is very attractive and has been painted a gorgeous aquamarine. The other addition was a conservatory in 1994, which makes a lovely sitting/dining space overlooking the garden and river. However, as the owner points out, the flood plain lies away to the north of the Old Rectory – the "Church fathers built their rectories well away from possible acts of God!"

You enter the gabled porch through a hand-built oak door to a stone-flagged hall with a reception room to the right. This has a period fireplace and leads into the wood-panelled party room. Also down the hall is a study and laundry/cloakroom and a dining or family room with fireplace and oak floor. This leads to the oak

kitchen with an Aga and a dining/breakfast area.

From the hall there is a wonderful rosewood banister up the stairs, and this leads to a half landing with the main bedroom to the right. There is also a bathroom with an original rolled-top bath. From an upper landing there are four more bedrooms and another bathroom. There are also two separate staircases to three large attic rooms which would make great teenagers' quarters.

Outside, there are the gardens and paddock (with room for a pony) as well as a tennis court which needs refurbishing. There is a walled fruit garden and a wonderful coachhouse.

This property has so much to offer and is ideally placed for the hospital, university or city. ■ The Old Rectory, Colney, is for sale for £1m with Fine & Country on 01603 221888.

## BARN ED AND SOLAR SIMON



Help make your home an eco-haven

**Simon:** It has been quite a dry winter, and a hose pipe ban beckons, so why not help by fitting water-saving devices. There are, as with most things, easy ways and difficult ways to do this.

**Ed:** What's the easiest way to save water?

**Simon:** One of the easiest ways is to fit a water butt, your roof is a large catchment area and you would be surprised at how quickly water butts will fill. Then you can water your garden and wash your car without fear. If you feel the need to save large amounts of water you can buy a very large butt or two or three smaller butts together. A 200-litre water butt costs about £30 plus accessories.

**Ed:** At the barn we have a 6,000-litre rainwater harvesting system in the garden. We dug a big hole in the garden, and buried a very big tank with a pump. We will never need worry about water shortages again.

**Simon:** Though rainwater shouldn't be drunk it can

be used to flush toilets, wash cars, water the garden and wash clothes – so think of the savings.

**Ed:** There are other devices to help us save water, such as the water hippo, which can be put in your toilet cistern. Each hippo costs about £2 and can save between 2.5 and 3.5 litres per flush when fitted in an average cistern.

**Simon:** You can also get aerating taps and shower heads which mix air in with the water flow to save water. Of course, some of these things are much easier to fit new, so if you are considering a new bathroom or kitchen, it is worth looking into.

**Ed:** I like the idea of fitting a shower timer so you become more aware of how long you are taking in the shower, alternatively you could share a bath (or the water at least!)

**Simon:** It is also a good idea when buying a new appliance such as a washing machine to consider the water usage as well as the electrical energy used.

### ECOBARN: OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE

As you are reading this Simon will be on-site helping to commission our micro-generation systems, and maybe by the time you finish reading the paper we will be using the electricity that it is generating to finish the barn. To follow his progress, go to [www.barnmasters.co.uk](http://www.barnmasters.co.uk) and follow the link to his ecobarn blog.

### PRODUCT: STANDBY BUSTER

This device means that by pushing one button on the remote control you can switch off any appliance in the house. Really helpful in turning off hard-to-reach plugs, or alternatively if you want to make sure the children haven't left



anything on standby, fit this in their room and you need never worry about them wasting electricity. The remote will switch four plugs separately. From £14.99 for one plug and remote, £29.99 for three plugs and one remote. [www.standbybuster.com](http://www.standbybuster.com)

### TIP FOR GOING GREEN

Shop locally! We are lucky in Norfolk to have some wonderful market towns where we can buy anything we want. And try to use local services; it helps to sustain your community and will cut CO2 emissions.

### CRACKING THE CODE

**Micro combined heat and power (CHP):** What on earth is that, I hear you all say? Well, to my mind these units are one of the best innovations of recent years a great way to cut CO2 emissions in our homes. These boilers, like

condensing boilers, reuse the heat, but micro CHP boilers generate electricity with it. So unlike solar PV, you can generate electricity when you are most likely to use it, that is, winter evenings. They are based on something called a Stirling external combustion engine, patented in 1816, so new technology, as you can see. They will not supply all your electrical needs so you will need a grid connection, but they will mean you can become almost carbon neutral. A mini power plant in your home.

■ If you have a question, get in touch with Ed and Simon by e-mailing [caroline.culot@archant.co.uk](mailto:caroline.culot@archant.co.uk). To contact Ed Masters at Barnmasters, ring 01379 852111 or visit [www.barnmasters.co.uk](http://www.barnmasters.co.uk) For Simon, either pop into his shop on Church Street, Harleston, ring 01379 854840 or visit [www.allthingsgreener.co.uk](http://www.allthingsgreener.co.uk)