



**Lancashire**  
Tourism Awards  
— 2022 —  
**WINNER**  
SELF CATERING ACCOMMODATION  
AWARD

# TEN YEARS ON

Oakdean Cottages luxury holiday lets are celebrating! It's a decade since they launched and are recent winners of a Lancashire Tourism Award for Best Self-Catering Accommodation

When Ian and Sue Sherrington started their journey ten years ago, they never imagined they would be welcoming visitors to the Ribble Valley from all over the world. Their guest book is full of five star reviews written by guests from Australia, Jordan and Gambia, the USA and Europe too. Visitors have travelled to Whalley from literally everywhere and they come in all shapes and sizes. Be it expats keen to re-sample their old stomping ground, friends and families coming to visit, brides, grooms and their wedding guests or business entrepreneurs, they've all called Oakdean Cottages 'a home from home'.

Why have so many chosen to stay in this delightful, converted piggery, tucked away on Whalley Nab? Well, the first reason is quite clear, that it is a piggery no more! In 2010, having retired from running multiple businesses together, Ian and Sue wondered if they had the energy to take on the enormous task of designing, building and decorating their dilapidated old sheds into a place for Ribble Valley visitors.

Removing retirement from their agenda, it wasn't long before Ian was bricklaying, plastering and plumbing. They worked together to design every detail and after hard graft and a few heated debates, they officially

opened their doors in 2013. Hodder and Ribble Cottage are two and three-bedroomed in size, each accommodating four to six guests and contemporary in style. They are full of light, space and bursting with life's little luxuries. There's a third cottage too – Calder Cottage lovingly referred to as the 'cosy one' given its slightly smaller stature.

The cottages' modern design, bi-fold doors and underfloor heating never fails to impress new guests, but are mod cons enough to grow a successful holiday lets enterprise? Ian and Sue had learnt how to self build but how do you teach yourself hospitality to ensure guests will keep coming back?



## The Lancashire welcome

A warm welcome works wonders! Speaking to Ian and Sue today it's obvious that without any official training, they've been led by their own high standards: "We always want to ensure our guests have everything they need to enjoy their stay. Many like to know we're close by if they need us, but not too close if they don't," says Sue.

When you add 'spotlessly clean' to the list of frequent compliments it didn't take long for Oakdean Cottages to gain momentum. The guest book grew and those who were kind enough to stay once, kept coming back.



Maintaining self-catering accommodation to such a high standard has taken an incredible amount of work, which has often been recognised. Visit England have awarded Ribble Cottage their coveted five-star self-catering accolade for the past nine years. There have been many local nods and Airbnb Superhost recognition too, but it's the amount of plentiful and kind reviews that always amaze Ian and Sue. Literally hundreds of them rating the cottages an incredible five stars again and again. It was something Property Manager Anna Davies was keen to shout about when joining Ian and Sue in 2019.

## The next chapter

The cottages are now approaching their 10-year anniversary this month. They're firm favourites on the local landscape and in marvellous company among the Ribble Valley's abundance of brilliant self-catering accommodation.

"Anna recognised the potential of getting to know other local businesses the moment she joined us," Ian says. "We were doing well but didn't fully appreciate the potential of connecting with others or having a presence on social media."



As well as ensuring guests had the best experience possible, Anna has focused on broadening Oakdean Cottages' regional connections. Nominating the cottages for the prestigious Lancashire Tourism Award felt a fitting next step.

## Recognition

Achieving success on the county stage felt quite a mountain to climb, especially in the prestigious category of Best Self-Catering Accommodation. Guests obviously thought the cottages ticked all the right boxes, but would judges, secret shoppers and an expert panel from Marketing Lancashire? Yes, is the short answer.

The judges, described Oakdean Cottages as: "A countryside idyll, three immaculate holiday cottages situated in the Ribble Valley with spectacular views over the countryside. The team at Oakdean Cottages welcome guests from all over the world making their stay the most comfortable and memorable it can be."

Anna recalls: "Hearing our name called out as winners, was just simply incredible. We're so honoured to win such a prestigious award and excited about the future."

There are some exciting developments afoot. Oakdean Cottages recognise the demand for wedding accommodation in the Ribble Valley and have recently introduced an all-new two-night package: "We want to open our doors to brides, grooms and party guests with

two-night stays (as opposed to a three-night minimum). Our bespoke wedding package includes champagne and organisation of transport to the venue," says Anna.

It's that focus on the very best guest-experience that has brought Oakdean Cottages a decade's worth of success and recognition, not to mention those five-star reviews. Wherever you're from, this hidden gem is definitely worth a visit. ■

To explore or book, visit:  
[oakdeancottages.com](http://oakdeancottages.com)

To find out more about the two-night wedding package or other offers email: [stay@oakdeancottages.com](mailto:stay@oakdeancottages.com)



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