Frenchay Christmas Tree Farm Celebrates 24 Years

In 1999, turf was broken in a field alongside the M32 motorway and Frenchay's first Christmas trees were introduced to the red Bristol soil. They took quite well, and now – twenty-four years later, the owners proudly claim that they could have one door on an advent calendar for every year that they have been in business.

"The first year, we just sold a few Christmas trees on the grass verge outside the gate. So if the progress of our business could be marked as if it were an advent calendar, then behind the first door would be a lorry, with me and my dad selling Christmas trees from the back of it!" says grower Simon Maughan.

"After that, we'd have a door for a shipping container, which was our first 'office', then a door for our iconic 'Wild West' windmill, and another for the compost toilet, which is a beautiful little self-contained hut that suits its setting perfectly. We'd also have doors for all the wildlife that makes its home on the farm, as well as the pond and the creatures and plants that live in that."

Behind the final door would have to be the beautiful peg-and-timber barn, which would make a wonderful crib scene. This is the heart of the farm where everyone gathers: regular customers, new families with babes in arms (or carriers) that come for their first Christmas, and many many children rummaging through the lucky dip. "Before you know what's happening, the children are all grown up and coming back as customers with their own families. Like the trees, they put down roots and just grow! We love seeing all the familiar faces year after year."

The windmill at sunset

And so every year a new generation arrives, and as the Christmas trees are cut, a new generation of trees is planted to replace those that are harvested through November and December. Each tree as unique and varied as the families who come to buy them. "For most of our customers it's a tradition. We see this more and more as people share their experiences with us and each other on social media. It brings the place alive, and it's just amazing for us to see how people experience their visit to our farm."

Frenchay Christmas Tree Farm is open every day from 9am to 5pm from Saturday 18th November. You can visit in person, or order your tree, stand and wreath online either for delivery or for click and collect.