

Guardian Home Quarterly

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Chimney Art: Twisted Chimney

In southern Wales lies the Bute Estate, with land spread out enough that two towns received the name of Bute: Bute-town, in the south Cardiff Bay, and Bute Town at the edge of the estate on the northern edge of the South Wales Coalfield. A workers' community, this second Bute Town was built to house ironworkers in 1830.

Outside of this modest Bute Town, on the north side of Rhymney Valley along A465

stands a most unusual structure. Simnai Dirdro ("Twisted Chimney" in English), designed by New York-based artist Brian Tolle, stretches an impressive 16 meters long and reaches 8 meters at its highest point. It represents his first artistic endeavor in the UK. The sculpture was erected near the former Union Ironworks and on former railway line land, but the artist intended it to point toward a future vision rather than one of the past. With input from current Bute Town residents, Tolle's vision was unveiled in 2010.



Trivia

- Since 1980 the town of Rochester in England has been reviving the Jack-in-the-Green May Day dancing chimney sweep tradition, which died out in the early 20th century. The festival's revival is based entirely on Charles Dickens' description of its predecessor in *Sketches by Boz*.
- Gourds have been grown for at least 10,000 years to be used as decoration or as instruments and utensils.

Honey-Don't List

Know when to DIY and when to call on a pro.

The advent of the Internet has made do-it-yourself projects and repairs far easier to grasp than in years past. While books are still a good supplement for details on such work, video still wins. Despite the proliferation of information and instruction in this modern era, not every home repair is one a typical homeowner should take on.

Hazardous Materials

Water - The most botched DIY project will not lead to death or dismemberment by water, but the hazard may be to your home. It's safe to say that most folks aiming to replace faucets, shower heads, and toilets can do so with little trouble. However, a botched plumbing job can lead to slight water leaks. One of Guardian's focuses is on water leaks and their potential dangers. Let a plumber handle the more complex plumbing (like a project involving a blow torch to cut copper pipe) so you don't get a bill for cleanup and unexpected repairs later on. Also note that you may violate building codes at your property you weren't aware of.

Gas - Like water, gas takes advantage of the slightest of leaks. The difference is that while water leaks may eventually

lead to carbon monoxide filling your home, gas leaks can do so much faster. Keep in mind that moving gas appliances like stoves may cause leaks, not just repairs and replacement.

Asbestos - Despite the severe reduction in the use of asbestos since the 90s, you might possibly need to extract some from your home. The very name "asbestos" carries connotations of respiratory hazards, so you may not be so willing to try to handle it yourself. This is a safe tack since not only might your neighbors suffer effects of asbestos you disturb, but you might even break laws of which you were unaware regarding its removal.

Mold - Experts say that as long



as you're dealing with an area of mold less than three square feet, you should be okay to handle cleaning it up yourself. Just note that even dead mold can still get into your lungs and cause infection. The greatest risk about mold is the unknown. Various kinds of mold can be perfectly benign or cause life threatening infections, mostly to those already bearing respiratory difficulties. If you discover a large patch of mold, let a remediation expert take care of it for you.

Risky Situations -

Electricity - Are you changing a light switch or a ceiling fan? Make sure your power is off and go ahead. Are you looking to do something with your home's cir-



cuits? Don't even try it. Aside from the government mandated codes you need to follow with certain electrical work, you could receive a life threatening shock or even start a fire.

Roofing/Gutters - Both are included here since both involve heights. The tiles and gutters themselves may be minor repair and cleanup jobs, but the danger is obviously the potential to fall. Working on a steep roof or high up on a ladder are risky places to be, especially alone.

Chimney/Fireplace Cleaning -

You may keep your fireplace free of ash and may even find a brush to do some of your own chimney cleaning, but the risk here is in lack of knowledge. Trained chimney sweeps know how dangerous creosote can become and can find fissures and cracks in your flue and chimney that often lead to water damage down the road.

When you let a professional clean your chimney, not only do you get a thorough job done, but also the inspection that comes beforehand to track down any sources of future troubles.

Weigh your skill against the job and consider the risk. If you can honestly say to yourself that you have no idea what you're doing with a repair you have in mind, then let

a professional handle it. There's a chance your repair will go well and achieve your desired outcome. But you have to be aware of the potential unintended consequences of a goof up. The worst you could do with painting a room might be forgetting the primer, ruining the edges, and dappling everything in the room with your new color. Not the worst thing in the world. The consequences of an electrical or gas line mistake? Worse than removing paint from the recliner.



inspired the song "Chim Chim Cheree."

- Although Americans had started having unofficial Thanksgiving dinners about a hundred years earlier, it wasn't proclaimed a national holiday until 1863. By that time, turkey, stuffing, and gravy were already classic menu items. They were popularized in part by Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.



- In Disney's *Mary Poppins*, the character of Bert is actually an amalgamation of several of the titular character's friends from the books. Among them, the minor character of a chimney sweep. It was a drawing of that sweep by one of the animators that

- Chimney sweeps are supposed to bring luck to brides, and often hired to attend weddings dressed in traditional top hat and tails.



Why Use Seasoned Firewood?

Firewood needs to be seasoned before it's ready for use in your fireplace, which just means that it's been given enough time and the right conditions to lose most of its moisture. When firewood is completely seasoned, it should have moisture content levels of 15-20%. Any more than that and the wood won't burn entirely; any less, and it will burn too hot and too fast.

Free or cheap firewood is usually unseasoned, so if you decide to use it, you'll need to season it yourself, which usually takes around a year. If you're planning on purchasing ready-to-use wood, you'll need to be sure its moisture content levels are correct. Most distributors will have a moisture meter available for your use. A moisture meter of your own can also be a worthwhile and inexpensive investment if you're planning on burning wood regularly.

For more information on firewood seasoning or purchasing, visit <http://guardianservicecompany.com/firewood/>

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WHY USE SEASONED FIREWOOD???

IT'S SIMPLE.



"GREEN", UNSEASONED WOOD CAN HAVE MOISTURE CONTENT LEVELS OF UP TO 50%. IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S WET.

SO, IT TAKES **MORE** ENERGY TO BURN **LESS** USING UNSEASONED WOOD



THE WOOD WON'T BURN THOROUGHLY AND ITS SMOKE WILL DEPOSIT A **CREOSOTE** GLAZE IN THE FLUE AND FIREPLACE.

CREOSOTE IS **FLAMMABLE** -- AND IT'S THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF **CHIMNEY FIRES**.

