

# Fairytale treehouse is a joy for the children

**STRUNG** among the trees in a garden near Newbury lies a scene which could be mistaken for the *Star Wars* forest Endor and the kingdom of the Ewoks.

However, instead of furry bipeds or Luke Skywalker swinging between the small huts, a local family has had the fairytale construction built for their children.

Master thatcher Bob Boulton, of RJ Boulton in Hungerford, added the finishing touches to the bespoke treehouses by thatching the roofs on five of the six huts, created by the TreeHouse Company, based in Scotland. He has more than 30 years experience in the job.

"It's basically a playhouse for their kids," Mr Boulton said. "There was no plan for it to be an Ewok village or something out of *Lord of the Rings*, but as we started building, the comments came in about how much it looked like an Ewok village. It just ended up that way.

"It's the first time the company has

thatched treehouses and it took them about five weeks to build and about that again for me and my son Mark to thatch."

The mini village consists of six huts connected by a maze of rope and wooden ladders and a slide, all 20 to 30ft in the air.

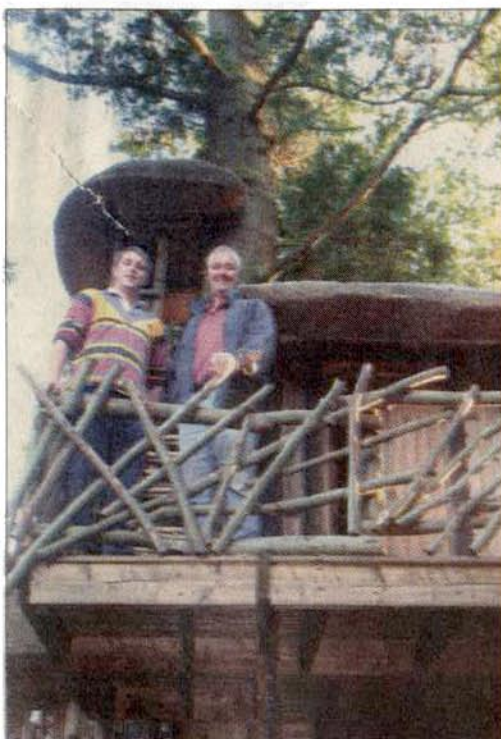
Bespoke treehouses of a similar style on the TreeHouse Company's website cost in the region of £40,000

John Lyle of the TreeHouse Company said: "We are currently building an adventure park treehouse costing £1.5m."

Mr Boulton said: "I haven't done anything like this before, but we have thatched a lot of unusual things, such as duck houses, chicken coops and bus shelters.

"With a project like this you use your skills in a different way. The roofs are obviously smaller structures and often these are more difficult to do.

"It's more of a challenge, but we enjoyed it thoroughly."



Master thatchers Bob Boulton and his son Mark in the thatched treehouse which has been dubbed the 'Ewok village of Newbury' Ref: 43-4406C



The thatched treehouse built by Bob Boulton and his son Mark