

# Country connection

*Interior designer Abi Powell brought her 17th-century cottage right up to date with a modern palette of rich greens and blues*

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY JEREMY PHILLIPS

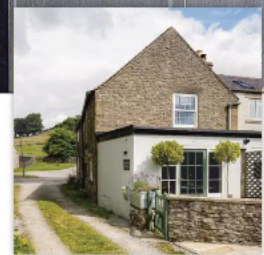


## DINING AREA

Leftover wallpaper from the sitting room links the two spaces while a yellow lampshade adds a pop of colour. Boråstapeter Flora wallpaper in Charcoal, £79.20 a roll, Fashion Wallpaper. Similar yellow shade, £20, Habitat. Calia oak table, £799, John Lewis & Partners



DESIGN ADVICE *'By limiting the colour palette you can keep the focus on the bones of the property'*



HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY**

A 17th-century cottage

**LOCATION** Derbyshire

**ROOMS** Sitting room, kitchen-diner, two bedrooms, bathroom

**PURCHASED** 2018

**OTHER PROPERTY**

'We also have a Victorian house in Nottingham,' says Abi.

KITCHEN

The new kitchen has been built where the old bathroom used to be with the beautiful original stone wall creating a natural flame-retardant splashback for the hob.

Lerhyttan black-stained kitchen doors, £69 each, Ikea. Oak worktops in Rubio Monocoat's Oil Plus 2c Ash Grey stain, £142.76 for 1.3ltr



SITTING ROOM

The local milled gritstone fire surround was added by the previous owner. Abi filled one of the alcoves with mirrored glass to reflect the light.

Bluebell sofa in Turquoise velvet, £1,305, is a close match; similar footstool, £490, both [Sofa.com](http://Sofa.com)

Having grown up on the edge of the Peak District, Abi Powell still felt a sense of affinity with the area, despite living 40 miles away in north Nottingham with her husband, Ian, and their children, Toby, 13, and Reuben, 10. Sadly, Abi's father passed away in 2017, encouraging the couple to reevaluate what was important in their lives.

'We needed a bolthole and it made sense to look for somewhere in the Peaks as we had friends and family there,'

says Abi. 'I'd spent my teen years scrambling on rocks, watching solar eclipses, going for dawn walks and still loved the peace and freedom of the moors, which Ian felt, too.'

The couple's main home is an early Victorian house in a bustling minster town and they liked the idea of retreating to a cottage, quintessentially Peak District, with gritstone walls and character. The couple found 17th-century Holborn Cottage down a narrow lane at the end of a higgledy-piggledy row. Entering through a plastic sliding



### SITTING ROOM

Originally the front wall of the cottage, the window opening remains and happens to be at worktop height to form a link between this room and the kitchen. Sideboard and second-hand chair in Ho Ho Green intelligent eggshell, £72 for 2.5ltr, Little Greene

FAVOURITE FEATURE *'I like how the wallpaper we chose has the right balance between old and new'*



**SITTING ROOM**  
The mullion window dates back to the 17th century and the sill makes a good seat. Similar velvet fringed cushion, £28, Oliver Bonas



**BOYS' ROOM**  
Abi made use of a ledge above the staircase to build a raised bed. The reclaimed ladder is from eBay



**BOYS' ROOM**  
A whimsical cloud wall mural adds a hint of fun and escapism. Cuddle Clouds wall mural, £38sq m, Rebel Walls



**BATHROOM**  
An all-white colour palette helps boost the feeling of light. Star floor tiles, £24.95sq m, Walls and Floors

door into a single-storey 1970s extension with a kitchen and bathroom, felt disappointing. Then they stepped through to the sitting room. 'We looked around and fell in love with the exposed, thick stone walls and deep windowsills,' says Abi. 'Afterwards we sat in the local pub, with the fire lit and fairy lights around the window, and both knew we wanted to make the cottage work for us.'

Abi and Ian's main concern was how to squeeze in a bathroom upstairs to make way for a kitchen-diner. Abi put her interior design skills to use, borrowing a pen from the

barman and sketching a design on a napkin. Four months later, they'd turned a section of the main bedroom into a shower room, made a bigger kitchen-diner and were ready to decorate. 'I was keen to introduce modern colours to contrast with and complement the honesty of the natural stone, pine cladding and beams,' Abi says.

Unsure about the colour of the black-stained beams, Abi eventually dismissed the idea of sandblasting due to cost, embracing them as they were and prompting the start of a colour palette with a black Ikea kitchen. 'Black






### MAIN BEDROOM

A monochrome scheme creates a Scandi feel.  
Similar Havanna wool throw, £78, Nordic Nest.  
Try the round mirror, £19.40, Søstrene Grene

cupboards rebel against conventional cottage interiors, but the rustic oak worktops nod to the property's origins,' she says. Blue-greens in the painted splashback add colour to the black kitchen while a richer shade of green was used to paint various furniture pieces and the doors.

'The cottage isn't huge so carrying colours through was the best way to encourage spaces to relate to one another,' says Abi. A pair of teal sofas in the sitting room work well with the striking wallpaper and extend the blue-green palette. Upstairs, colour dials down with fresh white tiles in

the bathroom allowing the gritstone wall to take centre stage. A similar approach is taken in the bedrooms where Abi's favourite French pale grey brings a lovely warm feel.

'Our cottage looks cohesive and feels connected, staying here always feels like a treat, especially in winter. There's nothing better than getting up on the moors and feeling the immense space around us and then returning to the cottage, getting the fire going and making hot chocolate.'  Holborn Cottage can be rented through: [peakvenues.co.uk/venues/55/holborn-cottage](https://peakvenues.co.uk/venues/55/holborn-cottage).