

Living room

Traditional touches are noted in the wool loop carpet and sofa shape. Bluebell sofa in turquoise velvet from [Sofa.com](#) is a good match. Chartreuse footstool, Sofa Workshop

CONTEMPORARY CHARACTER

Interior designer Abi Powell brought her 17th-century cottage into the 21st century with a modern palette of rich greens and blues

Exterior

Holborn Cottage is thought to be one of the oldest in the village of Litton. The single storey extension benefits from a new front door, in a traditional design by Abi

**Dining area**

Leftover wallpaper from the living room links the two spaces while a bright yellow lamp shade brings a pop of colour. Habitat has similar. The Calia table is by John Lewis & Partners

“WE LOOKED AROUND AND FELL IN LOVE WITH THE EXPOSED, THICK STONE WALLS AND DEEP WINDOWSILLS”

**AT HOME WITH**

Owners Abi Powell, who runs Hookway Design (hookwaydesign.co.uk), lives here with husband, Ian, a building surveyor, and children, Toby, 12, and Reuben, nine. The couple bought Holborn Cottage in 2018 as a holiday retreat.

House A 17th-century two-bedroom cottage.

Losing a loved one can be a trigger for change, as we look at our lives and wonder what could be different. When Abi Powell's father sadly passed away in 2017, it encouraged her and husband Ian to re-evaluate what was important in their lives. Abi had grown up on the edge of the Peak District with the moors on her doorstep, and she still felt an affinity with the area, despite living 40 miles away in Nottingham with Ian and their children.

'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.'

The couple's main home is a Victorian house and they were keen to find somewhere very different. They liked the idea of retreating to a quintessential Peak District cottage, with gritstone walls and character.

'In winter, the landscape here can look quite barren. And with many villages built in gritstone, some looked quite grey as we drove through,' Abi recalls. 'Then we arrived in Litton with its trees and village green.'

The couple found 17th-century Holborn Cottage down a narrow lane at the end of a higgledy row. Entering the house through a plastic sliding door into a single-storey 1970s extension with a kitchen >

Kitchen

Ikea's black Lerhyttan Shaker doors form a solid and contemporary base. They're paired with a traditional tongue and groove panelling and oak worktops in Rubio Monocoat Oil Plus 2c Ash Grey stain



“BLACK CUPBOARDS REBEL AGAINST CONVENTIONAL COTTAGE INTERIORS BUT THE RUSTIC OAK WORKTOPS NOD TO THE COTTAGE'S ORIGINS”

**Dining area**

Abi designed the bench seat to fit the space. She bought the Victorian shoe lasts from Rutland Antiques Centre, upcycling them with hooks to hang coats

Kitchen

Fitting a traditional door and oak floor planks helped the 1970s extension blend in. Chair made by a friend, Nigel Briggs at Windsor Chairmaker



and bathroom created a disappointing first impression, but then they went into the living room.

'The fire was going and we fell in love with the thick, exposed stone walls and deep windowsills. I had a strong feeling the cottage had always been a happy place,' says Abi. 'Afterwards we sat in the local pub, cosy with a fire 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 downstairs. Borrowing a pen from the barman, Abi put her interior design skills to use and sketched a design on a napkin. Four months later, they'd turned a section of the main bedroom into a compact shower room, made a bigger kitchen-diner and were ready to decorate.

'I wanted to move away from typical country cottage schemes of creams and greys,' Abi says. 'I introduced modern colours to complement the honesty of the natural stone, pine cladding and beams.'

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 cupboards rebel against conventional cottage interiors but the rustic oak worktops nod to the cottage's origins,' she says. 'Then we found an old etching of a farmer at an antiques fair. His contented >





Main bedroom

A monochrome scheme creates a Scandi feel. Nordic Nest sells a similar throw. The antique ebony and bone-framed pictures were given to Abi by her parents; Unique Objects on Etsy has similar. The mirror is from Sostrene Grene



Main bedroom

The exposed stone is complemented by pale grey paint on the other walls. Walls painted in Little Greene French Grey Pale. Bed, John Lewis & Partners. Cushions, West Elm



Boys' bedroom

Abi made use of a storage ledge above the staircase to build a platform bed, ideal for the children, and painted the tongue and groove panelling. The ladder came from eBay

expression and link to the farmland around us really appealed, as did the colours, which informed the green and blue tones in the cottage.'

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 a way to make spaces relate to one another,' says Abi. 'Limiting the palette and the number of times colour appears keeps the focus on the bones of the property.'

A pair of teal sofas follow through in the living room where wallpaper makes eye-catching impact. The pattern is another decorating solution to balance old and new. 'I love the country feel of the floral print and how the rich colour tones and Scandinavian design feel more contemporary,' Abi says.

Upstairs, colour dials down with a fresh, crisp decor of white tiles in the new bathroom, allowing the gritstone wall to take centre stage. A similar approach is taken in the bedrooms. 'Little Greene's French Pale Grey is a favourite of mine as it has a yellow tone with a lovely warm feel,' says Abi. 'Staying here always feels like a treat, especially in winter. There's nothing better than feeling the immense space around us on the moors, then returning to the cottage, getting the fire going and making hot chocolate.'

Stay at Holborn Cottage via peakvenues.co.uk.

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN PHOTOGRAPHS JEREMY PHILLIPS



ON OUR DOORSTEP

Visit... 'The Chatsworth Estate (chatsworth.org) is wonderful. We also adore walking on Burbage Edge and Stanage Edge Moors.'

Shop at... 'The Old Original Bakewell Pudding Shop (bakewellpuddingshop.co.uk) still makes puddings by hand. I also like the David Mellor Country Shop (davidmellordesign.com) in Hathersage.'

Go for a meal at... 'The Red Lion (theredlionlitton.co.uk) is minutes away, serving traditional pub food and where we're greeted by a pair of friendly labradors.'