

The forgotten house

VARINIA AND PAUL JOYCE RESCUED AN UNWANTED HOUSE, CREATING A RELAXED HOME WITH A CLASSIC KITCHEN-DINER AT ITS HEART

Kitchen The family spend most of their time in this space. The switch between practical stone and warm wood flooring marks the divide between the new and original part of the house. Grey limestone, Mrs Stone. Oak planks, World of Flooring. >>

What makes this house a home...
 'We've moved many times, but having the belongings we love around us always makes us feel at home'

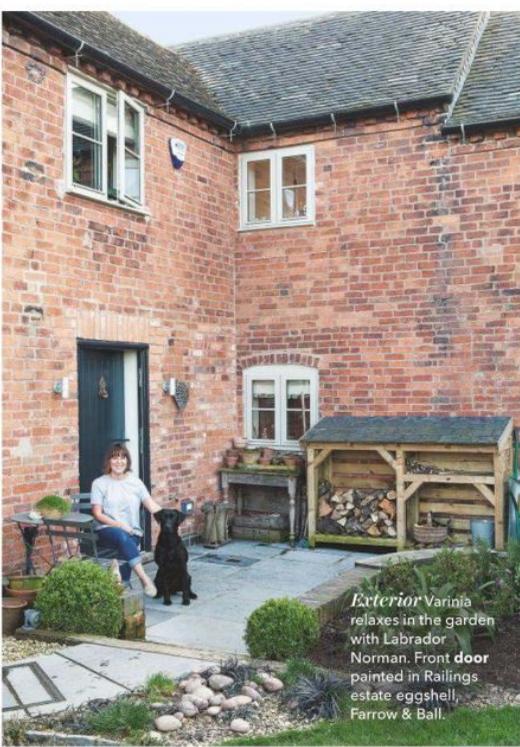


Kitchen The newly extended space is bathed in light from the Velux windows. **Cabinetry**, DeVol, painted in Mushroom; island painted in Lead. **Quartz worktop**, Planet Granite. **Pendants**, Garden Trading.

Hallway A plaid carpet adds subtle pattern. **Abbotsford Range plaid stair carpet**, Brintons.



Exterior Varinia relaxes in the garden with Labrador Norman. **Front door** painted in Railings estate eggshell, Farrow & Ball.



Finding themselves with time on their hands one Saturday afternoon, Varinia Joyce and her husband, Paul, went out and bought themselves a new house.

Serial renovators, the couple have moved 10 times in the last 30 years, and were aware that a Victorian property nearby their previous home was empty and had gone unsold at auction. 'We paid a visit, loved the rural views and stopped to take a look at the garden and peer through the windows,' says Varinia. 'The property was in a bad way, but we'd never taken on a project on this scale before and liked the idea of starting from scratch.'

The couple offered the full asking price without stepping inside, but the estate agent insisted they view the house. Duly they did, and remained unfazed by the poky layout, no heating and lack of kitchen. The house hadn't been touched since the Fifties, nor used for two years. 'We thought it had a really nice feel to it,' says Varinia. 'We could also see it was a chance to try living with an open kitchen-diner/sitting area.'

Varinia sketched out an ambitious plan for an architect to finesse. As well as extending onto the footprint of the rear coal shed and converting the garage, the couple planned to extend the house to the side and relocate the front door and staircase. 'We wanted the rooms to be >>



AT HOME WITH...

Owners Varinia Joyce, her husband, Paul, and their two black Labradors, Logan and Norman. They have a grown-up son, Jack.

House A detached four-bedroom house built in the 1880s. The couple bought the property in 2013.



Kitchen Creating a step up to the living area keeps a level connection with the garden and provides views of the fields beyond. Rais **woodburner**, Robeys.



Living room The oak ceiling beam marks where the old garage used to be. Sofas, John Sankey. Harrie Leenders **woodburner**, Robeys.

DERBYSHIRE COUNTRY HOUSE

as large as possible – now, none of them are the same size they were before,’ she says.

The couple’s plans were approved in spring 2014 and the builders began work that autumn. By now, Varinia, Paul and their son, Jack, were temporarily living nearby in a Victorian terrace they’d bought to rent out while they took their time to plan the new interior to perfection.

‘The kitchen was the most important room in the house,’ says Varinia. With her heart set on DeVol cabinets, she settled on the company’s Shaker-style kitchen in a pale grey with a darker grey tone on the island. ‘The palette for the whole house unfolded from there,’ she says.

A visit to the Artist Residence boutique hotel in Brighton became an unexpected source of inspiration when the couple spotted a vintage garage door in the reception, fitted on a horizontal runner. ‘We thought the idea looked great, but our builders thought we were bonkers when we asked them to do the same with our old garage doors,’ says Varinia. Despite the builders’ misgivings, the reclaimed sliding doors are now installed in the kitchen and living room, while a salvaged door from the old potting shed leads into the utility room.

The couple also kept the beam from the demolished pantry, which their joiner, Joe Thompson of JT Joinery, »



Living area A simple display began with a painting from Newark Antiques Fair. The cabinet was found in a charity shop and painted by Varinia.



Living room The Eastern-style antique cabinet was too heavy to carry upstairs and found a natural home in this space. **Cabinet**, Cottage Antiques.





Guest bedroom Soft pinks add a feminine touch while the eiderdown fits the nostalgic mood. Flying Ducks cushion, Mulberry Home.



En suite Velux windows allow daylight to flood in. Vanity, JT Joinery, painted in Purbeck Stone estate eggshell, Farrow & Ball.



Main bedroom Low views over the fields can be enjoyed from the bed. Balinese doors, Hansons Auctioneers. Peacock cushions, TK Maxx.

*What we love most about living here...
‘The rural views and waking up to the sun streaming in and the sounds of the countryside’*

sliced in half. ‘Joe glued a piece of the oak above the new kitchen window and another above the living room patio doors to look like original wood lintels,’ says Varinia.

The juxtaposition of old and new threads throughout the original house. A contemporary woodburner takes pride of place in the living room, which was once the garage, and a pair of antique Balinese doors makes a striking wall feature in the new main bedroom. Rooms are an eclectic mix of Eastern accents and ethnic design, Victorian antiques and classic styles, as well as a touch of modern. Varinia’s treasures have come from antique auctions, exotic holidays, and some pieces she has owned for years.

‘I’m drawn to the texture and colour of old things and I don’t like them to look too perfect, as this adds to their charm,’ she says. ‘The cast iron and brass bed in the guest bedroom came from an auction when we were first married 27 years ago, and has been with us ever since. The starburst mirror has been in three or four houses and takes on a completely new identity each time.’

The house has proved the perfect project. ‘We love being surrounded by fields, and we sleep with the curtains and windows open in summer as we don’t have neighbours,’ say Varinia. ‘But we haven’t retired from renovating just yet – we’ve got our eye on a barn conversion next.’

ON OUR
DOORSTEP...

Visit... Barton Marina (01283 711666, bartonmarina.co.uk) at Barton-under-Needwood is a lovely place to walk around, with cafes where you can sit outside and watch the boats go by.

Shop at... The Florist Gate (thefloristgate.org.uk) near Burton upon Trent is another favourite. They sell lovely homewares and farm produce with their flowers.

Go for a meal at... The Dial Restaurant and Bar (01283 544644, the.dial.co.uk) in Burton upon Trent is family run and the food is always good. They sell great craft beers and have an innovative cocktail menu.

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN PHOTOGRAPHS JAMES FRENCH