

HEART OF OAK

Jane Hartley's passion for wood inspired the transformation of her listed cottage in Hampshire into a home full of light and space

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MAIN PICTURE JANE'S ASIATIC PHEASANT CHINA BLENDS WITH THE CHALKY BLUE DINING ROOM WALLS. ABOVE LIGHT FLOODS INTO THE DINING ROOM THROUGH FLOOR-LENGTH WINDOWS





MAIN PICTURE A COLLECTION OF CLOCK FACES STANDS ABOVE A RESTORED MULLION WINDOW IN THE HALL WHERE A PORTRAIT OF JANE AND MICHAEL'S SON MAX HAS BEEN FRAMED WITH OLD FLOORBOARDS. LEFT WITH PLENTY OF LIGHT AND FOLIAGE, THE SINGLE-STORY CONSERVATORY CONNECTS THE GARDEN WITH THE HOUSE. BELOW THE GREEN OAK STAIRCASE, COPIED FROM A 13TH-CENTURY EXAMPLE AT THE NEARBY WEALD AND DOWNLAND MUSEUM, RISES TO THE GALLERY AND BEDROOM

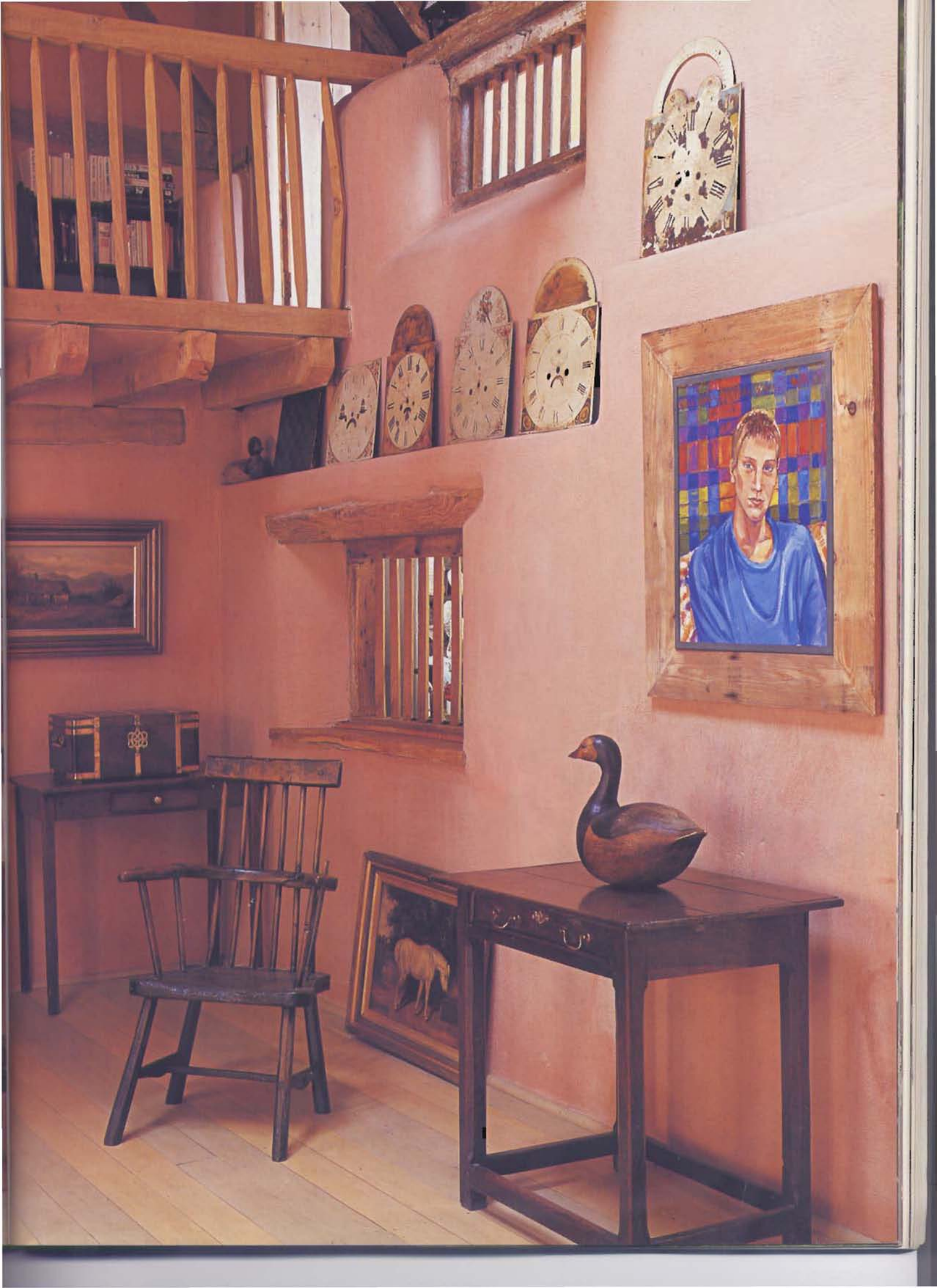
When the Hartleys moved to a small 16th-century thatched cottage in Hampshire, a sitting tenant greeted them. The listed barn next to the cottage was occupied by an elderly lady who lived in two breeze-block rooms that had been erected inside the barn in the 1950s.

Jane and Michael bought the grade-II listed building in 1979, undertaking necessary renovation work immediately while renting nearby. "The gardens had become totally overgrown and we were able to pick apples through the bedroom window when we first moved in," Jane recalls.

"We were never able to see the construction of the barn in the early years," she explains. So, when they eventually gained vacant possession in 1994, they were surprised by the amount of space available. "It was only when we had removed 36 skips of blockwork that we could appreciate the structure in its entirety: it was immensely exciting."

After living in somewhat cramped, if cosy, conditions in the cottage, they were in desperate need of light and space. Although Jane had been collating ideas, swatches and magazine clippings for some time, it was difficult to decide how to approach such an enormous project. Inspiration, however, came through a chance meeting with architect Roderick James and an invitation to his Devon home, Seagull House. A former director of »







the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales, Roderick had transformed a 1950s bungalow by cladding it with weatherboarding, building a walkway around and adding a conservatory. Jane and Michael loved the beauty and simplicity, returning to Hampshire fired with enthusiasm to emulate this style.

Roderick suggested linking the rear of the cottage and barn with a two-storey extension housing the dining room and master bedroom above. A contemporary

conservatory was planned, to be designed and built by Carpenter Oak & Woodland, Roderick's company, which specialises in building with green oak, using carpentry skills passed down by the great barn-builders of the Middle Ages. "Green oak is relatively cheap and easy to use as it is still wet and malleable," Jane explains.

Wood has become part of Jane's life, in more ways than one. She now runs a mail-order business, The Nether Wallop Trading Company, from home, selling practical kitchen and garden items designed by her and handcrafted from British hardwoods.

The Hartleys lived in the cottage during the building work. They experienced wet feet from spring floods when the earth floors were dug down to accommodate underfloor heating, and took to wearing Wellingtons at breakfast. Living on site had its compensations, with Jane able to supervise, make deals and undertake many tasks herself, including making wooden window shutters out of woven sheep hurdles for their bedroom and painting many of the walls with soft distemper.

It took almost a year to complete the work: the tin roof was removed from the 15th-century chalk barn, which is now covered with a mellow mixture of red and brown handmade clay tiles. Structural repairs to the existing buildings were carried out prior to erecting the new oak additions. Light now streams into the rear of the house through the glass panels. Heating concealed underneath Spanish floor tiles adds to energy efficiency, a priority in such large spaces. The overall effect, a harmonious meeting of Mediterranean and medieval, is awe-inspiring. 🐣

Carpenter Oak & Woodland (01225-743089) will be exhibiting at the CL Spring Fair.

MAIN PICTURE SIMPLE TICKING CURTAINS, MINIMAL DECORATION AND A LADDER LEADING TO MICHAEL'S WARDROBE GIVE THE MASTER BEDROOM A NAUTICAL FEEL. **BELOW** IN THE OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN, JANE PAINTED THE SOFTWOOD UNITS A DISTRESSED GREY

SOURCEBOOK

ASIATIC PHEASANT by Wedgwood is available by mail order from Lovers of Blue and White China (01763-853800). PAINT Soft distemper by Cy-Prez (01536-373431). COUNTRY ANTIQUES available from Andover Saleroom, every two weeks; call 01264-364820 for details; or Jane Baigent Antiques (01264-811137). BEDROOM STRIPES AND TICKING available from Ian Mankin, call 0171-722 0997 for mail order and samples.



READER OFFER

The Nether Wallop Trading Company has a unique range of unusual and practical products for your garden and house, available by



mail order. We particularly liked this traditional garden dibber and dibblet made from English Yew. The Nether Wallop Trading Company is offering *CL* Friends a 15 per cent discount off their first order from the catalogue, for a copy, call 01264-782450 and quote *CL* when ordering. Offer closes 30 April 1999.

