



Hilary and Michael were thrilled at being able to work closely with the Churchwood team during the process to help get their ideal kitchen. "It was great being able to visit the workshops," says Michael. "We got to see all the various components and pieces of furniture being made."

### Origin of species

The kitchen showcases its enticing natural wood cabinetry which is made from pippy oak, a species sometimes known as cat's paw because of the patterns made by knot clusters. "For the counter tops they opted for nero impala granite to create a dramatic contrast with the natural oak," explains Charlotte Ambler of Churchwood Design. "They also picked out some traditional antique-style handles, and for the flooring the boards were Russian oak. The overall look was chosen to reflect the area of the country that the home is in. It's a Derbyshire cottage with extensive oak beams. So we found something that would suit this element of the house. Hilary and Michael loved the burr pattern of the timber, and they were thrilled with the end result which is great for us when we've put as much care and thought into the details and finish as possible."

The design team worked with Hilary and Michael to ensure that everything that they wanted could be achieved in the space available. "The larder cupboard that hides the flue, had to have reduced in depth, for example," explains Charlotte. "This was so that it did not encroach on the dining area. They also decided on putting some shelves around the range cooker to create some extra storage space. Too many wall cabinets would have closed it all in, and it could have ended up feeling a little cramped. We also crafted the side table with its two drawers to match the units."

The couple were very pleased with their new kitchen, and the fact that Churchwood Design managed to meet all their desires. "The only major thing we had to compromise on was the range cooker," says Michael. "We wanted a gas model but there was no natural gas in our village, so we opted for an electric cast iron one from Esse instead. Considering it was an entirely new kitchen, that just goes to show how smoothly the whole project went."

### Expert Tip

With the uneven and challenging proportions of old properties like this one, bespoke furniture is the only real solution if you want to make the most of such a difficult space.

**CHARLOTTE AMBLER,**  
CHURCHWOOD DESIGN

### CONTACT DETAILS

Churchwood Design kitchens are priced from around £15,000. Every commission undertaken is unique, with no standard materials, styles or sizes. Call 01298 872 422 or visit [churchwood.co.uk](http://churchwood.co.uk) for more information.



# Tree of Life

This 300-year-old cottage was given a natural oak kitchen in keeping with its ancient character

Hilary and Michael Collyer have been living in their current home for 13 years, but the property itself has been around much longer. The original part of the building is over 300 years old, and it was a modest two-bedroom cottage until fairly recently. The former owner, an architect, had the property lovingly extended in the same traditional style so that it now has five bedrooms.

Having been here for over a decade the couple decided that the time was right to rework the kitchen, reinvigorating it and making it work perfectly for their needs. "The previous kitchen was just too small for us," says Michael. "It was also located in a tiny, dark room in the old part of the cottage. So we decided to relocate it to somewhere in the more spacious extension. We had been using this area as a utility room, but it seemed like the perfect place to move it to."

### Big ideas

Even though the size of the house had greatly increased thanks to the extension, the cosy cottage feel had been retained, so the area available was still relatively limited. "We wanted a brighter, bigger space, and I think the layout has certainly helped us achieve that," says Michael. "Initially we had oak veneer cabinets fitted, but ultimately we decided to push the boat out with bespoke, in-frame cabinetry from Churchwood Design."

When the couple talked through their needs and desires for their new kitchen, Churchwood's design team made sure that every element was covered. "The plans were meticulously hand-drawn, with some clever design solutions," says Michael. "For example, we needed to disguise a flue pipe from the boiler so they created a larder cupboard to hide it. We decided against having a central island unit simply because of the space available."

