

# A LABOUR *of* LOVE

*Passionate decorator and DIY enthusiast, Lorna McCallum, breathed new life into an abandoned Victorian farmhouse in Bankfoot, Perthshire.*

By Ketsuda Phoutinane

Picture an eyewateringly clear summer sunrise in Perthshire. The air is very, very still. On these mornings Lorna McCallum occasionally notices little dots of hot air balloons softly emerge on the skyline, floating across uninterrupted countryside.

"It makes it look like it's fake, the view out of the window, because you see nothing but rolling green and there are little hot air balloons floating by," says Lorna. "We're really quite blessed."

It was enough to make an army kid stay put. Born in Helensburgh but with a father in the forces, Lorna had never lived anywhere longer than 18 months. The past eight years in Meikle Obney House, the McCallum's Victorian farmhouse near Bankfoot, have been a considerable stretch indeed.

She and her husband, Kevin, and children, Lewis and Beth, packed up from the outskirts of Glasgow to what was then a dilapidated farmhouse. It was the perfect project for a perpetual decorator.

"We fancied a little bit of rural living," Lorna recalls. "We just wanted to raise our children somewhere the air was clean and where we could walk our dog. It's the dream, isn't it? To escape from the city."

The house was passed down generations of farmers and had been neglected for the last seven years. While rain poured into the bedrooms through the roof, there was no running water. Luckily, Kevin and Lorna were in the market for a "fixer-upper".

"We both wanted something we could start afresh and renovate to our tastes," Lorna explains. "I didn't want to buy a house and rip out a perfectly nice kitchen."

They reworked the four bedroom, three and a half bathroom house from the inside out for the next six months.

"We rewired it, replumbed it, did all the usual things when you come across a house that's over a 100 years old and needs a little bit of life breathing back into it. We did all the essentials and gave it a heartbeat again."

After the remedial work, the real work began – and still continues.

Without question, interior design is a passion for Lorna, a film and makeup artist and former real estate agent. Each room in the house has since been redecorated four or five times over.

The McCallums have completed most of the

refurb themselves, from painting rooms to laying floors. A massive eBay, Gumtree and Pinterest fan, Lorna is a keen DIY-er.

Kevin and the kids generally leave Lorna to her devices.

"I'm forever dragging rubbish home and Kevin's saying, 'What the hell are you going to do with that?' and I'm saying, 'Just you wait. It will look nice eventually.'"

A factory-table-turned-kitchen-island is one of her most notable creations. It was originally used to stretch and cut leather, which they then cut down just so it could enter the kitchen. Then it was converted and powered up for kitchen use.

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"If there's something I want and it's a vintage piece and I can't find it, I'll get the next best thing and convert it," she says.

"It's very rare that something comes in to the house and I leave it as it is."

Other projects include a tea crate turned hallway table, a reproduction of a vintage spoon rack (inspired by Pinterest, naturally) and soft furnishings. Lorna has made the entire home's blinds and cushions.

For all the DIY, the home takes a cue from its farmhouse roots. The family kept all of its original doors and some original sash windows. The drawing room and living room also have traditional press cupboards.

While the latest iteration of the farmhouse décor is modern country, Lorna's style is