



Above
The bright oak fitted kitchen

Below
The larder – once the outside loo



south-facing panoramic views up and down the valley, along the River Tamar and across to Cornwall. Built by Mark Snellgrove of West Country Woodland Gardens, even the wooden fencing was inspired by a design the Garners had seen at Holne Chase Hotel, Ashburton. "This is where we spend all our time; we live here – drinking wine, eating and talking," enthuses John.

Downsizing inevitably raises the problem of deciding what to keep and what to throw away. Not only did the Garners move from a five-bedroom house, but they had also been "collecting anything" for over 30 years, including 200 jugs, sardine dishes, cheese dishes, honey pots, Poole pottery, paintings and stained glass.

Some went off to auction, a selection of favourites are displayed around the cottage, but the remainder has gradually been sold at John's Tuesday morning stall at Tavistock Pannier Market. "It is my main interest at the moment, I just love the atmosphere."

To the Garner's great surprise and pride, they met the Duchess of Bedford's son through the sale of their sardine dishes in the market, when he asked if he could visit Weir Cottage to see the last remaining Tea House built by his great, great grandfather at the bottom of their garden by the river.

Everything in the original cottage is geometrically angled and measured perfectly, indicating the work of master builders – even for its modest use as a fishing lodge. Living Space architects have cleverly incorporated several of the original design features and materials to create a seamless extension, including oak windows with intricate leading beneath, granite sills and hanging slate tiles in a fishtail pattern. The most eye-catching feature is the replicated porch design jutting out from the west-facing master bedroom, where the wooden brackets rest on granite corbels, hand-carved by their builder, Paddy.

The cosy sitting-room surprisingly has three large windows, one of which juts out into a bay, which the owners believe "allowed the water bailiff to see down the river to make sure there were no poachers out there." Individual panes of stained glass are cleverly hung in the top window panes to catch the light, especially in the mornings, while a small selection of jugs sit below on a table. The fireplace now has a

In the cosy sitting room a slab of granite from the original damp course is used as the mantel

