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JUNE 2006 £3.20

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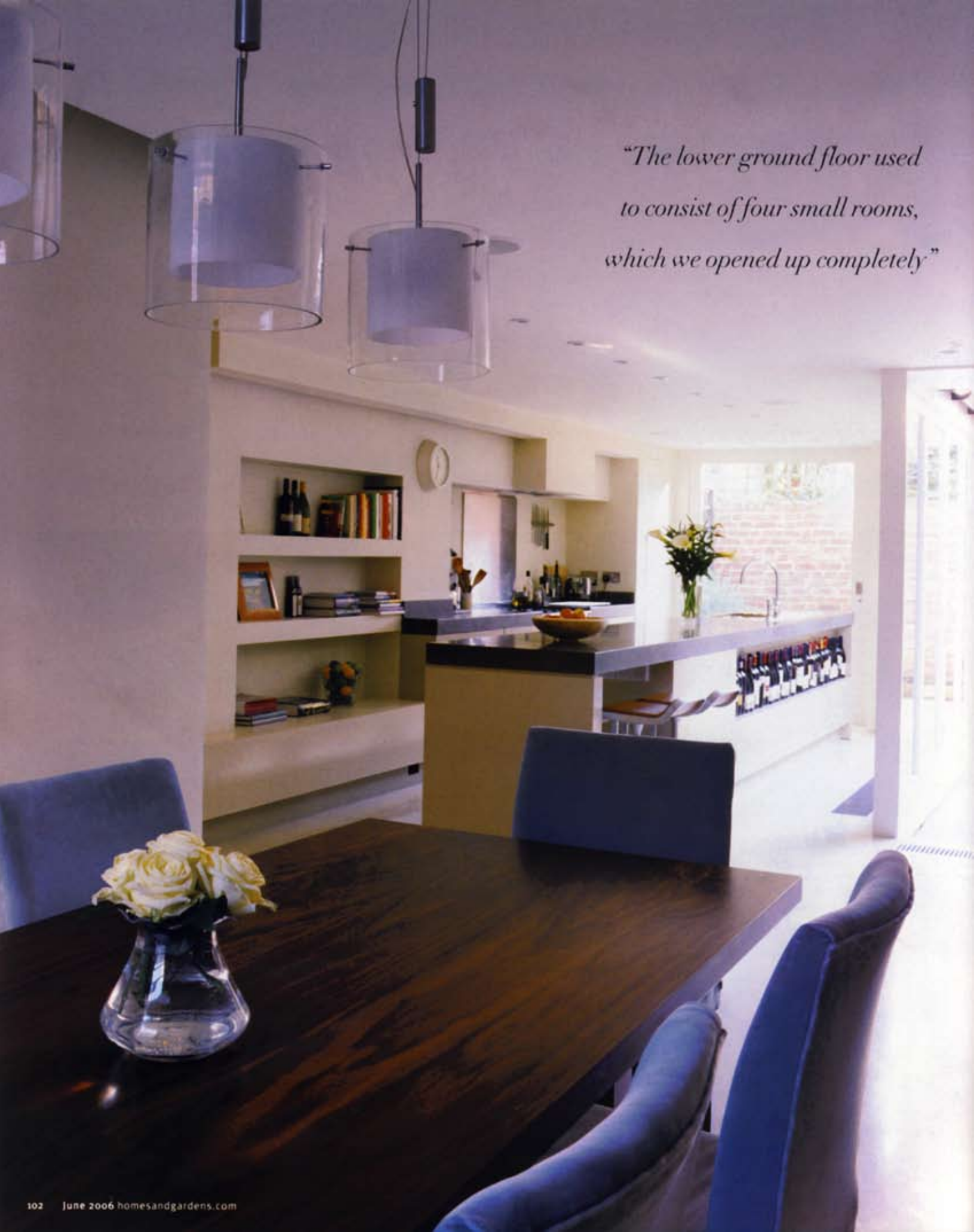
ISSN 0950-0804

# *Hidden talents*



*From the outside,  
Henry Halley's London  
home looks like an  
ordinary period house,  
but inside it is a different  
story – with spacious,  
welcoming interiors  
and an inspiring  
mix of old and new*





*“The lower ground floor used to consist of four small rooms, which we opened up completely”*

**T**HE HOUSES IN SOUTHWEST London where Henry Halley lives have a deceptive quality. For Victorian terraced homes, they are surprisingly light and well proportioned. They offer another surprise in that you enter at ground level and walk down to the basement, which leads into the back garden. It turns out that the streets themselves are raised – a common trick in the 1840s, it was a way of allowing coal holes and services to be hidden away beneath the new roads.

Henry Halley's home is particularly well served with sunlight and natural warmth due to its recent treatment by architects Groves Natcheva and interior designer Antonia Lazenby. The entire house has been radically re-invented since Henry, a City banker, bought it three years ago and began to mastermind a delicate balancing act between old and new.

"I spent a year living in the house and thinking about what to do with it," explains Henry. "Then for a year and a half there was building work in which everything from rewiring and plumbing to a lot of structural work was done. The lower ground floor used to consist of four small rooms, which we opened up completely with new supports."

Henry has lived in the area ever since he graduated from Cambridge, first buying a flat with one of his two sisters, and then a small house. But he underestimated the amount of time and level of commitment that re-modelling his new four-storey home would demand. He set about turning the lower ground floor into a modern, open-plan kitchen and dining area, with additional space gained by claiming some of the garden. Structural changes were also made on the floors above, including heightening and extending doorways. For the decoration upstairs, Henry was quite clear that he wanted a more traditional feel but he didn't have the time to achieve it on his own.

"I was getting to the point where the main building work was finishing, but I had no idea about how to pull the interiors together," he admits. "At the same time, I was also

**OPPOSITE AND PREVIOUS PAGE, TOP** Modernity reigns in the kitchen designed by Groves Natcheva. The Tablemakers table echoes the chunky quality of the limestone work surfaces; the pendant lights are from John Lewis. **TOP RIGHT** Henry chose a Dudgeon sofa for his study; on the shelf is a bust of his famous forebear, novelist John Buchan. **RIGHT** To enhance the cosy feel of the study, Henry chose hessian wallcovering by Schumacher at Turnell & Gigon and curtains in Donnybrook Floral Tea by Ralph Lauren at Designers Guild. A chair from Kingcome Sofas beside a standard lamp by Mr Light provides a relaxing place to read.





immersed in a very intensive project at work and there was no way I could go over to the house every morning and then turn up to meetings covered in builders' dust"

On the advice of a friend, he turned to Antonia Lazenby, who had worked with James and Philippa Thorp of Thorp Design before setting up on her own a year ago. She took on Henry's existing ideas and furniture and shaped them into a cohesive scheme. "The architectural look downstairs is obviously very modern," she says, "and the worry was that it might become too clinical, so our challenge was to make it visually friendly. Overall, a key way of getting the whole scheme started was to make sure each room had a definite purpose, this encouraged Henry to be a bit more adventurous than he might otherwise have been."

He had already decided that the formal living room would be on the first floor and that the ground floor should be reconfigured as a more relaxed study-cum-television and dining room. There were also a number of family pieces to be woven into the scheme, including the dining table, and a mirror in the sitting room. Henry is a descendant of the novelist John Buchan, who wrote *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, he owns a bureau that once belonged to the author, books and various other pieces, including an imposing bust that now presides over a bookcase in the study.

"The living room became a more formal space, but the study in particular needed rescuing from being filled with technology," says Antonia. "I wanted to make it into a room where you would want to get the fire going - to be a place where you could sit on a lazy Sunday afternoon and feel content and cosy. Henry's taste isn't overly masculine but there were a few details, such as the Ralph Lauren floral curtains, where he needed some persuasion and I had to ask him to trust me."

Texture and splashes of colour were used throughout to add character - the hessian wallcovering in the study being a prime example. In the living room, there is a Bruno Triplett grasscloth on the walls, while a new fireplace from Chesney's creates a focal point, topped with a reconditioned mirror inherited from Henry's parents. The delicate glass oil lamps on the mantelpiece were found by Antonia in a shop on Madison Avenue in New York.

"As the process went on, I gave Antonia much more latitude, since I felt I could not only trust her, but that she

**ABOVE LEFT** On the Philippe Hurel table in the sitting room are contemporary vases from Rebecca Scott International and lamps by Linley.

**LEFT AND OPPOSITE** The ornate mirror, a family piece, does not look in the least bit out of place with the contemporary coffee table by William Yeoward. The curtain fabric is in a slub silk, Harmony, with binding in Serenity, both by Larsen at Colefax and Fowler; the chairs, placed close for casual gatherings, are from Dudgeon.





could come up with much better ideas than I could," says Henry "As a layman, you think you have ideas but, once your great idea has been used up, there is still the rest of the house to be done. Apart from the basement, where there was no point in pretending it could be anything but modern, I wanted interiors that would be in keeping with the house. Antonia is instinctively more modern in her ideas than I am, but I think she's got the balance right. The house is now a great combination of the old and the new" ■

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**PHOTOGRAPHS** MARK LUSCOMBE-WHYTE

**LEFT** These Alpine cushions were brought back from Switzerland by Henry. They pick up the red in the Ian Mankin fabric, Empire 3 in Flax and Peony, on the Ochre blanket box.

**BELOW** With its painted panelling and floor, the bathroom has a New England feel. A Lloyd Loom chair from an auction at Criterion sits below a blind in Tango from the Fandango Stripes collection by Nina Campbell at Osborne & Little; fittings are from Aston Matthews.

## SOURCEBOOK

**Antonia Lazenby**, 07714 714988; antonialazenby.com.  
**Aston Matthews**, (020) 7226 7220; astonmatthews.co.uk.  
**Bruno Triplet**, (020) 7823 9990.  
**Colefax and Fowler**, (020) 8877 6400; colefax.com.  
**Criterion Auctions**, (020) 7359 5707 and (020) 7228 5563; criterionauctions.co.uk.  
**Designers Guild**, (020) 7893 7400; designersguild.com.  
**Dudgeon**, (020) 7589 0322; dudgeonsofas.com.  
**Groves Natcheva**, (020) 7823 8804; grovesnatcheva.com.  
**Ian Mankin**, (020) 7722 0997; ianmankin.com.  
**John Lewis**, 0845 604 9049; johnlewis.com.  
**Kingcome Sofas**, (020) 7352 1005; kingcomesofas.co.uk.  
**Linley**, (020) 7730 7300; davidlinley.com.  
**Mr Light**, (020) 7352 7525; mrlight.co.uk.  
**Osborne & Little**, (020) 7352 1456; osborneandlittle.com.  
**Ochre**, 0870 787 9242; ochre.net.  
**Philippe Hurel**, (020) 7373 1133; philippe-hurel.com.  
**Rebecca Scott International**, (020) 7352 3979; rebeccascott.com.  
**Tablemakers**, (020) 7223 2075; individuallymade.com.  
**Turnell & Gigon**, (020) 8971 1711; tandggroup.com.  
**William Yeoward**, (020) 7349 7828; williamyeoward.com.  
**FOR MORE STYLE IDEAS, SEE PAGE 172**

