

SHEFFIELD

MY NEIGHBOURHOOD

WHEN CAMILLA WESTERGAARD RETURNED TO LIVE IN THE CITY WHERE SHE GREW UP, SHE FOUND ITS MIX OF URBAN LIVELINESS AND OPEN SPACES THE IDEAL PLACE TO RAISE HER OWN FAMILY

Photography: **CRISTIAN BARNETT** Words: **CLARE GOGERTY**



Opposite: the stairs are painted with Danish numbers to help the children learn the language of their grandparents; Camilla in the Botanical Gardens. This page: Camilla made the orange cushion and lampshade. Work by friends is displayed on the shelves behind



"MY MOTHER STILL LIVES HERE. I CAN SEE HER BACK DOOR FROM MY KITCHEN WINDOW"

Returning to live where you grew up is something many of us consider, especially if the intervening years were spent living in London. As property prices grow out of reach, and children are born, the home town we once escaped from starts to become ever more attractive.

Camilla Westergaard grew up in Sheffield but, after university, work drew her to London. She loved city life, but raising children in Hackney became less appealing as time went on. "I loved that when the children were studying dinosaurs, we could go to the Natural History Museum," she says, "but we always knew we wanted our children to grow up with a slower pace of life."

So Camilla went back home to Sheffield and,

with her husband Brendon and their three children (Kaspar, now 16, Anouk, 12, and Pia Rose, 8) in tow, moved into a rental property within sight of her childhood home. "My mother still lives there," Camilla says. "I can see her back door from my kitchen window."

Moving back to Sheffield was a decision she never regretted: the city has delivered in spades. There's its proximity to the Peak District, for starters – a walk through the city's parks takes the family there in under an hour. "Nothing pleases me as much as walking in the country with the children," she says. "Life can be stressful, and it's important to do things that make you happy."

Camilla, who at the time was running her business, Butterscotch & Beesting, selling her own cushions and lampshades, also quickly discovered »





Camilla and Brendon's bedroom is painted in Railings by Farrow & Ball. The sideboard was from a second-hand shop in Nether Edge

Sheffield in a snapshot

For a city forged in the steel industry, Sheffield is very green. A brisk walk will take you from its centre to the Peak District National Park in under an hour and the Winter Garden – a huge, curved, larch glasshouse – is packed with tropical plants. Culturally, it has always attracted singular artists. The Crucible theatre is known for innovative productions, and musicians including Pulp, Human League and the Arctic Monkeys all hail from here. A thriving community of artists and an array of independent cafés, bars, restaurants and galleries keep things lively.



The diagonal bath was in place when the family moved in. The pretty vinyl floor tiles are from Zazous

"IT HAD BEEN A STUDENT HOUSE. WE STRIPPED OUT THE STICKY CARPETS AND MADE IT OUR OWN"



"Pom Kitchen serves the most delicious vegetarian and vegan food and is where I head for a healthy treat with friends. It's one of several interesting independent places on Sharrow Vale Road. Their cheesy jaffles [an Australian take on a toasted sandwich, left] are really tasty and healthy, as is their beetroot latte." *388 Sharrow Vale Road*





"My mum, Hanne Westergaard, is a ceramicist. Her studio is in Persistence Works, a purpose-built art space in the centre of Sheffield. We often drop in with the children, who love making things with her. Many of her pieces are inspired by natural forms such as feathers, the shoreline or leaves. They are really beautiful." hannewestergaard.co.uk

like-minded people. Soon she was part of a supportive and creative community of artists and makers. One of these was James Boardwell who runs Folksy, a marketplace and online community for craftspeople, where Camilla sold her work. After bumping into her in the street and discussing the challenges facing designer-makers, James suggested she organise a Folksy Summer School, which she did with great success, and which led to her current job as lead content creator for Folksy.

Her love of craft – perhaps inherited from her Danish mother Hanne Westergaard, a well regarded ceramicist – can be seen throughout the home she shares with her family, four rescue cats (Claude, Tabitha, Mahi and Ottoline) and Herb, an African pygmy hedgehog. Although the house – a substantial stone terrace yards from the Botanical Gardens – is rented, its landlord turned a blind eye to Camilla's home improvements. "It had been a

student house and had sticky carpets and magnolia walls," she says. "We stripped out the carpet, painted the floors white, and made it our own."

'Making it their own' also meant displaying work by ceramicists, printmakers and textile designers, many of whom are friends. "I like having things around me by people I know," she says. These people also include family members: as well as Camilla's own cushions and lampshades, there are several pieces by her mum on shelves in the living room, and the sketch of an owl on a bedroom wall was drawn by Anouk. "The children are all pretty crafty, too," says Camilla. "They love making things. Pia is really into origami at the moment."

With the children's schools within walking distance, the Peaks near enough for Brendon to indulge his love of running, and Camilla's mother at the bottom of the garden, it looks like this family isn't going anywhere any time soon.



"All the chocolate at Cocoa Wonderland is made by Kate Shepherd, who bought the shop with her friend Anne in 2006. I designed the packaging and had fun thinking up flavours for the chocolate bars with Kate. It's a magical place, filled with jars of sweets and a Chocolate Café upstairs." cocoawonderland.co.uk



"Anna Potter, the owner of florists, Swallows and Damsons, used to be a fine artist, and she treats flowers like a palette of materials, using them in new and inspiring ways. Although the shop is quite small, it has been incredibly influential and her wreath-making workshops are legendary. swallowsanddamsons.com