

## Heather Coppock

*Heather has not lived in Great Shelford for nearly 48 years, but she has fond memories of both Great and Little Shelford, and receives her copy of the Village News each month via the Cambridge Building Society.*



*Heather Coppock*

We moved to Little Shelford early in 1953 when my son was a few months old. My husband converted the old cottages beside Little Shelford village hall, eventually to name them The Long House because they were about 60 feet long. Opening the bedroom windows facing the hall and looking left (*across where the Gall family ropewalk ran*) it was possible to see the railway line - Grandad's railway line. When Grandad's train was due we'd wait for his whistle as the engine came down the line – once we waited, pillow-slip in hand, ready to wave, for almost 45 minutes.

Sometimes, if I knew Grandad was due, I would, with son in pushchair, race to the Hauxton Road crossing gates; at other times I'd go in the opposite direction to Great Shelford station, but it was always exciting seeing Grandad and his train (sometimes pulling goods wagons) go past.

By 1955 and because proper sanitation had not arrived yet in Little Shelford,



*Trains are an enduring interest for the Coppocks and here is the Sir Nigel Gresley with Addenbrooke's in the background*

and my daughter was shortly due, we moved to Station Road (*opposite the then Shelford Corn & Coal Company*). For the first few weeks we found that the noise of the express trains racing down the line from London took some getting used to - as though they would come into the bedroom - but eventually

we got used to them. When Grandad came and made up our coal fire we used to joke that he was 'stoking his engine to go up Chesterford Bank'!

We lived at Station Road until December 1960, moving to Queen Edith's Way, Cambridge, two days after Christmas. We hadn't wanted to leave the Shelfords; I'd made a lot of friends and particularly enjoyed working in my front garden when people returning from work on the trains would sometimes stop and talk. One day there was great excitement when the Queen Mother, the Queen and members of the Royal Family drove over the crossing gates and waved at us on one of their journeys. One of the things I still miss today were the whist drives at Great and Little Shelford, particularly the Christmas ones; in the early days at these drives even the small rooms at the rear of the Memorial Hall and up on the stage at Little Shelford village hall were packed with people – the prizes laid out a joy to behold – turkeys, chickens, pheasants, rabbits, etc. Yet in the end, sadly, because of insufficient support, it all came to an end.

Today, all these years later, we still love the Shelfords, the recreation ground and river where we walk, we use the shops, library, etc, regularly, and the beautiful trees are nearly all still there for us to see as they were.



*The Long House, beside the village hall, Lt Shelford*