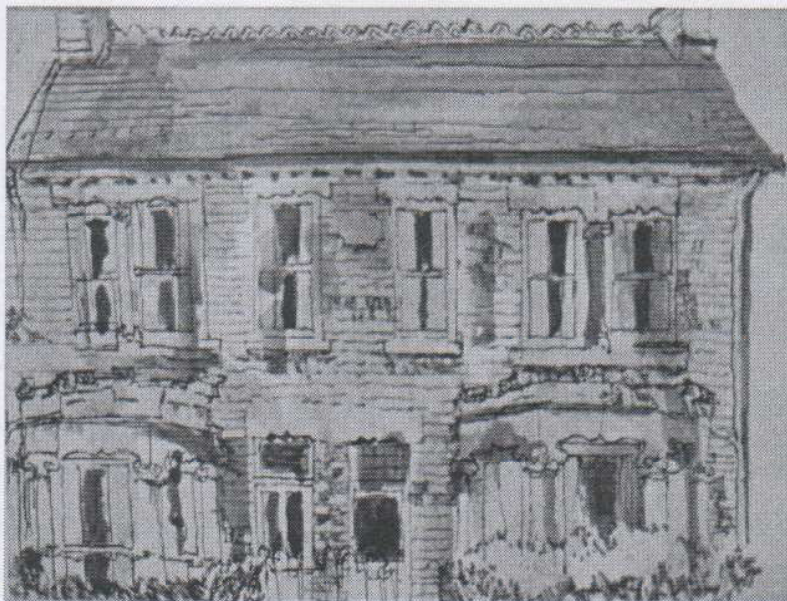


Ted and Hazel Coney

Ted and Hazel were both raised in Hull and both trained as teachers. They came to Shelford soon after they were married in the early 1970s. Ted had just been appointed as Head of Art at Cambridgeshire High School for Boys (later Hills Road Sixth Form College) where he remained for 34 years.

We've been here just over thirty-five years. We've always lived in Woollards Lane. We came over before we got married to find somewhere to live. We only had one day. We went to Mill Road and we didn't like the look of that, and then we got a call to meet this bloke on the garage car park at 10.30 at night - it seems rather bizarre now - to look at 58 Woollards Lane. He didn't live there. It turned out he was looking after it for his mother. So I think we got to Great Shelford about six o'clock, and we had a walk round the village. We peeped in the village hall and there was a Parish Council meeting going on, and then we went to The Plough. We sat in there for a while, and it got darker and darker, and then finally we met this guy on the car park. We didn't even know which house it was, we just knew we were meeting him there, and he took us up to this little top flat. We were there renting about two years. And

then we decided we would try and buy something, and we were going off to Bar Hill to look at something, and as we came out of the house we just noticed across the road, at number 45, there was a little hand-written notice in the window saying 'For Sale'. We knocked at the door and within half an hour we'd agreed to buy! So we were



Ted's house The Hollies is on the right - painting by Ted

photographed by Emily Coney

there for about two years. And then we met Mrs Love, who was about to marry Professor Deer and move, so her house was up for sale. I met her at an evening class, and she came round for coffee, and met Hazel, and said we couldn't possibly live in that little house with a child, because of the staircase, which was very steep. She said we had to buy her house! I said 'I don't think we could afford it', and she actually put the price down, and said 'You've got to buy it, I insist!' Hazel was about to give birth. In fact I think the anxiety of the move brought it on, and so she was rushed into hospital from

45 Woollards Lane and when she came out ten days later, she came back to this one, number 20! So I think that was quite dramatic really, but we didn't have much furniture, so I just had a collection of friends who walked the stuff down the road, and I borrowed the college minibus to take any bits and pieces. The Middlebrooks, who lived two doors away, just by the cake shop, hosted a lunch party for everybody who helped me move, but unfortunately they provided home-made beer, and in the afternoon people weren't as careful with all the stuff, and so although Hazel had colour coded everything, nothing went in the right place. So she felt even more disorientated when she finally got here.

I always felt Woollards Lane was very much the village high street, although it's not called High Street, with a mixture of shops and houses, and big houses and small houses.¹ I felt it was nice, particularly as we'd lived in three houses there.

We never needed a very big garden because, although we had three children, we always used the recreation ground (*which is opposite the Hollies*), and our children made full use of that over the years. There's ten years separating Yve and Max with Leo in the middle, and I think I had twenty years of going over to the park with the children. Although my children are in their 20's and 30's, we always wickedly go on the swings on Christmas morning, when there's nobody there. We break all the rules! We play Off-ground Tig – whoever is 'It' tries to get somebody, until you leap onto a swing or stand on a seat. And then we usually walk down Woodlands Road, and then back round to the house, ready for the Queen's speech. A Shelford ritual!

Ted describes life as an art teacher

The school changed into a sixth form college. It was always changing and the art department was always changing too. I always said I'd leave if it ever got boring but it never did and it was a fantastic place to work. The College got bigger and more and more successful, although it was hectic. I used to get there at about quarter past seven every morning and leave at seven at night. It was great! I bought this old Morris Minor, which I've had for over thirty years, and it's seventy-five years old now. For most of the time I interspersed driving with cycling, but three or four days a week I would drive in my Morris Minor.

¹ The most common mistake outsiders to the village make is to assume that Woollards Lane is the High Street.

Both Ted and Hazel have a great respect and feeling for the past and its relationship with the present. Ted did a 70th anniversary tour in this car which subsequently inspired one of his many unique paintings, narratives of his personal history and family life. More recently he and Hazel joined with friends to celebrate 60th birthdays by cycling from Great Shelford to the West Coast of Scotland.

Our only cheat was Hazel with our back-up car. We'd meet her each evening in the B & B's. It meant she'd got all our clothes, so we could get jollied up with a bit of luxury in the evening. We needed that! My bike dates from 1940 and it's been maintained by Dougie of Trumpington Cycles who's brilliant. He used to shake his head when he knew what we were doing, but he did the bike so well, and he put in this green gunge so that we didn't get any flat tyres - special secret formula green gunge. And we had thicker tyres put on. Otherwise it was the bikes that we'd normally use. Of course Great Shelford and Cambridge are a great place to cycle and it's got better over the years because I could get to Hills Road virtually on a cycle lane from Hinton Way these last few years, so that's really good.²

When interviewed Ted and Hazel were on the point of moving to Ely where he is to establish a new venture.

I've always been doing paintings about my travelling and our family life. The most significant painting was the one where I've made about forty drawings of lots of buildings in the village, particularly in Woollards Lane. I put these into a painting which is almost like a picture map with dotted lines showing everything coming to our house, 20 Woollards Lane; everything happens here. That was the idea of the painting. At least ten buildings either no longer exist or they've changed so much, like the 'Corn and Coal Company' and the newsagents. Some may be changed subtly.



Ted on his bike

Photo courtesy The Cambridge Evening News

² This was before the opening of the cycleway to Addenbrooke's Hospital

I have done 'Open Studio' a few times, which is a thing that artists in the Cambridge area do, and it gave me the idea that I would run it as a little business. The idea is to have an 'open studio' Saturday and Sunday afternoons opening from June to September in high season. I'll be charging people a modest fee to come in for a half hour tour of the paintings. But because there are over forty paintings I've worked out six different themes, so if you've enjoyed it, you can come back for a different viewing of different paintings. The reason why we're moving is because, much as we love Great Shelford, it's not on the footfall of any tourists, so it's not the right place to do this. Whereas, where we're hoping to move to in Ely, down Waterside near the Maltings, people are going there for the gallery, tea shop and the Marina. I've been on a business course and I've been doing all my homework, so it will be fun to embark on a kind of mini business, and see what happens. My paintings are not for sale, so it gives me a reason for keeping going. Each painting takes about a year with all the research. The climax of your visit will be to come into the studio to see the one that I'm working on at the moment. That's the idea.