



Celebrating 40 Years in Upton – A Journey That Began in May 1985

By Sue Hollyman

This May marks 40 years since I arrived in Upton to manage & buy Broadlands Park — a place that has not only been my home, but my heart and life's work. In 1985, I came here on behalf of the trustees in bankruptcy to manage the home for the courts, before my husband Ray and I bought the business later in September. He gave up his job as a quantity surveyor in Buckinghamshire and we took a leap of faith, choosing Upton as our new beginning.

Those early days were not easy. The previous owners were still living on-site and made things, let's just say, rather difficult — I wasn't even allowed to use the phone! With just six residents and no staff of our own, my first task was to steady the ship and build something that could last. I remember making all my important phone calls from the red phone box near the old school. Solicitors, accountants, you name it — everything was arranged via that box. One moment I'll never forget is queuing up while a lovely elderly lady was mid-call. Eventually, she finished, I took my call, and just as I thought I could breathe, there was a knock on the glass — she'd left her false teeth in the Yellow Pages.

What helped us settle so quickly was the warmth of the village. Ray (Winkle) at The White Horse made us feel so welcome, introducing us to everyone — soon we were regulars at the pub. For those of you who remember the Winkle days, it was more than just a watering hole. You could buy hams and kippers, get your hair cut, and serve yourself a pint when Winkle was off on a cab run. The mystery coach tours and the quiz became stuff of legends.

Many of our early staff were local – often several members of the same family, and now over the years even three generations. The Joneses, Cookes, Barbers, Cossey's, Roe's— just a few of the names who've shaped Broadlands Park into what it is today. We've always believed that care should be joyful and full of purpose, so even before bucket lists were a "thing," we had one. Residents went to the Houses of Parliament, took helicopter rides, even met the Chippendales!

Forty years on, I'm still here, and still proud to call Upton my first Norfolk home. Thank you to all of you who have been part of this journey — your kindness, humour, and community spirit have made it all worthwhile.

Here's to the next chapter — and perhaps another call from that red phone box (hopefully without the dentures this time).

Sue Hollyman