



Artist and easel, Lucy Grossmith

London commuters may like to look away now. Lucy Grossmith's journey to work time is less than a minute and takes in a few steps through her charming, timbered and thatched pink cottage before opening out to the green oasis of her garden.

After breathing in the scent of summer flowers, and listening to birdsong overhead, she arrives, calm and collected, in her immaculate shed-cum-studio, all ready for the day's toils.

Actually, "toils" is stretching the reality of this scenario. Lucy is an artist who rather likes getting lost in her thoughts as she works on illustrations for greeting cards, prints or larger scale canvases. "My family call it going into my 'Lucyworld', she smiles.

"I love being surrounded by wildlife... needless to say I don't need to go too far for my inspiration," she says.

Not for one minute have Lucy (37) and husband Dan, a freelance utilities distributor, regretted their move from London to Suffolk. "I have family connections with Cavendish and Glemsford, and used to holiday here, so though I spent my teenage years in Devon and Wales, moving to Suffolk feels like coming home.

"We have had to adapt to a fall in our incomes (Lucy used to work for the Islington (now Croydon) based Camden Graphics and was the company's art editor and art director) but it has been a small price to pay for the lifestyle change. We love the relaxed pace of life in Glemsford, our six-year-old Jack goes to a local school, and the people are very friendly and show a real interest in my work," she says.

Drawing and painting have interested Lucy since her primary school days and it was while she was exhibiting her work in south Devon that a national magazine editor noticed her work and gave it some publicity. "Camden Graphics saw it and offered me a job so off I went to London. It ►



Cavendish Green in the round painted by Lucy Grossmith

Pictures of HAPPINESS

Artist Lucy Grossmith's lifestyle is almost as idyllic as the one portrayed on her beautiful illustrations and paintings. Richard Bryson spoke to her and tried not to feel too envious



Reader offer

Lucy would like to offer EADT Suffolk readers 10% off any of her fine art prints on her website. To order and receive your discount call her on 01787 282820

Above, Hares and Bluebells and below, houses on Long Melford's green



Above, Birdsong and, left, Autumn walk in Long Melford



Above; Lucy outside her studio in the lush surroundings of her Glemsford garden

Photographs: TUDOR MORGAN-OWEN

► was difficult leaving Devon but the work was interesting and challenging . . . I was illustrating and having to think up jokes for greetings cards. I was rubbing shoulders with cartoonists from *Private Eye* so it was a lot of fun."

The move to Suffolk has allowed this talented artist to become self-employed and establish her own business, Heart-to-Art, and the opportunity to create her own range of fine art prints. She explains: "I paint canvases for exhibitions and commissions and illustrations for books and cards. Piecing together snippets of country life, I paint and etch on to canvas all the things that I love. I aim to capture feelings of happiness, magic, movement and humour," she says.

Her pictures do have a child-like innocence and are beautifully detailed and coloured with lovely, soft shades. It's no wonder the demand is growing for her private commissions.

Her love of our county's "wonky little

houses" is reflected in pictures of Hartest Green, Lavenham and Long Melford. Look closer and you will spot delicately drawn flora and fauna. "My paintings can take a week or more. I might do several illustrations in a day but my

larger work requires a lot of detail and I fit them around my bread and butter work." They can cost in the region of £350-£400 direct from Lucy, more if bought from a gallery.

Her commissions usually involve a reconnaissance of the

chosen village, some photographs, "to make sure I get the right amount of windwows on a house!" then it's down to inspiration. "Sometimes I will be asked to include someone's child or family pet in the picture

to really give it that personal touch," adds Lucy.

And are there any downsides to working in a shed at the bottom of the garden? Surely when winter sets in it's not so idyllic?

"Well, sometimes it's even better as it can be quite cosy and I can get more done. In the summer it's tempting to get out and enjoy the weather.

"Although Jack is older I still feel guilty leaving him while I work, but once he goes off to school I go up the garden to paint. Dan is based at home with his work too so he is just a few yards away and can collect him most days and sometimes takes him off swimming," she says.

Rather enviously, on what is a warm and sun-dappled mid-summer's afternoon, I drive back to my stuffy town office and leave Lucy to her lovely, fairytale-like artwork and perfect country lifestyle.

■ Heart-to-art, Little Chequers, Chequers Lane, Glemsford, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 7PW. Tel: 01787 282820. For more information go to www.heart-to-art.com