

## Christine Edwards remembers

After our wedding on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1954, we moved into our first home which was the railway carriage at the top of what is now Catherine Close. The carriage stood in Rimple Knapp's farmyard and had all its original windows. He rented the carriage out to us at 8 shillings a week. We lived in it for about 2 years and were very happy there. The carriage had been completely stripped of all the railway furniture; it was a bit like a caravan. There was room down the end for our bed and wardrobe. The sitting room was separate and we had our 3-piece suite and chairs and a table arranged. The whole carriage was kept warm because we had a little combustion stove in the sitting room with a pipe connected to and through the roof to allow the smoke to escape. I used to clean this stove with black lead polish. Our toilet facilities were a little more primitive. While we had a washbasin the loo was situated outside - it was a bucket which my husband had to take to Longcot Road and dig a hole to empty it each morning. In the fullness of time Linda arrived - she was a lovely baby. We had a pram with a detachable body so that the wheels could be stored outside. It was quite an effort lifting the main part of the pram up the steps into the carriage and eventually this was the reason for our move to ..... As I said, we were very happy there, but I did find the condensation which dripped on to the furniture and bedding bothersome. It was not good for a young baby.

To the left of the railway carriage was the Dairy that was also used as a betting shop. It was then used as an Antiques shop by Mrs Berry-Benton and her friend. It was a whitewashed building adjacent to Coplow House. My married name was Christine Goodman. Before we lived there George Barrett and his partner lived there; they had a baby boy and later moved to be caretakers in the Memorial Hall. George used to let the little boy ride on the buffer when he polished the floor.

The address for the railway carriage was:

The Railway Carriage  
Horne's Corner  
Shrivenham

In 1936 Lady Barrington sold the Beckett estate together with Beckett House to the War Department. Shrivenham was one of the few places in the south of England that regularly had clear skies both at night and daytime and thus it was chosen for an anti-aircraft training establishment because of its good reliable visibility. Both officers and men needed military uniforms and because of the sheer numbers of men passing through Shrivenham it was decided to utilise scrapped railway carriages from nearby Swindon as showrooms and workshops.