

CLOSE TO MY HERTS

Bespoke jeweller Harriet Kelsall, who has her own business – Harriet Kelsall Jewellery Design – in Halls Green, tells Louise McEvoy about her passion for her work, her idea of a perfect day off, and the best views to be had in Hertfordshire

Have you always lived in Hertfordshire?

I was born in St Albans and went to the high school. I lived in Surrey whilst I was at Brunel University and then moved to London for a few years. I moved back to north Hertfordshire in 1998 and have lived here ever since. I love Hertfordshire and the exact type of vegetation and landscape. I live in a very rural area and enjoy the wildlife very much, and I really like many of the towns too.

Describe yourself in three words.

Stubborn, optimistic and energetic.

Tell us about your family.

My husband works in film and TV sound and he is also involved with the marketing side of the jewellery business. My son, Thomas, is five and is very musical and creative and spends much of his time either writing or playing music at the moment. My daughter, Eleanor, is one-and-a-half and very energetic and happy. My parents and sister live in St Albans. My father is a retired GP who also has always

enjoyed making jewellery, both as a hobby and a very small business. He is now the archivist at St Albans Cathedral. My mum is a lecturer and has a lifelong passion for St Albans Cathedral.

When did you establish your jewellery business?

I started the business in 1998. I sold my

first piece of jewellery when I was about 12 and used to make earrings for a friend of the family to sell on her stall in Covent Garden. I guess the passion for jewellery had always been there, but it took me a little while to realise I wanted to start a business of my own as I saw it as just a hobby.

Where do you get your inspiration?

It always comes from the customer. Most jewellery designers get inspiration from around them and come up with a collection and hope that people will buy it. I am a bespoke jeweller and so, rather like an architect, I will chat with customers who may know exactly what they want, or may not have a clue what they want. At the end of the chat,

though, I have come up with a design with them that they love.

Is there a particular piece you are most proud of?

Usually the piece I have most recently finished! There is an Allium flower inspired ring that we have just finished that I am particularly pleased with, but I'm also excited about what I am working on at the moment.

What do you most enjoy about your work?

The variety of inspiration and the happiness generated when you create something perfect for a customer.

What makes your company different from other jewellers?

We will always design you something completely unique, which can be very traditional or very contemporary, but will always be something that somehow tells your story.

How would you spend a perfect day off?

My perfect day off is being at home with my family, all working together in our little vegetable garden, and maybe having a nice supper out somewhere with my husband.

If you won the lottery, what is the first thing you would do with the money?

Give all of my team a nice pay rise!

What do you consider to be the best view in Hertfordshire?

The best views are towards Ashwell and Letchworth from the Therfield hill. I also love the view from the roof of St Albans Cathedral, but I don't think many are lucky enough to have seen that!

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