



'I never tire of my riverside seat'

Goldsmith and silversmith RACHEL JEFFREY, 38, lives in St Albans with her partner, Nick. She produces her jewellery from a workshop in a converted water mill in Wheathampstead, which has views of the River Lea

I HAVE LOVED THIS OLD WATER MILL FOR as long as I can remember. When I was a child, it housed a farm shop, but for the past six years it has been my workshop and shop. The redbrick façade and heavily beamed interior are charming, but the best thing is the view. I will never tire of it. In summer, the banks are lush and green and the water so shallow and clear I see trout meandering lazily downstream.

Although it's a popular spot and passers-by often stop to feed the ducks, they can't see in, so I can people-watch, unseen. Often when I'm enjoying my first coffee of the day, the resident kingfisher flits past, flashing its brilliant blue plumage.

I know how privileged I am to enjoy this view, and I am constantly inspired by what I see. A few years ago, I was commissioned to make a brooch for the Queen Mother for her 100th birthday. The design was based on a fishing fly. Camilla wore it on her official photograph for her engagement to Prince Charles.

Of course, there are some drawbacks to this location – in heavy rain, for instance, the noise is so loud we have to shout, and we have been flooded a couple of times. But it's a small price to pay for such a stunning vista. 📍

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When she looks up from her work, making jewellery in the windows of her water-mill studio, Rachel is at eye-level with the banks of the beautiful River Lea

