

Graham Swain

Earth Architecture



Graham started Earth Architecture over 25 years ago, when he lived in Hampshire. After his honours degree in Architecture, he went to art college and worked as a fine artist, exhibiting in London and

abroad. His love of gardening worked well in parallel and soon became an established thriving and respected local business. RHS Wisley was nearby for in-depth informal courses with hard-landscaping at a local college. Both from Surrey, Graham's wife Emily was yearning to return to her country roots, so we moved to Clapham village near East Preston, in spring 2017. Graham now loves working in East Preston, Angmering and Rustington and exploring this beautiful part of England.

What do you like best about East Preston?

The quality of the sea air and the quietness. Walking Smartie, my Sealyham terrier, along the lovely beach. Emily's amazing aunt lives in East Preston: 97 and still driving! Hazel is an inspiration to us all. She was a Filter Plotter in WW2 and the PA to director of the WAAF, Dame Nancy Salmon. Her book was published this year: *A Happy Life*.

What is your earliest memory?

Running away from school aged five. I preferred being at home. My mother took me out for the day and bought me a teacup and saucer. It was brown with fluted sides.

What is your favourite piece of music?

Gregorio Allegri: Miserere. It reminds me of the beauty I experienced and was influenced by as a young treble soloist singing in the major cathedrals of Holland, Belgium and northern France, including Notre Dame, Paris and The Palace of Fontainebleau.

If you were alone on an island, which record would you take and why?

An uplifting funky Stevie Wonder song, probably *Master Blaster* or *Superstition*.

What is your favourite computer game?

Chess. I represent Sussex and England on Chess.com

All About East Preston

Q & A

Which person in history would you most like to meet?

Capability Brown and my ancestor John Stewart, head gardener at the famous Broadlands, Romsey. My uncle, also a John Stewart, had a brilliant mind. He was Head Boy at Guildford Grammar School, awarded the sword of honour at Sandhurst, he spoke a number of languages, Lieutenant in The Royal Tank Regiment, he was mentioned in Dispatches, later recruited to MI6. He died when I was only seven, but I do remember his great sense of humour.

What was your first car and your favourite thing about it?

A Jamaica yellow Vauxhall Nova – easy to park and find in the dark, when a university student studying architecture.

How would you spend a million pounds?

I'd use some of the money to help build architect-designed housing for the homeless with beautiful communal gardens designed by myself.

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go and why?

India. My A-level art master, Fergus, had to be found and reminded to return from India after each summer holiday to teach. He would get us to stand on the tables chanting. He was a brilliant teacher.

What is your favourite smell?

My wife's freshly baked Irish soda bread. There's Irish in both of us.

What is your proudest sporting achievement?

School record for the longest-ever cricket ball throw. Plus, coming 2nd in the U14 All England Schools Table Tennis Championships in a team of four boys. We lost to a girls' team in the final.

Do you have a claim to fame?

Winning the BBC Radio 4 Today Programme, Peace cartoon competition, called 'Prophets on a Cloud' and appearing on Channel 4 TV's *The Property Ladder* as a garden expert. Being married to Emily, a professional actor, I married into an acting family.

What is the best advice you have ever been given?

Health first. Also my late father, a DCI at Scotland Yard, said: 'No matter what, always keep your sense of humour'.

What would your motto be?

Love your garden and cherish your gardener.