

# Graham Wigginton

## Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design

# Retrofitting Permaculture to an Evolved Lifestyle

Observation - November 2019:

I have always allowed things to evolve, to take their time, have ideas, let them develop and then act. Mostly not intentionally but deciding what to do, then doing it never seemed to work for me, whereas by the time I got around to it the plan seemed to have improved with time. Consequently I find myself, contentedly living in the landscape you can see in the background. Who could not be happy with this view out of their living room window? Surrounded by things we have done, with varying degrees of effectiveness and success.

I have always been happiest when doing practical things, especially outside. Maybe this is the effect of Scouting in the 1970s and 1980s with the 1st Eastcote, George Philip's Own Scout Group, in North West London, who did things in a traditional way, standing camps, cooking over open fires, pioneering, expeditions. I believe that it is important for adolescents to have significant adults outside their family, for me these were Ron, Pete and Jim. They taught me how to be self-reliant, resilient, how to manage situations and others, how to respect people and the environment. Without knowing it the permaculture ethics of Earth Care, People Care and Fair Shares.

I went from school to university, studied Earth Science and then Applied Geophysics and moved into the oil industry as an Appraisal Geophysicist. I enjoyed the intellectual process of mapping rock strata from seismic data. The environmental impacts of an oil dependent society were not high profile in the news as they are today. After four years I decided that I wanted control over where I worked in the world and went to teacher training college in Glasgow and trained to be a Mathematics teacher. That was 30 years ago and education has changed a lot and not at all. I started teaching in Fraserburgh in Grampian, where Doric is spoken and the furthest south the children could envisage I came from was Fife. Family and my in-laws were a long way away from Fraserburgh, further even than Fife and we moved to Cumbria, first Workington and then to Pardshaw Hall with a dilapidated house and 5 acres of land. With the move came a change from teaching Mathematics to Special Educational and Additional Needs.

At home we always did as much of the work ourselves. Learning as we went along. Ducks came with the house and having spent a week each year strimming thistles and reeds we acquired two donkeys who do it for fun. Everything slowly developed but without any real overall plan. 10 years ago a friend gave me a year's subscription to Permaculture Magazine and this seemed to fit with our approach and philosophy and in 2017 to 2018 I did my Permaculture Design Certificate with Angie Polkey in Mid-Wales. Here I began to realise that Permaculture can be as easily applied to education and that the principles fit so well to the Special Educational Needs and Additional Needs work that I am involved in.

I always jokingly said that living at The Old Hall was to be a retirement project and so it seems to be turning out. But now hopefully with design at its heart and, as I phase out of full time work, design for other areas in education that interest me.