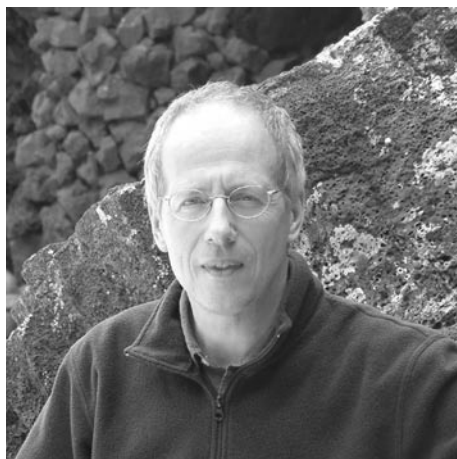


Kenneth Ward and his wife Rebekah moved to Cothill last year; he is a design engineer and Essex native, while she is a teacher and writer from New Orleans, Louisiana. They are enjoying their first spring in the region and looking forward to exploring the nature reserves and cycle paths in the area. Both love the proximity Cothill offers to Abingdon and Oxford while still maintaining its rural repose. Rebekah is finding her inspiration in the diversity of the British landscape and people--but especially in her husband, whose hope and promise make her believe in possibility. She shared with MADNews this story of how perspective can change everything:

When Kenneth Ward was diving into the crystal blue of a resort pool in Grand Canaria, his eyes were on the water – cooling off was the only thought that occupied his mind. So when his vision faded to black – not because he closed his eyes, but because the impact



broke his neck – there was no time to think. The blank canvas of unconsciousness prevailed. Kenneth's neurological specialist would later reveal that his broken vertebrae had crushed his spinal cord causing *temporary* paralysis. The knowledge that there was merely a hair's width which separated his injury from the one that *permanently* paralysed actor/director Christopher Reeve in 1995, made this life-altering event even more significant.

Due to the extensive damage, the recovery process took much longer than expected. Being physically immobilized leaves a lot of time for reflection, and dreams are a necessity--the mind's flight is the only one in which the body fulfils its basic function: motion. Thinking over his past, Ken felt defined by the limits of his chosen career, almost 20 years in an engineering post with a major automobile manufacturer. While he had dutifully climbed the corporate ladder, his supervisory role lacked the inventive edge he hoped for. With his eyes on the road before him, there were no provisions for this twist of fate. After several operations to set him right again, his body began the arduous process of healing – as the rest of him sought after that persistent, solitary voice inside saying "look within".

As the design engineer testifies today, his neck break was the catalyst that allowed him to break with his past and begin thinking about the direction of his life in inventive ways: the start of a lateral-thinking approach to his endeavours. His first venture would be transforming an MGB, the understated British classic, into a V12-engined powerhouse. "As an MGB enthusiast, I realized that the car had never been developed to realise its full potential. Even the V8-engined factory car was a very cautious development, so I thought I'd test the limits to see how far I could push the envelope and still have a practical road car. The simple route would be to tune the V8 engine for more performance. But having experienced the silky smoothness of the Jaguar XJS with a V12 engine, the inventor in me went into overdrive." The result was an unprecedented yet road-legal transformation in both form and function – deemed impossible by other motor engineers. For the



creator, this car was symbolic of his own potential, the value of recognising that we can not only push the envelope, but with the right perspective, redefine it entirely. The car received unanimous acclaim and was featured in many exhibitions including ex-F1 Driver and sportscar manufacturer Peter Monteverdi's Automotive Museum in Basle Switzerland. This momentum inspired Ken's company Artisan Engineering and he is still using his MG expertise to realise the car's full potential today--mostly with the V8 engine, as the V12 market is limited!

Ken's reinvention mentality has also proved an effective approach to compliment the British lifestyle. On a relatively small island, where every inch of living space counts, his other business offers an innovative alternative to the utilitarian mindset. Starting out with his first home at age 24, his first property developments were initially refurbishments that were then resold. However, using similar creative methods to those that inspired the MGB V12



project, Artisan Interiors currently explores the full potential of living spaces. Specializing in kitchen and bathroom upgrades, they have fine-tuned the art of effectively combining form with function--creating inspiring places where you want to live and thrive.

"Many British homes are soulless; they suffer from inefficient use of space and blandness. It is possible to create an inspirational and aesthetically pleasing environment that is also useful." In a climate where nature's grey exterior is the predominate colour for much of the year, our interior considerations are an essential component in well-being; the choices we make affect our mood and outlook.

"Most homes have potential for improvement, some with relatively modest changes."

Kenneth addresses these opportunities and works with his clients to achieve the best and most cost-effective outcome, whatever the project's size or scope. He welcomes new ideas and challenges which enable Artisan Interiors to create an interior space which expresses the clients aspirations: "improving even a small space can alter our perspective in a positive way. The interior of our homes should reflect our motivations and project our aspirations."

Kenneth is looking to build his client base in the local area: if you would like to realise the potential in your home or your MG call 07774 833499 or 01865 390991 for an exploratory chat.