

Trellis 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Networking Conference 15th March 2011, Perth Concert Hall  
Gardening – the Original *Feel- good* Activity

### **Speaker Biographies**

#### **Tony Archer, Project Officer**

##### **Aberdeen Forward**

Established in 1999, Aberdeen Forward is a charity that initiates and supports environmental and recycling projects. It works with communities and businesses to educate and promote projects that help to protect our environment, reduce waste and encourage recycling. Tony is involved in the Community Composting Project

#### **Di Blackmore, PhD student**

##### **University of Stirling**

She is a '60s Essex girl, who has abandoned stilettos in favour of various sets of boots. A first degree in Chemical Engineering was followed by several years in industry, both as a research chemist then as a buyer. A masters in 'Energy Systems and Environmental Management' followed - from a deepening concern for the environment. Children, village life and an RHS horticulture certificate at RBGE led her into environmental education. She worked outdoors with schools and nurseries on 'Grounds for Learning' principles in Stirlingshire together with Forth Environment Link. In partnership with Caledonia Clubhouse (a mental health charity) she carried out the design and project management of a walled garden for Callendar House in Falkirk (council)- with educational, sustainable and community use at heart. From there she went to Stirling University through Trellis and the privilege of postgraduate research into therapeutic horticulture.

#### **Debbie Butler, Co-ordinator**

##### **The Walled Garden, Perth**

The Walled Garden in Perth is a community-based support service which helps people who are recovering from severe and/or enduring mental health illnesses. Along with the Wisecraft project in Blairgowrie, the project support 65 adults from the Perth and Strathmore areas every week, helping them to recover in a supported work environment. The Walled Garden is also a popular local attraction, where visitors can tour the gardens, buy plants and ornaments and enjoy lunch or coffee in the café.

#### **John Duncan, Farm Manager**

##### **Easter Anguston Farm Training Centre, Aberdeenshire**

After almost 30 years in the health service, John took a change of direction to work with adults with learning disabilities. John has a farming background, having worked on the family farm, part time, for many years. He also has experience of working with people with special needs in various settings, including summer camps and weekend retreats. He now combines these skills in managing VSA Easter Anguston Farm in Peterculter, Aberdeen where the team provides training and therapeutic employment opportunities for adults with learning disabilities in Agriculture, Horticulture, Rural Skills and Conservation.

**Alison Edelsten, Development Worker and Kerry Kirkwood Co-ordinator,  
Columcille Centre, Edinburgh**

Columcille provides day care, offering a range of activities with sensitive support, to adults with learning disabilities, a number of whom also have mental health problems. Columcille is based on the principles of Rudolf Steiner, which aim to address the needs of the whole person. There is a lively social aspect to each day, and opportunities for attendees to further develop social and occupational skills.

Alison and Kerry work together on the Community Gardens Project- Alison as the development worker, networking and organising, and Kerry co-ordinating the garden work and group involvement in this work.

**Hugh Fife, Blairbuie Woodland Co-ordinator  
Blairbuie, Argyll**

Woods for All is an award winning Reforesting Scotland project that works towards access and inclusion. Reforesting Scotland is a leading charity and movement involved in environmental, social and sustainable forestry in Scotland. We represent over 750 members and our vision involves the creation of a well-forested and productive landscape, as well as a culture which values the contribution that trees and woods bring to our lives.

(Hugh is also the author of "Warriors, Kings & Secret Guardians - Native Highland Trees".)

**Dr Ruth Jepson, Senior Research Fellow, University of Stirling**

Ruth is Senior Research Fellow at the School of Nursing, Midwifery & Health at the University of Stirling where her research focus is primarily on physical activity, nutrition and health, especially in the context of physical activity and the outdoor environment, ethnic minority groups and for people with dementia. Ruth also has a particular interest in patient involvement, choice and participation in healthcare decisions, particularly around cancer and cancer screening. Other areas of interest are risk and risk perceptions of environmental hazards and the management of asthma.

**Jim McColl MBE, Radio & TV Garden Presenter**

Jim is a well-known horticultural consultant as well as a TV & radio broadcaster and has been working with people who have learning/physical difficulties since the 1960's. He soon found out how useful gardening could be in helping us all achieve a sense of worth, purpose and enjoyment. That feeling about gardening hasn't changed a bit in 50 years!

**Peter Ross, Team Leader  
Acorn Project, Leverndale Hospital**

The Acorn Project, a gardening initiative at Leverndale Hospital, Paisley, has its roots in the work of the Forensic Learning Disability Units at Woodilee and Lennox Castle Hospitals. The project covers a wide range of gardening activities, including work in the greenhouse, a flower garden, growing vegetables and herbs and maintaining allotments.

**Lesley Speedie, Project Manager**

**Larkhall Community Growers, South Lanarkshire**

Lesley is coordinating an exciting new project to develop a community garden in Larkhall.

**Colin Stirling, Horticultural Consultant & Trellis Board Member**

Colin is a director of HortiCS, a horticultural advisory business. He was employed by SAC as the Senior Horticultural Advisor from 1988–2002 providing an advisory service to the north and east of Scotland. He is a director of Trellis and Chairman of Pitcaple Environment Project Ltd. The latter is a registered charity providing horticultural training facilities for adults with special needs and disabilities in the Inverurie area. He is a regular broadcaster on the BBC *Potting Shed* programme.

**Pam Whittle, CBE**

**Chair, Greenspace Scotland**

Pam is a former Director of Public Health & Health Improvement for the Scottish Government and a lifelong keen gardener. Since retiring from the Civil Service at the end of 2008, Pam has continued to be actively involved in a range of activities and issues. She became Chair of Greenspace Scotland in August 2009, is a non-executive Board member of NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, a Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society council member, a Board member of Stevenson College Edinburgh, member of the Scottish Government's National Food and Drink Leadership Forum and member of the Advisory Group for the Glasgow Centre for Population Health. In 2009 Pam was awarded the CBE for her services to public health in Scotland. She strives to do a fair amount of gardening!