Trellis Conference 2010 General Report



The 2010 Trellis conference, held at the Concert Hall, Perth on Wednesday 17 March. This year's theme, **Tending Body & Soul: Gardening & Health**, attracted 106 delegates to book their place at the event.

The **Keynote address** was given by **Dr Richard Simpson, MSP for Mid Scotland & Fife,** who's genuine personal and political support of

therapeutic gardening was very powerfully and thoughtfully communicated to the audience in a speech which evidenced the health and social benefits of gardening and physical activity. Richard is Shadow Public Health Minister, calling on his experience as a former GP and psychiatrist. He has had a long-standing interest in the hospice movement and was a founder member of Strathcarron Hospice. His hobbies include golf and gardening, which started at school, where he had a small a plot to keep, and has continued into his adult life.

In keeping with the health theme **Andrew Anderson**, **Centre Head**, **Maggie's Centre**, **Edinburgh** gave an insightful, fascinating and detailed account of the history and theory behind the development of the gardens at Maggie's cancer centre's around the UK entitled **Maggie's Gardens**. Andrew Anderson is a Registered General Nurse who trained at Queen Margaret College in Edinburgh. He then went on to specialise in cancer nursing and worked for 11 years in the Western General Hospital Oncology department. For the last 10 years he has worked for Maggie's Centres and is the Centre Head for Maggie's Edinburgh.

Project Showcases

The day got off to a lively start with the Project Showcase presentations. This was a superb opportunity to learn more about four therapeutic gardening projects, straight from those who manage and work in them. This year we had the pleasure of hearing from:

Pierre Bernard, Lilybank Resource Centre, Forfar, Angus

Pierre Bernard is a Day Centre Officer et Lilybank Beautres

Pierre Bernard is a Day Centre Officer at Lilybank Resource Centre in Forfar for adults with learning disabilities and has been in post since October 1995. In 1996 Pierre was asked to take part in a gardening group to support service users and develop their skills and knowledge and in the process he has developed his own skills. In April 2006 he started working for the biodiversity team at Lilybank and this has grown from strength to strength, being nominated for a number of local and national awards. Talking about 'Into the Labyrinth' experiences of developing a maze in the centre's garden.

• Patricia Payne, Annie's Garden, Bandrum Nursing Home, Saline, Fife Patricia explained the meaning for the residents of their garden -Annie's Garden - Providing a Place in the Sun for Today's Residents & Visitors. Member of the Chartered Management Institute and owner of Bandrum Nursing Home, a family run facility in Saline, Patricia is Chair of the Fife Branch of Scottish Care and finalist in the Scottish Care annual awards in categories "Care Entrepreneur of the Year" and "Specialist Services Provider." Says Patricia:- "Our residents and staff have always been very close to my heart and my aim is to maximize the enjoyment and benefits of our grounds and gardens. If I also manage to find time to indulge my hobbies which include horses and dancing, then I consider myself very lucky indeed."

Stephanie Elder, Manager, Silver Birch Scotland Mark Williams, Senior Support Worker, Silver Birch Scotland

Stephanie joined Silver Birch in 2005 as temporary Development Officer, bringing with her experience in business and marketing. In 2006, Stephanie was promoted to Manager and has helped the organisation to develop, including the overseeing the build and relocation of the project, generating new income & funding streams and supporting the Client Manager to develop client services. Mark joined Silver Birch in 2007 to help develop a new work experience opportunity in garden maintenance. Following a pilot, the focus was changed to site maintenance, allowing clients to gain a wider variety of skills without the time pressures of customer expectations. Mark continually looks for new and unusual ways to develop the 11 acre site, including a Japanese garden, living wall and a grass sofa. They gave their experiences of **Providing work experience & skills development.**

Norma Forbes, Southton Smallholding, Perth

Norma delighted the audience with her tales of animals and organic gardening from the smallholding and their service users 'Growing in Confidence'. Southton Smallholding is situated on the estate of the Bield of Blackruthven, a Christian retreat, on the outskirts of Perth. The smallholding is a charity which offers therapeutic voluntary work to a group of adults with learning disabilities. The work includes animal care, horticulture and farm maintenance. We strive to create a more inclusive community with the help of a team of volunteers from the local community. Norma has worked here for four years after an earlier professional life in Careers and Employment Services.

Workshops

This year there was a choice of 5 workshops on the day, which were well received by participants:

1. Horticulture Skills Workshop: John Smith, Suntrap Lifelong Learning Centre, Edinburgh. John's gardening career started with a council summer job. After college he managed a plant nursery, gardened in Saudi Arabia, grew test plants for SASA, and worked as a propagator at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. John introduced the first landscape courses in Scotland while at Oatridge College and

currently uses Therapeutic Horticulture in teaching gardening to a wide range of students.

- 2. 'Grow & Learn' Assessing the Achievement in Horticulture Award: Margaret Teale, Royal Caledonian Horticulture Society. Margaret Teale is a member of the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society and sits on its Council and Education Committee. A retired senior manager in Community Learning and Development, she spent most of her professional life in the field of adult education, with a specific interest in Adult Literacies, community-based adult learning and staff development / training. An enthusiastic but not very knowledgeable amateur gardener, she is also on the management committee of Bridgend Allotment Community Health Improvement Project. She is going to attempt growing vegetables this year for the first time as a result of being inspired by the allotment movement!
- **3. Focal Points: Getting the most out of photography in your project:** Max Blinkhorn, Photographer, Edinburgh. Max Blinkhorn began his career in I.T. but felt he needed a change and spent three years as a Technical Instructor working in the Occupational Therapy Department Garden at Astley Ainslie Hospital. During this time, he also worked as a reviewer during the Edinburgh Festival and found himself well-placed to take pictures of performers to support his reviews. Eventually, the photography replaced the reviewing and he began working as a photographer, professionally.
- **4. 'Cultivating Health, Enterprise and Tatties' Inclusion & Health:** Helen Thomson & Niall McShannon, Clydesdale Community Initiatives, South Lanarkshire. Niall is Project Manager for CCI and Helen Placement Support Officer. CCI was setup in 2002 to enable young people at risk and adults with mental health issues to develop a derelict site in Lanark. Since then CCI has developed one of the most innovative and successful social inclusion models in Scotland, providing opportunities for people experiencing social exclusion and significant disadvantage to participate in real work. CCI has a portfolio of landscaping, horticultural and woodworking projects.
- 5. The Professionals Next steps for the field of therapeutic gardening? & Presentation by Kay Diack Associates of the Trellis Feasibility Study into providing a therapeutic gardening qualification, Kay Diack, Fiona Thackeray & Jenny Simpson, Trellis. Fiona Thackeray is Development Manager for Trellis. She has worked in therapeutic gardening for 14 years, with learning-disabled people in Bristol and visually impaired students in Brazil (with whom she built Brazil's 4th sensory garden) before returning to Perthshire to support Scottish therapeutic gardening projects. Jenny Simpson is the Information Officer for Trellis. Previously, as a University of Stirling researcher, Jenny was involved in range of projects within the Institute of Education; Department of Applied Social Science and with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration. Jenny also had a small business growing and selling herbs and salad plants at Farmers Markets.

A leaflet exchange, seed swap and marketplace stalls in the main foyer created a space for Networking opportunities at lunch and coffee times. Although the busy

schedule may have reduced networking opportunities – this is to be taken on board in planning for 2011.