**WELCOME TO PLENTY? FESTIVAL 2025**

Plenty? festival returns! This year’s gathering brings together a diverse mix of talks, creative activities, apple pressing and more. Join us as together we ask, ‘how much is enough?’ through play, conversations and reflection.

Plenty? is a festival, that reimagines a traditional harvest celebration and focuses on the idea of degrowth in a consumerist world that demands more and more.  At Plenty? festival, we aim to foster a hopeful, open, and exploratory atmosphere where diverse perspectives and ways of thinking can come together.

**A DAY OF DISCOURSE – Saturday 4 October 2025 @ 12-5.30pm**

**EVENT PROGRAMME & SPEAKER BIOS:**

**12.00-12.30 - Welcome Address (30 mins) with Mel Shand.**

**“PROJECTS I HAVE LEARNED FROM: FOUR COMMUNITY PLAYS AND AN ORCHARD.”**

**Mel Shand** is a fully occupied in one creative activity or another. Following a BA Hons in Fine Art from DoJCA she has spent the last 30 years building a reputation for fearlessness when it comes to community engagement. In 2009 she suffered a near fatal experience which brought home how short and precious life is. During her recovery, the importance of collaboration became apparent. In response she became a network promoter for rural touring theatre with North East Arts Touring (NEAT), built “A Portrait of our Time” specialising in creating opportunities for her community and the arts to engage.

She has written and directed three plays, one of which, ‘Alter:Nativity’ won an Epic Award for Scotland for creative community engagement with the arts and in 2019 was awarded a BEM for services to the Arts and Community. As a Trustee of the River Dee since 2014, Mel works hard to educate and promote understanding and tolerance for all aspects of country living and the values of conservation. She annually judges the GCWT children’s art competition and has twice been an Artist in Action at their Game

Fair. In 2023, Mel joined the Board at the Barn at the same time as becoming the Lead Artist for The Far Orchard project.

She lives up a glen with her Gamekeeper husband, a loft full of doves, some errant bees, swallows in her bedroom and stopped counting at fifteen dogs, dancing to the tune of the turning of the seasons.

**12.30-13.15 - Session 1  (45 mins)**

**Panel discussion with Tom Addy & Oliver Wilson. Moderator – Jonathan Rose.**

**“WOODLAND TO WORKSHOP: REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF SCOTTISH TIMBER THROUGH CREATIVE CONNECTIONS”**

**Tom Addy** is a furniture maker based near Ballater in the Cairngorms National Park.  A member of the Scottish Furniture Makers Association and instigator and creative director of the Ash Rise initiative and exhibition.  Tom is now embarking on a series of films entitled ‘Scottish Trees’ highlighting the cultural, environmental and economic importance of our most iconic tree species

Head of Hardwoods at Logie Timber, **Oliver Wilson** has been instrumental in shaping the department and building recognition for Scottish-grown timber. His path with wood began young and has taken him through timber framing in the Highlands, sash window restoration in Wales, the rebuilding of a Zulu sailing boat in Shetland, and the practice of green woodworking through bushcraft.

At Logie Timber, he is known for his deep knowledge of hardwoods and his passion for connecting people to the character, beauty, and heritage of local species. Beyond the sawmill, he has built his own home and tends a small plot of land, raising saplings that will one day form a new woodland.

Logie Timber near Forres, Moray provide high-quality, bespoke timber products that foster a deeper connection between people and nature, ensuring every piece of wood tells a unique story and supports a sustainable future.

**Jonathan Rose** Design was founded to satisfy a passion for design and a desire to develop contemporary furniture for living with today’s physical, cultural and commercial demands.

As an engineer at heart, Jonathan loves to solve problems hands on. Believing that through collaboration, partnership and trust, great things can happen he works with other craftsmen to extend his design capabilities and maintain a strong British skills base. He believes curiosity is key to everything new – how processes impact design and how material properties create new processes.

Experimentation and passion are at the heart of Jonathan Rose Design’s design process. He works to commission as well as designing for small batch production runs.

**13.15-13:30 - Break 1  (15 mins)**

**13.30-14.15 - Session 2 (45 mins)**

 **Speaker - Dr Em May Armstrong. Moderator - Helen Needham.**

**“QUEERING ECOLOGIES: TOWARDS AN ATTENTIVE FUTURE”**

**Dr Em May Armstrong** is a plant-focused interdisciplinary researcher based at the University of Glasgow. Rooted in sustainability, abolition, and justice, their work explores the intersections of plants, queerness, disability, and community. Through writing, performance, lectures, experimental sound work, and workshops, Em shares plant knowledge and queer ecological practice with audiences worldwide.

Em holds a PhD in plant genetics from the University of Glasgow and currently works as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Glasgow, while maintaining a freelance career in parallel. Em currently holds grants from the Royal Society of Edinburgh, The Scottish Alliance for Food, and The British Ecological Society.

**Helen Needham** has been working for the BBC for almost 25 years on various radio programmes and projects around Scotland.  She oversees the production of Out of Doors/Scotland Outdoors Podcast and folk and traditional music programmes.

She also makes programmes for BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio 3.  Her passions are nature and the outdoors, both for recreation and for work.  She believes deeply in the importance of celebrating and nurturing our connection with the more than human world.   Her favourite thing in the world is to climb mountains and sleep on them (in the vein of Nan Shepherd).  She also loves foraging and swimming in the river or the sea.

**14.15-14.30 - Break 2  (15 mins)**

**14:30–15:15 – Session 3 (45 mins)**

**Speakers - Sanjay Bhattacharya, Hedge Shand & Dr Linzi Seivwright**

**“WILD PLENTY, EMPTY PLATES: THE PARADOXICAL LACK OF LOCAL VENISON”**

**Sanjay Bhattacharya** is a local chef and hunter, with a passion for getting more people to try game in new and exciting ways.

**Hedge Shand** is the current gamekeeper on the Finzean Estate, a post that he has held for 23 years. Prior to this he was a fishing Ghillie on the River Dee. He has witnessed substantial changes in wildlife management over his career and has extensive ‘boots on the ground’ experience.

**Dr Linzi Seivwright**, an ecologist based in Moray, has built her expertise around deer management and upland environments. Raised on an estate in the Angus Glens, her passion for deer and the natural world was ignited early on—a passion she has since transformed into a fulfilling career.

After earning her PhD in upland ecology, Linzi spent a decade in the public sector, where she worked as an advisor and contributed to the development of Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance. Ten years ago, she launched her consultancy, Caorann, allowing her to focus on advising the Association of Deer Management on policy matters, supporting individual deer groups, and engaging in hands-on deer management.

A lifelong interest in cooking and a commitment to promoting the ecological and health benefits of venison have inspired Linzi and her husband to start Findhorn Venison. This small business, situated in the iconic Findhorn river catchment, is their latest venture.

In addition to her consultancy work, Linzi serves as the education lead on the Executive Committee of the Scottish Venison Association. She is currently focused on efforts to introduce venison more widely into school meals, furthering her educational and advocacy roles.

**15.15- 15.30 - Break 3 (15 mins)**

**15.30-16.15  - Session 4 (45 mins)**

**“THE SHAPE OF BECOMING “**

**Luke Devlin**

What if degrowth is less a theory than something already alive and happening now: in gardens, kitchens, workshops and communities? What if it means not only using less but finding more time, care and imagination? Together, people are quietly setting foundations for another future. In hard times where many are struggling and polarisation and division are rising, what are the ways that belonging can unfold when the new and the familiar learn to share ground?

**Luke Devlin** is Executive director of the Centre for Human Ecology and a social researcher, writer and broadcaster. An advocate for degrowth, he is a regular contributor on social and ethical affairs to BBC Scotland’s Thought for the Day and Sunday Morning, and currently serves as programme manager for the Interfaith Restorative Justice Project, responding to unrest and polarisation in communities.

**16:15- 16:30 Break 4 (15 mins)**

**16:30 – 17:30   Shared Meal (60 mins)**

Open discussion with communal meal

**Menu**

* Chipotle braised venison tacos, fennel & apple slaw.
* Seasonal grilled vegetable tacos, fennel & apple slaw (vg / gf by request)

**17:30 – 18:00 - Depart**