



LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY –
OUTDOORS



Andy Wright

Therapeutic Gardens Manager at Stanford Hall

I started out at the age of 13 as a Saturday Boy in a Nursery but I have been interested in Horticulture from a very early age, my Grandad was a Gardener too. I have worked in Horticulture since I left School in 1988. I started out doing a Sports Pitch/fine turf Apprenticeship this led onto to working in Commercial Grounds Care principally on Contracts for Trust House Forte as well as high end domestic clients.

After this I studied Arboriculture to HND Level at Merrist Wood College in Guildford. I then worked as a Groundsman for a Tree Surgery Company and then quickly became one of the climbers too, here I honed my skills and understanding of all things Arboricultural, especially my love of the maintenance and preservation of Listed Trees and also my passion for topiary.

I suffered a small accident at work and decided to cease doing tree work only to land another job as head climber for a tree surgery and maintenance company! I was also a team leader and did Tree Surveys and consultancy work.

After this, I set up and ran my own successful Landscaping and tree surgery company for over ten years where I employed up to six people working on high end landscape projects and tree preservation and grounds maintenance.

For the last ten years I have been Head Gardener for a large private family estate in Surrey. I was responsible for an area close on 27 acres, which included formal lawns, huge formal rose garden, formal courtyard and also a large kitchen garden and orchard. As well as this I assumed the role of Estate Manager and dealt with all that entailed with the maintenance of a large equestrian facility and I was also the contact for all outside trades and craftsmen.

Whilst working in my last role I started to volunteer for HighGround at Headley Court once a week and soon became hooked on Horticultural Therapy. I learnt a lot from HighGround's Horticultural Therapist in my two years of volunteering, and I have bought many books and read many papers on the subject.

I bring to my role over 30 Years of practical knowledge of Horticulture and Arboriculture and also as a keen follower of Nature I am someone who understands how the natural cycle of the seasons affects what we do. I hope I can help to enable others to feel the joy I get from growing things and from the wider natural world. I feel hugely lucky to be able to work with our Armed Forces and to play a part of their rehabilitation, and to help HighGround to move forward and to further our knowledge as to how best to use Horticultural Therapy within the Armed Forces community.

For more information about HighGround's services please contact Anna Baker Cresswell

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