

# AHPP at UKSCP

## IMPRESSIONS OF THE UKSCP ANNUAL CONFERENCE

University of Kent 4th -6th January 1991

by Judith Dell

I attended the Conference in place of Mary Parker. Mary and Courtenay Young have been AHPP's representatives for the past 3 years. They had always reported back to AHPP members the important and salient points of the Conference process. I had kept myself up to date with all this and Courtenay had briefed me on our journey down to Kent. However, I did not anticipate the feelings of utter confusion, isolation and alienation which assailed me as a newcomer to the Conference itself. To explain myself: There were approximately 120 delegates representing 25 analytical psychotherapeutic organisations, 4 psycho-analytical, 2 psycho-analytical based psychotherapy with children, 1 behavioural, 2 experiential, 4 family, marital and sexual, 11 humanistic and integrative, 4 hypnotherapy, 3 special members - Social Workers, Psychiatrists, and the British Psychological Society and 4 unplaced - e.g. University teachers of Psychiatry, Tavistock Clinic.

### Friends and Adversaries

Most of the representatives of the above organisations had been meeting for the past 4-5 years. They had a history together - and apart, for the organisations talk and debate and thrash out with each other during the year and then meet once a year to talk, debate and thrash out with everyone else.

Therefore, like the family who get together for Christmas, there is an overt agenda - what and how do we really feel and what goes on privately at home - for each topic discussed.

Alliances were tested out and temporarily formed as familiar friends and past adversaries met. As a first timer, I had no idea who was who, or what was what. The organisers put on an orientation meeting and this was led by Courtenay who took us through the programme for the weekend. I began to align myself with some of these first timers and wondered whether I would be accepted - and by whom - for each of the Sections (maybe because of their own feelings of insecurity) formed their own secure clique and they were not particularly welcoming to newcomers. I began to recognise this as a reflection of the whole conference.

At the opening plenary, the Chairperson in welcoming all the delegates stated that there were a number of new representatives and that they should feel free to say whatever they wanted even if the issues had been discussed before in committees, or at past conferences. In theory, that permission was necessary but, in reality it proved to be irritating and infuriating to the 'old' representatives who had spent so many hours of debating and clarifying contentious issues and now understandably wanted to move on.

## **Authoritative Voice**

At that same first plenary, there were papers on entering Europe, registration and on section criteria. Dissenting voices were raised and the main issue seemed to be "Who was the competent authoritative voice of the psychotherapist?" As we begin to enter Europe who, which body, will represent psychotherapists? The U.K. Standing Conference for Psychotherapy had been formed for this very purpose, but there were slight rumblings of breakaway factions. It was important that these should be brought out into the open, into the Conference arena. Two members began to express some of the strong feelings which can accompany rival bodies. There was some satisfaction that, at last, these feelings were being expressed and although there was not enough time for this to continue it feels that this must be addressed at the next Conference.

The first preliminary meeting on Europe had been held in Amsterdam in December. The Dutch were concerned with professional standards and felt that the U.K. Standing Conference has not yet come up with an agreed common set of standards. A group has been formed to look at standards across Europe. In Holland they have a three-tier system. A trainee has to be a graduate, in psychiatry or social work, to enter into training. They then have a basic psychotherapy training and can then choose to do a specialist training within psychotherapy. Every psychiatrist and clinical psychologist will now have a psychotherapy training (of 50 hours). All psychotherapists should have a training in, or knowledge of, another psychotherapy. There is a feeling that Brussels will follow the Dutch model. There

was much sympathy at UKSCP for this model not to be accepted in the UK and that relevant life experience is as important as being a graduate - although the problem of defining 'relevant life experience' has still to be addressed.

## **Register**

The rumblings of breakaway factions were to be heard throughout the weekend - one section against another and within own sections. When there is a register, who do we register? How do we register? If there are different criteria for the accreditation of a psychotherapist in each section, how can this be expressed in a register? It was suggested that the register could be by Sections and can identify the different approaches. That brought up the question of the different approaches and the different trainings and is there - can there be - a core basic curriculum; is there a core pre-requisite for training? To give some example of the difficulties facing the Conference members, the psychoanalysts cannot agree with the analytic psychotherapists with regard to the way they work let alone the hypnotherapists. The Humanistic and Integrative sections also have their factions as the range of psychotherapeutic techniques and the trainings differ from one organisation to another. The question, 'what is psychotherapy?' was raised continuously. To their credit, the HIPS representatives have been working very hard and painstakingly throughout the year. They are way ahead of all the other sections in their thorough and difficult task in confronting themselves with this question and with looking at their own Guidelines on Criteria to make them more explicit and answerable to others.

### **Friendly respect and anxiety**

The Conference delegates did meet twice in small groups, comprising members from the different sections, to discuss certain topics and this was very rewarding as this was a friendly forum where we could begin to get to know each other and were able to share differing backgrounds and views. In my group a psychiatrist, an analytic psychotherapist and a family therapist were able to listen to, and ask questions of, a hypnotherapist and express their personal concerns and ignorances. Respect of differences was shown but there were also real anxieties as to whether they wanted to be bedfellows with each other.

By Sunday I began to feel my place and could feel some excitement at the process which was happening. An election took place and three members of the HIPS section were Courtenay Young (as Treasurer), Emmy Van Deurzen-Smith and John Rowan.

Overall I was impressed at the enormous task to which the Conference was addressing itself and the hard work which had been done by dedicated representatives of all the organisations in the past years. I was also impressed by the amount of goodwill and open attitudes there were amongst many of the delegates, although the long pervading attitude, that only the analytical fundamentalists have the true voice, was still around.

It is my view that the UKSCP is an important body to be part of and to support. It can be the only chance for all psychotherapists to have a competent authoritative voice to represent them. That we are having to confront and clarify our trainings, philosophies, ethics, reasons for working, can only raise the standards of our work and the professional service we offer to the public and our clients.

## **ACCREDITATION**

**by John Rowan**

The time seems to have come for me to say something about accreditation. There have been several articles in *Self and Society* about this recently, and some of them seem to be to be missing the point entirely.

In 1980 I helped to found the Association for Humanistic Psychology Practitioners, because I wanted to grasp the nettle of accreditation. A couple of years earlier I had resigned from the Psychology and Psychotherapy Association because it had (after several inconclusive meetings) failed to do this.

The point of accreditation, as we spelled it out at the time, was to put some structure into a disorganised field which had become quite messy. We felt we wanted to put our own house in order, so that we could say to all and sundry that there were some decent standards of practice, and that some of us cared enough about that to make sure that they were upheld, at least within the bounds of the organisation we were setting up. And so we set out some guidelines for how people could assess