

As a counsellor I know these experiences have influenced my work with clients. A great deal of my one-to-one practice and group work focuses around imagery and art. I find the physical act of painting can track into body memories and so be a physical release. Images created during an art session can reveal

events too painful to verbalise. So this can be the beginning of acknowledging what happened, to work through the feelings from the past and move on to life in the present.

I would be interested to know if any reader recognises in this description any elements of their own experiences.

AHP/AHPP Conference Reports

Cal Cannon

The whole event was characterised for me by what seemed like swings between the poles of 'boundarilessness-and-chaos' and 'tightly-held-boundaries-and-control'. The conference was held at Dartington, a most beautiful setting with delightful gardens and impressive buildings. However, the setting itself epitomised the pole-swings I have described. Arrival was muddled and difficult for many people and there were administrative problems with rooms, with keys, with registration, and eventually, with our departure.

On the other hand there were strict 'rules' — do not walk on the grass, no smoking etc — and one extraordinary incident when, after the 'Saturday night disco', which finished spot on time, a small group of ten or twelve people were doing a 'peace dance' in a circle. The staff, doubtless carrying out instructions as they must, pushed quite rudely through the singing circle, placing tables between us as if completely oblivious to our presence. It was almost as if we did not exist. It seemed as though the boundaries had to be imposed regardless of the human

beings within them.

The poles themselves were held, in my experience of the Conference, by two of the events I attended. The first was Andrew Samuels' keynote speech. This was a beautifully presented, polished, controlled, tightly bounded address, containing some rich and interesting content, at which we all behaved wonderfully, grown-up-ly, quietly and attentively listening and doing our exercises. Even the behaviour of one delegate, whose own inner disturbance spilled out into uncontainedness, was quietly 'dealt with'; the boundary remained (almost) intact, and she slipped through it onto the 'other side'.

The second event was a workshop 'facilitated' by Guy Gladstone, where we were invited — nay, driven even — to reveal and act out the pathological, fear-driven, regressive, oppressive, chaotic, fragmented, (and sometimes creative) aspects of our selves and our structures (political, social, professional) that we (as therapists?) think we are containing, and indeed often mask and hide!

Somehow these two events, outwardly

so different, inwardly mirroring and reflecting each other in the playing out of the very same dynamics, spoke to me of our difficulties in setting our own appropriate boundaries, and moving flexibly within them to set new ones where appropriate. We seemed both to rebel against tight boundaries, and to rail against loose ones, feeling insecure and fearful. We

James King

Offering myself as victim in Guy Gladstone's workshop I became transformed into the new Dracula — the new abuser terroriser. From protestant roots. Though no protestant terrorists were present in the minds of participants of 'Lines of Force' some catholic ones certainly were.

Flowing with the process in 'Creating Positive Space' I joined the group to drift smoothly upon a raft and then dropped anchor. Power and responsibility had been shared and then withdrawn. Coitus interruptus. Harmonizing with my impotence fantasy at the start of Guy's 'Knowing Your Place'. In 'Lines of Force' some few refused to be manipulated (by other group

Julian Nangle

I was surprised and delighted that Andrew Samuels chose to stay for the duration of the Conference and not just the evening of his speech. I felt his presence permeated the whole weekend which, surely, is what a keynote speaker should do. Given that his subject was Politics (and I purposely put that with a 'big' P) there wasn't a corner of the quadrangle, not a

wanted to have boundaries set for us, but we didn't like it much when they were.

Certainly I was stimulated and stirred by my experiences. Thank god for the dancing on Saturday evening — and for my lovely, warm, real, flexible, skilful-with-boundaries home group. And thanks to the organisers, who had obviously had a hell of a time.

members) into place as statues to form image theatre tableaux. Refusing the oppression of another's control. Even momentary.

What a luxury this would be for prisoners. No. They too resist forcible physical manipulation to retain pride and dignity. (With what different consequences.) Behaviour crucial to survival 'in extremis' appears spontaneously in pale workshop simulations. I want participants in groups to insist upon what they perceive as their human and political rights within (and without) that group.

The form and process of the group are political metaphors and social reality. Change these and change the world.

window in a workshop from which one could get away from the Politics of Therapy. While some were enjoying a good confer others were trying to have a good ignore. That, at least, is how I interpret the bubbling up to the surface at the end of the conference of the disharmony between AHP and AHPP, or perhaps at the risk of getting political, heaven forbid, the

disapproval of AHP by AHPP.

Elizabeth Wilde McCormick's workshop 'Living on the Edge' was, for me, the highlight from an extraordinary range and high standard of workshops. Jocelyn Chaplin's 'Living on the Boundaries' workshop set up a theme of the snake which curled and coiled after me throughout the weekend culminating in my having the enormous pleasure of reading D. H. Lawrence's poem 'The Snake' to the small but homogenous group assembled around Dave Jones on Saturday evening for a version of 'Poetry Please'.

I attended two other workshops; John Button's on Groupwork which didn't let me down although it felt difficult to keep sight of our goal — to look at how to control a group experience while actually living the group experience. John did his usual stuff though, and was magnificent. The other workshop I went to was gloriously full of controversy. Guy Gladstone ranted and railed and generally put the fear of God into everyone. I liked the idea

of his challenge and went to meet it. Basically a workshop for the untimid, Guy used it to display all his skills in psychodrama therapy to help us get in touch with where we really are, not just where we think we'd like to be. Some of us got something which was more than a surprise rather a short sharp shock. The fall-out rate from this workshop was quite high, which was a pity, but as I said to Guy on leaving, I found it frightening but very good — and with that Guy disappeared into the darkness from which he'd come. I understand why he keeps himself at a distance from us, I think, but I do wish he could find a way by which he could begin to live the aftermath of our experiences with him, with us.

And that's it really, except to thank all those in the White Hart Bar before dinner on Saturday evening. They included me in their table when I was on the outside. I could so easily have slipped away, like that snake, and pretended there'd been no boundary to cross at all.

Barbara Carruthers

I found myself quite annoyed at the end of the conference when it seemed as if issues were being raised in the final ten minutes which had no chance of being addressed. Since I'm both naive and slightly deaf (especially in a large, high hall) I was not sure what it was all about, and since the raisers of the issues did not seem willing to make use of the microphone available, I still do not know; but it felt very uncomfortable and unnecessary.

I have received a great deal from humanistic psychology. It has enabled me to

grow and experience life in a way I had never believed possible for me. It gave me my adult and sanctioned my child. It enabled me to love myself and take responsibility for myself.

I am saying this because I felt that, at the end of the conference, there were a lot of things happening which seemed to deny much of what humanistic psychology stands for. There was a sense of people not taking responsibility themselves for getting something from the conference; there seemed to be a lot put on the organ-

isers to make it good for everybody — which obviously no-one can do. It felt very immature and dependent.

Perhaps in a conference with a theme, more time is needed to discuss the theme itself in small and changing groups, gradually weaving all the workshop expe-

riences into an on-going understanding, and allowing people to air their concerns in a focussed and useful way. Thus the final plenary could reflect the thoughts of the whole conference rather than become the last-minute forum for a rather desperate confrontation.

Dave Jones

Exchange Rate

He said at the turn of the year,
'Give something of value
to your neighbour to keep'.
Innocent as Jonah
having a whale of a time at the seaside,
I dug in the dark, damp detritus of my pockets
for something insignificant to give away;
a silverling,
a shining moon-seed coin,
and got back in exchange, a dead mother's ring,
which I put in my back pocket
for safe-keeping.
You cannot second guess the soul;
for I was taken hand by hand
to the cold and clear moon,
to the earth-heat cooling and the vital tears
and saw
a proud man picking up the rubbish,
piece by piece on the lawn.
Was he looking for his gifts
or an authentic complaint?
I don't know.
My partner and I fingered our gifts, tentatively,
and she palmed my hand with silver,
shining and indestructible.
Is my tiny coin lodged now
in my back pocket, safe?
Or will it go from hand to hand
across our weather-beaten land?