

Festival 2008 Update Julian Nangle



While sorting through my books (I recently moved house) I fell on the booking form and flyer for the 1994 AHP & AHPP Conference. It was entitled a 'Training Conference and Celebration - Borderlines and Boundaries' and held at Dartington Hall; and guess what - Andrew Samuels was keynote speaker. There were supporting roles from Guy Gladstone, John Button, Jocelyn Chaplin, Tone Horwood and Elizabeth McCormick among others.

What has pleased me about this piece of serendipity, taking me back fourteen years (I was lucky enough to attend), is that I can tell you how much it cost: £160 (early bird AHPB members) or £170. Children had to pay £85.

This year we are charging £160 for adult members which is exactly the same as fourteen years ago and £80 for children, which is less! This has to be a bargain by any other name, despite the fact that you would be required to camp for the prices I've quoted this year, whereas in 1994 you had a dormitory bed indoors. To be indoors this year you will have to pay a modest supplement.

Another exciting thing this year is that we have Dina Glouberman as well as Andrew Samuels as a keynote speaker. We also have a host of other contributors including two storytellers, a drummer, a singer, an equine therapist, a sound healer, a chi kung teacher, meditation and goodness knows what else, *and* Seize the Day!

Organising this year's Festival started soon after the end of last year's Festival and we had a busy time for a couple of months. It then goes quiet until the Flyer /Booking Form is published. This happened with the last issue of S & S and it's too early to say how busy life has become once again (I am writing this in January). We anticipate and welcome further months of busy-ness, while we fit everyone in to the accommodation they require and meet the needs and expectations of our humanistic community. If you haven't done so already, do book your place and come and join us. It'll be a lot of fun and you'll meet some like minded people - always a treat.

The concept of having HomeGroups at the AHP(B) Festival is integral to the concept of humanistic psychology. The HomeGroups will have four meetings in less than 48 hours, which means an opportunity for some pretty intense interaction between members of each group. Their purpose is to support members during a stimulating and possibly challenging two days. The HomeGroup is the 'family', whereas the Festival as a whole is the 'world'. What goes on in families in relation to the world will go on in the HomeGroups in relation to the Festival. Be prepared!

Festival Preview – a visit to work with the horses will be available at the festival.

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy meets theatre and the message is still the same – horses help us understand relationship

Josephine Sellers

Synchronicity brought us together. I use Equine Assisted Psychotherapy as part of my counselling practice and Niki and I met, at an unrelated event, only to find ourselves talking about our understanding of horses having a lot to teach us about relationship. Now we have combined to use photography of my working therapy horses to promote Niki's theatrical venture that is to take the message of the wisdom of the horses to children via theatres and schools in the UK.

Following our chance meeting, Niki requested an opportunity to come and spend time with my herd to gain a feel of the work I was doing. The experience proved to be moving and enlightening for her and then came her request to use pictures of herself interacting with the horses to promote her theatrical venture.

My husband Brian and I have kept horses and ridden and driven them for the past thirty five years and now our small herd of four are working alongside of us in a therapeutic partnership. The therapy model requires a therapist to work in conjunction with of a horse professional. Our horses have always lived with us, close to our home and so we have always been a part of the greater herd. We choose to work with our clients in the horses' natural environment, out on fifteen acres of rambling hillside with wonderful views that stretch for miles. Our clients, the horses and us merge with the landscape and the elements, all of which add value and content to the sessions. I am a great believer in the value of Eco Psychology. Sometimes our clients will select to take or two of the horses into the roundpen for more intimate sessions.

We receive referrals regularly from a local child and family charity and some of my therapy room based clients choose to have some

sessions with the horses as part of their total therapy process. This year we have also had quite a few visits from counsellors, psychotherapists, supervisors and life coaches who have come to have some hands on experience out of curiosity about the possible value of the therapy. Feedback and ongoing referrals resulting from these sessions have made us aware that these professionals have been impressed with the potential of the work.

Josephine with Danny and Merlin



Transpersonal therapy makes great use of creative applications and I think there is none better than that of interaction with horses. Their ability to encourage externalisation of the internal process of the client and, in the latter stages, to become an honest mirror for the client to witness their own progress made is exceptional. Horses allow clients to re-empower themselves by choice. The process is moving to witness and I am constantly humbled by the magnificence of these beasts. One of the most graphic indications of congruence amongst a group of working clients for me is when the horses feel safe enough begin to play with each other. Witnessing this event is always a powerful message for the clients as well.

Josephine Sellers: I am a mother and grandmother, have been married for 43 years and now work as an integrative/transpersonal counsellor and tutor and run a complementary therapy and teaching centre in Dorchester Dorset – Body Mind Spirit. From my home in Somerset I specialise, with my husband in offering Equine Assisted Psychotherapy.

In 1990 my autobiography was published documenting a lifetime of powerful psychic/spiritual experiences. This was followed by my therapy training under a charismatic Doctor of Psychology and Shaman. I had studied originally just for the journey but ended up working in my passion, transpersonal therapy.

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