

The AHPB Summer Festivals – 2008 and 2009

Julian Nangle



I never saw myself as an organiser of conferences or festivals but a few years back I fell into it, challenged by the past Chairman of AHPB, Tony Morris, to put my energy where my mouth was. I had been moaning about the lack of anything happening through AHPB, except *Self & Society*.

I was only moaning because ten years earlier I had so much enjoyed the conferences at Dartington, Leicester, and elsewhere. My worry was that the magic of those times represented the 'heyday' of AHPB - but I shouldn't have worried. Our first 'revived' festival, held at Green and Away near Worcester, proved a big hit, with contributions from across the therapeutic and humanistic constituencies; and this despite the unbelievable mud and floods.

Then last year we had a second revival which went wonderfully with Andrew Samuels and Dina Glouberman as our guest speakers. The number of delegates was down on the previous year, but that was as much sod's law (a lot of people wanting to come but who had previous engagements or a variety of illnesses) as it was the economic downturn.

This year the economic downturn is really biting at everyone's heels - but I've found a marvellous antidote to it all: treading water. Planning is out, living is in! And thus we - yes, we - have an Events Core Group this year comprising myself, Pauline Elwell, Tyagi and Brigitta Mowat. We shall let everyone know as often as it takes that this year we are having our festival again, at The Leela Centre again, in July again (10th - 12th 2009), and that this year we are asking delegates to arrive after lunch on the first day. One other thing that will be different this year - it will be cheaper! Our planned fees are £130 for members of AHPB and £150 for non members. This is for camping. The cost of special accommodation such as pine lodges, static caravans etc will be the same as last year.

So you see much of the planning is done - now we just need to do the living. We have a keynote speaker lined up; we have many workshops lined up - including drumming (but please try to bring a drum with you this

time, as we cannot guarantee drums), recreational therapy, singing, chi kung, yoga, meditation, shamanic journey, drama therapy, Trauma Incident Reduction (TIR) workshop and demonstration, dreams, psychophysical integration, creative writing ... And we shall be inviting delegates to offer their wares in whatever guise they choose, also.

One innovation this year will be to have an Open Art Space where delegates can go to chill out whenever they wish to, and where they can connect with their creative side. All materials, paints and brushes will be supplied free of charge.

These are early days, of course, and while most of the planning for the festival is already done it still needs the official blessing of the AHPB Board which we anticipate coming shortly. As usual the Association's finances are at the heart of this decision, so if you feel like signing up NOW (for attendance only – we can sort out accommodation later) you will facilitate the Board's decision no end.

I look forward to seeing you there next summer – something cheerful to think about in these rather dark winter days.

And to tempt you still further – here are further details of some of the workshops we have lined up for July:

This year's keynote session will be delivered by Henry Whitfield. Henry works with Traumatic Incident Reduction. As Henry writes:

This decade has witnessed a number of mindfulness-based, Zen-informed, therapies achieve empirical validation. This recognition arguably gives weight to other mindfulness-informed experiential therapies such as Gendlin's Focusing, and Gerbode's Traumatic Incident Reduction (TIR). TIR is a versatile methodology for applying mindful observation to specific case-formulations and thoroughly operationalises mindfulness to great effect in brief therapy practice for trauma. The broader subject of TIR also applies mindfulness to general counselling practice and long term psychotherapy.

Henry will also be offering a workshop and a demonstration – so, three events for the price of one!

Money Workshop – Julian Nangle.

'Money, money, money'. It's been on our minds this past year more than most. My workshop will require you to bring as much money to the venue as you feel comfortable with, given that you might leave the venue without it!

We shall explore our attitudes to money and its energy, through experiential exchange and bartering.

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy Workshop – Josephine and Brian Sellers.

The workshop will involve a short Power Point presentation to explain the fundamentals involved in Equine Assisted Psychotherapy. This will be

followed by time spent out in the paddock with our small bonded herd of four horses.

Eight people at a time will be invited to interact with the herd to experience the potential of this work.

Dreamspace – Dr. Els van Ooijen.

When dreaming we inhabit a bizarre and apparently meaningless space.

However, when we bring this dreamspace into our physical world, meanings may emerge that surprise and excite us.

In this workshop we will explore ways of mapping the inner space of dreams onto the world of everyday reality.

Psychophysical Integration – Brigitta Mowat and Glen Park.

Psychophysical integration comes from both Eastern spiritual traditions and research on the use of touch in the therapeutic relationship. In this workshop participants will be introduced to chakra work through experiential exercises and relational touch based on the principle of 'non doing' - thus experiencing this subtle bodywork on an intrapsychic level as well as relationally. The use of chakra work combined with touch offers a unique space for working with early trauma.

Raggedy Boy - All life is here – Pauline Elwell.

Working with a Guatemalan Big Myth we will explore the themes of the journey from life through to death and eventual rebirth. Working through Myth, Movement, Enactment and Art we will seek to bring forward into consciousness the unconscious patterning of our own lives. Within this experiential workshop there will be time to reflect on the role of the Dramatherapeutic process within education and other therapeutic methods.

I booked the AHPB Festival because I wanted to do something different and to spend some time with other humanistically minded practitioners, but to be honest I approached the weekend with great trepidation. I was too young to have done the hippy thing, and I'm not really a festivals or camping kind of gal. As the date drew closer, I began to think I must have signed up in a moment of complete madness! The worst part was walking in at lunch on the first day and thinking everyone else seemed so much more - well - *self actualised* than me !!

In reality, however, my fears were groundless. It was a really nice venue - the community couldn't have been more welcoming - and I thoroughly enjoyed the organic, home-grown food. I shared a dormitory with four lovely women who made me laugh and helped me feel at home. The workshops, talks etc were excellent and the gig on Saturday night was fantastic fun!

So it was different - but in a good way - and I'm very glad I overcame my nerves and went for it!

From one of this year's participants