

UKAGP Chair's Report

Jacqui Lichtenstern May 2015

It is only eight months since I wrote the last report, and so much has been happening in UKAGP during that time, that it feels like much longer!

The success of coming together with EAGT for our conference 'Enriching Our Community' in London last September and pre-conference evening event, resulted in our largest ever one day event with almost 70 participants, and a lot of positive feedback as we mentioned in our newsletter.

What we've been up to

Administrator Post – see Administrator Role attachment for more details

We said goodbye and thank you to Natasha in our newsletter, when the 18 month pilot scheme came to an end in December. After a thorough review with Natasha and Liz, we came up with a clear outline of what would best support the organisation for an ongoing post. We had 5 strong candidates whom Ruth and I interviewed, and we have been delighted with to have Jen Clayton on board with us since the end of February. Jen brings IT competency, professionalism, efficiency and a warm and friendly manner with her, and the committee feel much supported by her coming on board.

Google Apps for Business – see 'Why the Committee has decided to invest in Google Apps for Business' for more details

Previously, committee members have used their own personal email accounts, which has meant that all their communication and saved documents is lost when they step down from the committee, and there were no archives other than minutes, for the new members to refer to. To reduce the need for re-inventing the wheel with each new configuration of the organising committee, we decided to trial and are now using a virtual office, with @ukagp.org.uk email addresses, shared online files and much more. Notwithstanding the challenges to those of us less IT savvy, it is proving an effective and efficient way of working.

Conference Organising Group (COG) 2015

Last autumn my focus was to support and encourage members to help form the COG, and by January we had in place a team of 15 people on the COG and working groups, ably led by Liz Beauchamp as Chair and Adam Smith as Vice Chair. We will have had five meetings by the time of the conference, and a lot more work going on behind the scenes. There have been challenges along the way, but I notice a significant difference from previous conferences, whereby a few people on the committee have been holding all the responsibility, and this time the sense of spreading the load is visceral. A huge thank you to Liz and Adam for managing this process, and to everyone who has taken part so far and is continuing to do so.

EAGT – see <http://www.eagt.org> for more details

In February I joined the informal meeting and the General Board meeting of EAGT in Amsterdam with 30 colleagues. The informal meeting provides an opportunity for the NOGT representatives to meet and share what is happening in their countries, and it was discussed that it would be good to share this more widely, so a short questionnaire was developed. There was talk about reaching the new generation through social media, and for EAGT to create a youtube channel where we could post short videos, infomercials, that are not just Perls! A working group will make a proposal for the September AGM. The Human Rights & Social Responsibilities Committee continue with their good work, including going to the Ukraine on a humanitarian mission for a 3 day training of volunteers, and also offering a 2 day workshop in Athens with tortured refugees. They are receiving more requests for support from Peace Brigades International.

This year brings the first interactive newsletter #26 – soon available from the downloads section of the EAGT website.

All presentations and videos from the Research conference in Rome are available on the EAGT website:
http://eagt.org/RActivities_detail.htm

The Professional Competencies & Quality Standards Committee present their comprehensive document Specific Competencies of Gestalt Therapists <http://eagt.org/pcqs/PC&QS%20-%20competencies.pdf> EAGT would like feedback on how we are all using this document, which is seen as a work in progress, in our own countries.

A proposal was agreed to ensure the continuity of the association to elect a new president one year before the end of term of the president in charge. There is a call for candidates for the President of EAGT, the Chair of the Ethics Committee, and for members of the Ethics Committee and Complaints Committee – details in the newsletter.

'The Aesthetic of Otherness: meeting at the boundary in a desensitized world' from 22nd to 25th September 2016 will be the first ever joint conference between AAGT and EAGT, to be held in Taormina, Sicily. They are hoping for 800-1000 participants to come from all over the world, and will be arranging a range of accommodation including budget ones. The first early bird deadline is 30th September 2015.

Thanks, Farewells and Call for Nominations

This is a time to say thank you to all the committee members for their commitment, time and energy in playing a part in developing this organisation further:

To Liz Beauchamp, who only joined the committee in September and offered to take on the newly created roles of Vice-Chair and Conference Co-ordinator, supporting me in my role by bringing her complementary skills and experience and making time to discuss ideas and practicalities. She did this whilst also taking on the position of Chair of the COG, and getting married and moving house during the past few months!

To Ruth Nightingale, who in her role as Finance Officer, continues to keep the financial aspect of UKAGP safe and sound, and has also led a successful Website Sub-Group, which she'll report on separately.

To James Bailey, who has been working creatively and productively in raising the profile of UKAGP, both in his refocused Publicity and Marketing role, and as member of the Website sub-group and on the COG.

To Helen Thomas and Dawn Gwilt, who are both in the challenging time of post-training and pre-accreditation, and have worked creatively together in the new shared Training Engagement role, developing ways to contact trainees and new professionals with us.

To Rachael Kellett, who has played the important role of the new committee member, asking pertinent questions at relevant times, and who has now offered to take on the role of Membership Officer, which plays an important part in ensuring our full members fulfil the criteria, and to oversee individual membership applications to EAGT.

To Rod London as our Secretary and Jane Flint, who have been on the committee for the full three year term, and will therefore be stepping down at the AGM; thank you both for your commitment, time, hard work and for being an important part of the team.

A special thank you also to Adam Kincel, who is not on the committee, but nevertheless shares his time and expertise by looking after the website and advising on such matters.

So we will have two spaces on the committee, one for a Secretary and one for an ordinary committee member – please consider whether you would like to nominate a friend or colleague that you know would use the opportunity well, or if you would like to be nominated, ask someone to do so. We have an exciting time ahead of us, which provides excellent CPD!

What we're planning

New Website – details to follow

New Sub-Committee – see Organisational Members' Sub-Committee Announcement for details

Reflecting on the informal and formal General Board meetings in March, I realised that there something missing in the links between the Gestalt practitioners in the UK and the Chair of UKAGP, who acts as the NOGT representative to EAGT. I started thinking about how we could make the role more truly representative in both directions between the UK and our European colleagues. My proposal to the committee was to create a sub-committee on which all the Training Institutes and other Gestalt organisations would be represented, and this committee could meet twice a year in between the two meetings of the EAGT, whereby matters arising could be discussed and fed back each way. I saw that this also has the potential to help realise the UKAGP's other aims and objectives, by creating a formal interconnected space for dialogue and collaboration between the organisations. More details in attached flyer.

We plan to hold the first exploratory meeting of this group at the conference, so invite those in key leadership or representative positions to contact me to register your interest Chair@ukagp.org.uk

Conference 2016 'Celebrating Our Community' – see website for more details

One of the ripples from last year's shared event, was that Christine Stevens, editor of the BGJ, to approach us with an idea of creating a similar joint event 2016, to mark the 25th anniversary of the BGJ. Many discussions and meetings later, this has developed into an exciting collaborative project between the BGJ, GPTI and UKAGP, which will culminate in a 4 day National Gestalt Conference 30th June to 3rd July 2016. We are looking for people to get involved with making this happen – more details will be on our respective websites soon.