

## Reflections from Julian Nangle

As I approach my 76<sup>th</sup> birthday in a couple of weeks' time as I write, people seem to be asking me what the most halcyon days of my life were. Obviously the teenage years and the early 20s have a special place in that portfolio of memories. However, if I address my time with AHPb, the most satisfying and exciting times were when I was the Administrator. I loved working with Maxine Linnell while she was editor of *Self & Society*, and with Judith Furner while she was Treasurer, working on how best to try and increase membership. John Rowan was always supportive, and there were many others who helped the society survive when all the signs were showing a decline. The most exciting and rewarding initiative was the transformation of the annual conference into an annual festival. The first of these was held at Green & Away, near Worcester, a venue suggested by Maxine. It was the only tented conference centre in the UK at the time.

I have written about these festivals in the past, but with the open invitation to AHPb members to write a little about what AHPb meant to them, I feel this strong desire to remind the membership through these pages how transformative the move to a less formal conference was. We had wonderful contributions from people like Brian Thorne, Leo Rutherford, Dina Glouberman, Andrew Samuels, Nick Totton, Guy Gladstone, Joy the Storyteller, Anna Nangle (Qi Gong), Martin Wilks (morning meditation), Nick and Jane Wise (drumming and singing workshops) and

many others whom my memory (now fading rather frighteningly) simply cannot recall. One aspect of these festivals that I do remember with much satisfaction was the Home Groups. On arrival, each delegate was given a Home Group, normally of no more than ten people, which would meet for an hour at least twice each day, to discuss how the experience of the Festival was affecting them. If they were in need of support, it was in the Home Group that this was found. At that first festival we had 100 delegates, and ten Home Groups. The event made a profit for AHPb of some £4,000, a sum it was badly in need of.

There were two more festivals in the years that followed but then, for some reason, as the recent Board have found, enthusiasm for the whole concept of 'self', and 'society' waned a little, to the point when to keep it going demanded sacrifices from special people, like Richard House.

I believe special thanks and appreciation should be given to Richard for all the tireless work he has put in over the years to keep *Self & Society* going. For me, as Poetry Editor of *Self & Society*, he has been attentive, generous and patient to a fault, introducing me in the process to some important poets who became friends, such as the late Jay Ramsay.

I am sure the spirit of AHPb will continue – how could it not, with the eternal ingredient of John and Sue Rowan's love for the cause? And now we have Tim Broughton, a friend of mine from distant pasts when we both atten-

ded Dance Camp East festivals. It was from these the idea of the AHPb festival found its fertile soil in me and others.

Tim now appears to have taken on the mantel of keeping the torch of AHPb's spirit alive and flickering in one way or another. I look forward to learning and witnessing the new directions he hints at. May he and others with sufficient and willing energy carry the Society forth for the younger generation to pick up and run with somehow, albeit perhaps with another name, bringing about the change so desperately needed in the wider society of modern-day Britain; to truly love and appreciate itself, and thereby others, in the community of self-aware people we call home.

### **About the contributor**

Born in 1947, **Julian Nangle** is a boarding-school survivor, bookseller, poet, psychotherapist, husband, parent, divorced; a husband and stepfather, with 14 grandchildren (aged between 26 and 3). He has aspired to finishing his memoir for the past 20 years, and is still a long way off.