AFT 40th Anniversary Conference

Daring to be different – a time to remember, looking back to the future

at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Durham

16th & 17th April 2015
April 2015

Dear delegate,

AFT North East extends a warm welcome to all of our visitors from near and far and we hope that you enjoy the richness of the conference and of our area. The North East has a rich tapestry – a unique combination of tranquil countryside, rugged coastlines, vibrant city life, historic sites and modern culture. This region was the northern frontier of the Roman empire; a land of many splendid castles, the land of the prince bishops. We are home to three of the country’s most famous rivers, the Tyne, the Wear and the Tees, each steeped in its own rich industrial history.

We have chosen the splendid city of Durham to celebrate this, the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Association for Family Therapy. Durham, with its winding cobbled streets, is packed with history, culture and stunning architecture. The Castle and Cathedral are within a world heritage site. Bill Bryson has reflected on Durham as being “a perfect little city”.

We hope you find the conference lively, informative and enjoyable as we reflect back on the first 40 years of AFT; that you take with you a feeling of being energised and enthused by the appreciative reflections of our historical roots, embrace the richness of our present(ers), and are hopeful and inspired as we look forward to the next 40 years of AFT.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who work and strive to keep family therapy and systemic practice vibrant. Happy 40th anniversary! Enjoy the celebrations!
### Day 1  
**Thursday 16th April 2015**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>All morning from 9.30</td>
<td>Registration and arrival</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00 – 11.30</td>
<td>Pre-conference workshop with <strong>John Burnham</strong>, systemic psychotherapist</td>
<td><strong>AMT (approach method technique) revisited</strong></td>
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<td>11.30 – 12.00</td>
<td>Tea and coffee</td>
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| 12.00 – 1.00  | Conference opening: AFT North East branch chair – **Margaret Dimmock** | Welcome and opening remarks:  **Barbara Warner** (chair of AFT 2004 to 2007)  
Northumberland Tyne & Wear Trust rep, **Esther Cohen-Tovee**  
Opening plenary by **John Burnham**, systemic psychotherapist |
| 1.00 – 1.45   | Lunch included for all delegates                                     |                                                                      |
| 1.45 – 3.15   | **Gill Gorrell-Barnes** (founder member of AFT and family and systemic psychotherapist) | ‘**What are Daddies for?** Contemporary family work with fathers, children and mothers |
| 3.45 – 5.15   | **Peter Rober** – professor of family therapy at the University of Leuven, Belgium | **The family, the therapist and the process: Our search for the thing in the bushes over the past 40 years** |
| 5.15 – 5.30   | Reflections on day 1                                                  |                                                                      |
| 6.45 – 8.30   | Residential delegates drinks reception                               | Anniversary dinner, followed by dancing to John Wheeler’s ceilidh band, **Summerhill Folly**  
After dinner presentation: *Happy 40th birthday AFT* |

### Day 2  
**Friday 17th April 2015**

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<tr>
<td>8.30 – 9.30</td>
<td>Registration, coffee and arrival</td>
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<td>11.00 – 11.20</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
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<td>11.20 – 12.45</td>
<td><strong>Alan Cooklin</strong> (founding chair of AFT, 1975, consultant in family psychiatry, Camden &amp; Islington NHS Foundation Trust, honorary senior lecturer UCL)</td>
<td><strong>Being seen and heard: Multi-family approach to releasing the emotional lives of the children of adults with mental illness</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>12.45 – 1.30</td>
<td>Lunch included for all delegates</td>
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| 1.30 – 2.15pm | Choose one of two workshops:  
1. **John Wheeler**, systemic psychotherapist  
2. **Julie Taylor**, nurse consultant, Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust | **Where does SFBT sit at the systemic banquet?**  
**Night and day – the story of a family’s resilience** |
| 2.30 – 3.15  | Choose one of two workshops:  
1. **Tonia Forster** with **Dr Aditya Sharma**  
2. **Alex Reed** and **Kevin Hawkes** | **Absolutely FAB – family-focused treatment for adolescents with bipolar disorder – a feasibility study**  
**Dialogical approaches** |
| 3.15 – 3.30  | Tea – please return evaluation forms                                |                                                                      |
| 3.30 – 4.00  | Closing panel with **Barbara Warner, John Burnham** and founder members to reflect and open floor for questions.  
Closing speeches to bring the conference to a circular conclusion. | **Reflections of 40 years of AFT and family therapy practice and looking back to the future** |
More about the speakers and their presentations

**John Burnham**

John Burnham is a family and systemic psychotherapist working in the independent and public sectors. John has 40 years of experience working with families, couples and individuals. Indeed the beginning of his practice coincided with and was inspired by the very first AFT conference. His practice includes therapy, supervision, training, consultation and writing. He has worked at Parkview Clinic, Birmingham Children’s Hospital for 37 years where he is employed as a consultant systemic and family psychotherapist and director of the systemic training programme. He continues to be part of a lively clinical team developing treatment models within tier 4 and community teams. He is a recent convert to how manualised treatment programmes can generate second order changes in staff relationships. As well as training in the UK he teaches in a variety of contexts including Scandinavia, Netherland, USA and South America.

**Approach – method – technique revisited**

I first wrote about using the framework ‘approach – method – technique’ as a tool to deconstruct therapeutic practice in 1992 and then followed this by applying it to supervision in 1993. The framework seemed to gather popularity, especially on training courses. It seemed to be helpful in

- including personal experience as a significant aspect of what influences a persons practice and indeed how they choose what model/theory of practice to train in.
- Extending a practitioners’ ability to use methods and techniques from multiple sources, while continuing to maintain a coherence with their preferred approach.

One of the difficulties with the framework emerged when practitioners asked an ‘either/or question about a certain aspect of practice: For example: “Is this a technique, or a method or an approach?” This seemed to emphasise the horizontal distinctions or separateness between the levels and led to a ‘hardening of the categories’, which was not an intention of the framework. It led me to consider how to give greater emphasis to the vertical connections which would involve appreciating the coherence within any aspect of practice. In Bruner’s words: “every action is the performance of meaning” and, I might add experimentally, every meaning requires an action to be meaningful. This workshop will explore this development and its implications for both therapy and supervision.

*We realise that many delegates travelling from afar will not be able to attend this workshop, which is why we have made it a pre-seminar workshop.*

**Gill Gorell Barnes, MA MSc**

Gill Gorell Barnes has been working with children and families since the 1960s, first as a psychiatric social worker and subsequently as family and couples therapist within the NHS. Her work has mainly been within the multi-cultural and changing population of London; at the Tavistock Clinic an international psychotherapy training centre where she lectured, supervised, and researched for twenty five years; and at the Institute of Family Therapy which she co-founded with colleagues in the 1970s. She was training director for ten years and co founded the master’s degree with Birkbeck College, London. The nature of her work has always reflected the changing nature of family life, including divorce, stepfamily living, single parent family living and the growth of gay and lesbian family life. Currently she is honorary senior lecturer for the Tavistock Clinic and works as a family therapist and consultant from her home in London.

Gill has taught internationally since 1980, and specialises in keeping her teaching grounded in clinical practice. Her three research studies, on stepfamily living, on children’s experience of going through divorce and post divorce living, and her current writing about fathers are all related to clinical practice as well as to research.

In her civic work Gill has been a trustee of the Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture (now renamed Freedom from Torture) for twelve years, and was trustee or chair of the Post Adoption Centre for ten years. She sits on the board a grant-giving charitable foundation which keeps her in touch with current social issues relating to poverty and mental health in the UK today.

Gill has written three books on working with families in social change, and co authored another five, and has written over forty scholarly articles and chapters relating to working with families. Currently she is writing a book about working with fathers, including gay fathers and fathers whose children also live with their mothers in lesbian families. This is what her presentation will be based on at conference.

**Alan Cooklin (M.B.Ch.B. F.R.C.Psych.)**

Alan is a family psychiatrist. He was consultant to the Family Project for Major Mental Illness for Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust, honorary senior lecturer at University College London, and consultant in charge of Paediatric Liaison Services for UCL Hospitals. For 20+ years he was director of the Marlborough Family Service. He was the founding chair of the Association for Family Therapy in the UK and founding director (and later chairman) of the Institute of Family Therapy. He has worked with families for some 45 years. Within his current role he developed the ‘Kidstime’ workshops for families in which a parent suffers from mental illness.

He has set up many family therapy training courses, including three University courses, written many papers and articles, co-edited one book, and edited a book on clinicians as agents of change in institutions. He co-produced the unique computer/video training pack *Family Therapy Basics* featuring John Cleese, has taught throughout Europe, North and South America, Australasia, India, Singapore, and China, and is an advisory editor for *Family Process.*

He is a regular expert witness in the District and High Courts in relation to Child Protection Cases, and has participated in a number of radio and television broadcasts.

He devised and developed the Kidstime project for the children of parents with mental illness, and wrote and directed the film *Being Seen and Heard: The Needs of Children of Parents with Mental Illness,* as well as a second film *When a Parent has a Mental Illness…* which is available to children and young people (as well as others) from the website of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, with links to many children’s websites.

He has now set up a new charitable foundation – The Kidstime Foundation to raise funds to promote the Kidstime model as well as to support other projects.
Alan says “Although a small number of family therapists do address parental mental illness, the majority are still focusing on the parent’s rather the child’s perspective – and rarely both”. Yet 70% of them will be significantly affected by living with a parent with mental illness. What we have developed – by focusing on explanations which both the parent and the child can accept (and hopefully usually the professionals!) means using what at first sight might seem a most un-systemic intervention in order to generate a systemic change.

The Kidstime multi-family approach has been developing for the past 14 years, and there are now about 10 groups in the UK (and growing) and 4 or 5 developing in Europe already.

“I would like to engage the whole conference in examining our preconceptions about systemic interventions when reconciled with the statements from children of what they need.”

**Tonia Forster and Aditya Sharma**

Adi is a consultant (Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust) and clinical senior lecturer (Newcastle University) in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. He leads on the Adolescent Bipolar Service (ABS) which is a national multidisciplinary second-opinion service providing assessment and/or management advice for youth (under 18) with mood disorders sometimes in the context of other mental health and/or neurodevelopmental disorders. His main area of interest in studying the impact of bipolar disorder on the development of children and adolescents. He completed his PhD on Neurocognition and Emotion Processing in Bipolar Offspring in 2013 and is chief Investigator for the FAB study (outlines above) funded by NIHR.

Tonia works as a nurse consultant (Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust) across Child and Adolescent Mental Health including learning disability in-patient services. Tonia completed the MA in Systemic Practice in 2001 and the Diploma in Systemic Teaching, Training and Supervision in 2007 and is a UKCP Registered Systemic Psychotherapist. Within community services Tonia is a member of the Northumberland Tyne & Wear Foundation Family Therapy Course team and has been involved as Treasurer of the Association for Family Therapy North East Branch since 2012. She has a special interest in solution-focused therapy, adapting approaches with young people and their families to enable them to move forward.

Tonia is involved with the FAB study as lead therapist.

**Absolutely FAB – Family-focused Treatment for Adolescents with Bipolar Disorder – a feasibility study**

At this workshop we will present information about the Family Focused Treatment for Adolescents with Bipolar Disorder (FFT-A) and its UK feasibility evaluation: the NIHR funded FAB study. The FFT-A model was developed by prof. David Miklowitz (UCLA, USA) and covers three domains: psycho-education, communication enhancement and problem solving. In addition we will explore our experience of delivering this programme and the tension between privileging the sessions and a desire to work outside the framework of the manual – maintaining fidelity to the model as a feasibility study. Tonia will give an account of a different journey working with families using manualised approaches from sceptic to....

**Peter Rober**

Peter Rober is a clinical psychologist, family therapist and family therapy trainer at Context – Center for Marital, Family and Sex Therapy (UPC KU Leuven, Belgium). He teaches family therapy at the Institute for Family and Sexuality Studies (medical school of KU Leuven, Belgium). His research interest areas focus on family therapy with children and on the therapy process, including especially the use of self of the therapist and the therapist’s inner conversation. Peter Rober has published several articles in international family therapy journals. Since 1992, he has presented international workshops on family therapy with children and adolescents, as well as on the therapist’s inner conversation.

**John Shotter**

John is emeritus professor of communication at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, USA and research associate at the Centre for Philosophy of Natural & Social Science (CPNSS), London School of Economics, UK. He is a visiting professor at Open University Business School, Milton Keynes, UK, and University of Leeds Business School, Leeds, UK.

**Presentation: Tom Andersen, Thomas Kuhn, leadership and the role of enacted and recounted, paradigmatic experiences**

“I used to think that we have movements and feelings and language inside us... [But] we are in them: in the movements, in the feelings, and in the language. And we do not shape them, they shape us” (Andersen, 1996, p. 122).

“Scientific knowledge is embedded in theory and rules... I have tried to argue, however, that this localization of the cognitive content of science is wrong... [what is learned is] embodied in a way of viewing physical situations rather than in rules or laws” (Kuhn, 1970, pp. 187-188, pp. 190-191).

Currently, we still seem to be fixated on the need for theories, models, protocols and/or recipes – indeed, a few years ago when, at the invitation of a commissioning editor (who shall remain nameless), I wrote a book for practitioners in psychotherapy, I was told it was “too thoughtful, as practitioners only want recipes”. Along with Thomas Kuhn, and Tom Andersen in his later years, I think this is quite wrong. As Tom (1995) told in his account of the origins of the reflecting process: “My way of telling about the origin and development of the reflecting process has shifted over the years. At first I often referred to theories, as if these processes were born our of intellectuality. Now I do not think so. I think rather they were consequences of feelings... when the reflecting process first appeared in March 1985, I now think it was a solution to my feeling of discomfort as a therapist” (p. 11). In my talk, I will make clear why it is one’s sensing of similarities (feelings), not the seeing of patterns out in the world, and why Tom’s enactment and recounting of various, experience creating activities, are and have been of such importance in shaping all of our therapeutic activities. It is not recipes, but paradigmatic experiences that are important. As Kuhn (1970) noted: “The paradigm as shared example is the central element of what I now take to be the most novel and least understood aspect of this book” (p.187). Tom Andersen led by example, not by formulating directive or instructive statements.

**Julie Taylor**

Julie has more than 30 years of mental health practice, and completed her masters degree in systemic practice in 1995. During her career Julie has developed a community based acute service, been a clinical specialist in a self harm liaison service and more recently is a nurse consultant in a crisis resolution and home treatment team. Julie has an interest in suicide and self harm,
utilising solution-focused approaches, and has been published several times.

**Presentation: Night and day – the story of a family’s resilience**

A jointly facilitated session between a carer and a practitioner to relay the story of a family experience of a mental health crisis and how this story differed from a traditional medical and institutional intervention.

**John Wheeler**

A UKCP registered systemic psychotherapist and supervisor who is also registered with UKASFP as a solution-focused practitioner and a full member of SFCT, the Association for Quality Development of Solution Focused Consulting and Training. John has a background of 30 years experience as a social worker and family therapist in CAMHS, has published over 30 articles and book chapters and is an external lecturer to several universities in the North East of the UK. John has delivered training throughout the UK and abroad, including the delivery of training in SFBT in India. John’s work currently includes supervision, training, private practice and expert witness work with the ‘resolutions’ model. John is a board member for the European Brief Therapy Association and committee member for UKASFP.

**Presentation: Where does SFBT sit at the systemic banquet?**

Whilst SFBT can be seen to have emerged from family therapy developments in the 1970s and 1980s, the relationship between SFBT and systemic practice could be seen as interesting, complicated and at times controversial – an offspring that might or might not be invited to a family banquet. The workshop will start with the presenter sharing his thinking on past influences which may have complicated the relationship between SFBT and systemic practice and current signs of hope. With the use of John Burnham’s framework of problems/restraints/resources/possibilities, and some solution-focused scaffolding, participants will be given an opportunity to reflect on the influences which determine where the method and techniques of SFBT sit in their systemic repertoire, and any changes they might be interested to make.

**Jim Wilson**

Jim has been a member of AFT since the early 1980s and has practised as a family therapist in social care, independent, voluntary and National Health Service contexts. He has presented his work in many settings and countries and has published widely on aspects of therapy including developments in creative practice with an emphasis on political and humanising approaches to therapy. He has a longstanding commitment to improving service delivery for children in social care and mental health services. Jim is past chairperson of The Family Institute, Cardiff (now based in The University of South Wales), past chair of the Centre for Child Focused Practice (now Centre for Child Studies) at The Institute of Family Therapy London. He is honorary lecturer in many European centres for the development and training of systemic therapy. He has presented his work in conferences and courses both in the UK, Europe, North and South America and in Singapore.

In recent years he has collaborated with Professor John Shotter and colleagues from the Open Network for Dialogical Practices where Jim is a founding member.
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The Radisson Blu Hotel's position in Durham city centre is ideal for sightseeing. Alongside the banks of the quaint River Wear, the hotel occupies a premium setting. It's enviable location in the Durham city centre affords easy access to major motorways as well as to the mainline railway station. A short drive from the Durham Tees Valley and Newcastle airports, the accommodation is also near Europe's third-busiest port.

Free internet and health-club facilities.

Nearby transport:
- Durham Railway Station – 2.1 km
- Newcastle International Airport – 42 km
- Durham Tees Valley Airport – 46.8 km

The nearest train station is Durham Railway Station, which is an 8-minute walk from the hotel. Head southeast toward Station Approach, turn left. Turn left onto Framwelgate/A691. At the roundabout take the 1st exit onto W2W/A690. Take the pedestrian tunnel stairs. The hotel will be on the left.

Driving directions to the hotel:
Take Junction 62 off the A1(M) and follow the signs to Durham city centre along A690. After crossing the River Wear, stay in the left-hand lane and turn left at the traffic lights. Take the first immediate left to Framwellgate Waterside. The hotel is on the left.