

THE STORY OF CHIRON

by **Bernd Eiden and Jochen Lude**

We, Bernd and Jochen, want to write down for you our story, how Chiron came about and has developed until now, recounting the successes as well as the shortcomings of our organisation. This idea grew out of the Story-telling event, led by Mike Eales, at the last AGM of AChP (Association of Chiron Psychotherapists) in November 2001.

Looking back from today's perspective, it is easy to identify two main forces, motivating us to create Chiron and sustaining us in holding it for almost 20 years now:

1. We deeply believe that the integration of body and mind is essential to effective psychotherapy. Having experienced Body Psychotherapy as clients and trainees, we could never imagine working without the body. Our training in Body Psychotherapy has opened up for us new dimensions in our selves and in contact with others and provided an invaluable understanding of the human personality on the physical, psychological and spiritual level. The depth of our experiences enabled us to found Chiron, as we wanted to continue the work which touched us so profoundly and taught us a deep respect for life. It turned out that to make Body Psychotherapy accessible to the public, as well as to develop the art, science and practice of Body Psychotherapy as a profession, and to promote it amongst other professionals, became our life project.

2. We also wanted to create and be part of a community of people who share the same values. Chiron became the focus and meaning of our lives and therefore often a priority in many personal decisions. We did not want a separation between our working and private lives. As a result Chiron had more of a family atmosphere and not so much an institutional character. It was very joyful and fulfilling to us to be able to do the work in such a way. We came from a background in communal living in the seventies and lived our dream of creating an alternative lifestyle with meaningful contacts and sharing.

By telling the story, we recognise important stages, representing the natural seven cycles of a life process. It needs to be said that the process was at times much more chaotic and less linear than presented here. It's partly artificial to separate these stages from each other, as they are overlapping, but it is also easier and clearer when looking at them retrospectively.

Stage 1 was the foundation of Chiron in 1983 by Bernd, Jochen and Rainer Pervöltz.

The three of us had already known each other in Berlin, having built together a self-help therapy project, prior to coming to London. In January 1978 Jochen and Bernd moved to London to continue to study Body Psychotherapy at the Boyesen Centre. After having worked there as trainers for a couple of years, we split in the summer of 1983, followed by a number of students who asked us to continue to train them. We separated from the Boyesen Centre due to personal conflicts and conceptional differences. The main controversies were: not enough tolerance for

conflict and negativity or integration of different approaches; the pure biodynamic approach was very inward focused and the therapeutic relationship with its conflicts was not honoured enough and the value of the massage work was overemphasised for our taste.

Originally we were six founder members. Bernd, Jochen and Rainer were joined by Kristiane Preisinger, Jochen Encke and Rita Maag. We all identified with and were excited by the choice of the name Chiron (suggested by Jochen Encke) as the wounded healer, for the organisation. Chiron was a centaur in Greek mythology, a horse and a human being, and became a healer and teacher. He was wounded by his own pupil and the idea is that the healing takes place in the relationship. As an archetype Chiron relates to wholeness or achieving it. Chiron teaches that our own wound is the gift we can offer to others. Also there was a newly discovered planet named Chiron, associated with new age and holistic healing.

In the beginning we had to be very flexible and improvise a lot. The newly converted loft in our small house in Acton provided the space for group meetings. We also rented additional rooms in order to pick up the training for those students who left the Boyesen Centre with us. This was in 1983, the first year of Chiron's existence. The only way we were able to afford premises for Chiron was to buy a house privately. It turned out to be too difficult to find a suitable house for six people to live in and have a suitable space for work. Bernd, Jochen and Rainer decided to carry on with Chiron. It was in the autumn of 1984 when 26 Eaton Rise was purchased. Only the ground floor was used by Chiron. Chiron had its own first intake of six students and amongst these were Michael and Werner.

Stage 2 was the phase of initial team building and shaping the training structure.

The three of us had to learn to work together and to form a team. We created the basic syllabus, acknowledging and supporting each other's qualities and skills. We also learned to accept each other with our limitations. Body & Energy 1 grew out of Jochen's beliefs and how he envisaged his way of teaching. Body & Energy 2 and the Massage training structure was conceptualised by Bernd, and Rainer developed Gestalt and Charge and how to integrate these with the body work. This was a quite natural process as we trusted our own skills and enjoyed the freedom to create what we believed in. It helped us to have been trainers at the Boyesen Centre for two years where we had already experimented with a training structure, teaching vegetotherapy and massage. It was very clear to us that we didn't want to offer exclusively a biodynamic training and that we were keen to create an integrative body psychotherapy training of which the biodynamic work was only one aspect. Jochen and Bernd had done further training with John Pierrakos in New York and Rainer had been trained by Jack Rosenberg in Los Angeles. David Boadella came occasionally as a supervisor to Chiron in these early years and we also attended occasional workshops with Stanley Keleman and later with Alexander Lowen and experienced other approaches such as Radix with Chuck Kelly and Hakomi with Ron Kurtz.

We also had maintained a strong network with our German connections and led ongoing training groups in Germany over weekends. Quite a number of students came over from Germany to continue to train with us, which explains the strong German presence in Chiron. We expanded the team and others joined us as guest trainers, e.g. Flora and Kristiane. Gill Westland joined the training team and was very helpful to us in establishing links with the outer professional world.

In 1985 Chiron's first crop got their Certificates. Those were the students who followed us from the Boyesen Centre. Amongst them were Joachim Boening and Michaela, Margaret and Claudius.

Stage 3 in Chiron's development was its anchoring in the professional world and gaining professional credibility.

After the training was established as an expression of what we believed in, we were ready to move more outwardly. In 1986 Chiron joined HIPS, The Humanistic and Integrative Section of UKCP, at that time still the Rugby Standing Conference. We had to expose ourselves to other training organisations, which created anxiety, insecurity and doubts whether we were good enough and whether our training would be accepted.

Besides these more personal fears, we were also hesitant to present ourselves particularly to the 'verbal' psychotherapists, representing a tradition in which the body is regarded as less significant than the mind. It was also very exciting to make links with the big therapeutic world out there and the accreditation process was done in a very mutually supportive way between the various member organisations. We were excited about the open and democratic spirit of that time and that it was possible to sit together with psychoanalytic therapists who represented the other camp and try to agree on training standards for psychotherapists. This would never have been possible on the continent where the analytic sections and the medical profession fight to maintain their power and are therefore much more exclusive. It did not take long to discover that power struggles exist within UKCP as well, of course, with animosities and polarities between sections. It is a conflicted field that has to deal with a complex mixture of different psychotherapeutic approaches.

Chiron became the first training organisation assessed by HIPS in 1987. The assessors passed Chiron's training with some recommendations such as the need to extend the training hours, improve the academic side of the training and also create a system for monitoring our certified therapists.

Being a member organisation of UKCP opened new possibilities to enter a dialogue with other ways of working, for instance through offering presentations at the yearly UKCP conference. Our fears of being stigmatised, as coming from the Body Psychotherapy subculture, were unjustified, at least this is how it appeared on the surface. Our workshops have always been well attended and there is a growing curiosity to add a body focus to psychotherapeutic practice. To move outwardly was not an easy process and confronted us with many questions. Were we bigheaded in trying to present our work, Body Psychotherapy, as a mainstream within psychotherapy? We can recall many moments when we wished we had stayed on the fringe in order not to compromise our values and let our inner truth be threatened by the ever tightening regulations. Is doing Body Psychotherapy so much more exposing than verbal psychotherapy? Or do we struggle with the impossibility to put the essence and the intuitively sensed experiences into words? Are we scientific in our work, or scared of, or inclined to dismiss the concept of science? It proved to be so much more difficult to describe what we are doing as Body Psychotherapists than just doing it. The challenge was to relate what we were doing to some kind of psychological model or theory.

It remained very important to keep a connection to our roots by joining EABP (European Association of Body Psychotherapy) as individual members in order to stay in touch with the development of Body Psychotherapy and attend biannual conferences. However, we decided that Chiron would not become a member as a training school. The reason for this is that we have already UKCP as an accrediting body for our training and this involves an enormous amount of work which seems to get more and more every year.

Stage 4 was the phase of expansion within the organisation.

The training blossomed and was extended to Diploma level. This led in 1988 to the initiation of a group of post certificate holders meeting regularly in order to work out a basis for an association to hold those who have completed the training. The initial group had 12 members and among others were Joachim, Michaela, Werner, Jutta, Clare, Flora, Sally Hart, Kristiane. A lot of work was done by the initial association group. A number of sub-groups worked on different issues, e.g. organising a conference in Ealing Hospital and working on a possible constitution. The possibility of going for charitable status was also explored thoroughly. The most important area of debate was the choice of name for the association. A number of members did not want to have Chiron included in the name of the association and consequently left when the name 'Association of Chiron Psychotherapists' was finally agreed on. One reason to have Chiron included in the name was the long term vision for the Association to be responsible for reaccreditation required by UKCP. Chiron wanted to support this in order to foster independence. Another important reason behind the choice of the name was aiming to have a clear identity as Chiron Body Psychotherapists. The disadvantages in this decision were the restrictions for the Association not to compete with Chiron by offering their own training as well as not to advertise in public. Chiron had to safeguard the running of its clinics to be able to provide enough clients for new therapists, and to generate income from the clinics to support the running of the training organisation.

By the end of 1993 AChP had worked out a constitution with the voluntary help and support of a solicitor, Robin Smith, the husband of a member of AChP, and held its first AGM on December 5th. The stated aims of AChP are summarised in the constitution and are given to each new member.

Due to the growing number of students Chiron needed more space. This coincided with Rainer's wish to have a private space outside Eaton Rise and he moved out in 1989. Three years later he went back to Germany after having prepared Michael Soth and Gillian Kelly for taking over his work. Rainer's return to Germany left Bernd and Jochen solely responsible for the running of Chiron and they had to manage this crisis.

The space in Eaton Rise was no longer sufficient. Chiron needed more rooms for the increasing demands for training and for the daily running of the clinics. Bernd and Jochen bought Harvist Road with their own money. The clinics became a special ingredient and feature of Chiron's training and enabled new therapists to get grounded in the initial phase of their clinical work.

The boundaries within the organisation in these initial formative years were very different from today. Starting, as we did, as a small organisation, it would not always have been possible to

safeguard the boundaries between therapist/trainer; therapist/supervisor; therapist/assessor or examiner and trainer/assessor or examiner. Close apprenticeship was very much a part of our way of teaching and team building. It has been a long process within UKCP as well to establish an agreed policy on dual relationships and it was only this year that this has finally been implemented. (You can obtain a copy of this dual relationships policy document from the office.) For a while now Chiron has been disallowing the dual relationships of therapist/trainer therapist/supervisor and therapist/examiner. We are still struggling with the trainer/assessor or examiner one and can't always secure this, but UKCP allows exceptional circumstances for this. We want to keep our training as organic as possible and want to avoid the pressures resulting from an external examination board.

Stage 5 is the phase of a theoretical struggle towards integration.

Other trainers were given more responsibilities and power by Bernd and Jochen as training directors. We wanted to build a team to share the running of the training and secure for the long term the possibility of passing on the business one day. Having more trainers involved brought naturally more diversity into the teaching which furthered the theoretical discussions about the training's content and structure. New models were discussed and the existing training was put under scrutiny. The wider staff group were included in this process by having an advisory function to the Training Committee. Consistent long term members of the existing staff, besides the already mentioned Training Committee members, are Monika and Gillian, joined a bit later by Roz, Alun and Yishai. Julie, Alicja and Joanne left after some years of valuable contribution. For a substantial period of time Lynne was running the open workshops. Clover Southwell and Joachim Boening, as well as a succession of various external anatomy teachers, came into the basic training as guest tutors.

The existing Training Prospectus was finally created with the help of some trainers. We especially want to thank Michael and Tree for their input and hard work in getting this project on paper. Looking back over these years we remember a lot of creative and inspiring meetings and the house bursting at times with vitality and used to its full capacity. The shortcomings of that time were that students were lacking an integrated model and received at times conflicting messages from different trainers. We struggled with the fact that the theory and practice of Body Psychotherapy was sometimes not sufficient, especially when it came to working with clients with a very fragile self structure and we looked how to supplement these limitations with theories and practice from external disciplines.

It was also during this time that we decided to change the name from Holistic Psychotherapy to Body Psychotherapy since Body Psychotherapy became the official name for our discipline, adopted by the European Association for Body Psychotherapy.

In the meantime Jochen and Bernd had completed another training in Transpersonal Psychology with Ian Gordon-Brown and Barbara Somers, delivering more integration of Jungian ideas. They also did further analytical studies. Bernd was strongly influenced by his Jungian analysis with Dr. J. Redfearn (Society of Analytical Psychology), which he started in 1982 and which lasted for 14 years. Another important influence was our long term work with Bob Moore, a spiritual

teacher and healer in Denmark. Our yearly retreats over 13 years grounded us in the practice of meditation and deeper understanding of the subtle body by using energy-transforming exercises.

The Training Committee was the place where we held the training together and attempted to define the Chiron approach. Were we trying to teach too many approaches and were we too eclectic? We had plenty of heated discussions leading to several changes. Gill Westland left fairly early on, not agreeing with the diversity within the team. Later Claudius left as well and he had been more part of the body work section within the team. It was a time when the emphasis on body work was questioned and got pushed aside in favour of a more integrative approach. The body mind split was clearly played out in the team and we gave space for this, so that new ideas could emerge. We were caught in the dilemma either to let these processes happen or to use our authority and keep the rope tighter. The fact that our colleagues have also been our students/supervisees, and sometimes even our clients, added a special flavour to these complicated dynamics.

Kristiane and Werner were important in confronting issues as they were coming from a more outside position being at the same time trainers at the Minster Centre and/or Metanoia. Both their contributions were valuable and they eventually decided not to be part of the core team any longer as they would not identify with the principles of Body Psychotherapy any more. Kristiane remained a staff member while Werner left eventually. This process strengthened the core group which included by then Michaela, Michael and Tree, a bit later Shoshi and eventually Margaret and Sue. Tree was a very active and long term member, who resigned recently, as you know from her announcement in the newsletter.

UKCP regulations had become tighter and more rigorous towards academic learning. The administrative tasks had increased enormously and more managerial work was demanded from us. We want to thank Caroline, our administrator, who was with us for 10 years, and who was succeeded by Nadia in the summer of 2000 .

It was clear for the existing team that the Chiron approach to Body Psychotherapy needed to address more the relationship between therapist and client including its transference and countertransference elements. We needed to move beyond the inherited theories of Body Psychotherapy which focus mainly on the theory of body armour and energy flow, sensation and feeling. We wanted to include more the relationship dynamics and the meaning of the client's experience and its connection to past or present client/therapist relationship. Can we incorporate a broader perspective by only drawing on theories from disciplines outside the field of our work or can this be achieved from within Body Psychotherapy?

We put more emphasis on inviting external trainers to contribute to our training. We organised a two-year supervision course in Analytical Body Psychotherapy with Sander Kirsch and Jacques Berliner as well as a course in Object Relations with Vin Gomez. Hella Ehlers from the Association of Arbour Psychotherapists taught us about diagnosis and assessment of borderline disorder. Babette Rothschild's training course in Somatic Trauma Therapy became a successful part of our Post-certificate Training. Our External Examiners, the late Ian Gordon-Brown succeeded by Liz McCormick, helped us in our yearly assessment procedures for our graduates

on certificate and diploma level. Our External Moderator Kathy Murphy was a strong support in moments of crisis either in team conflicts or in handling a complaint.

Stage 6 was the phase of consolidation and new expansion.

Chiron had to undergo a re-accreditation process by UKCP in June 1999 and was visited by two assessors for a day, spending time with students from different years, with the staff and with the Training Directors. The report was very positive and it was more than satisfying to be validated and seen for our beliefs and the values we try to express in our work. We published the report in the AChP newsletter at the time.

The Training Committee has consisted for a while now of Michaela, Sue, Shoshi, Michael, Margaret, Bernd and Jochen. Our discussions became much more coherent at this stage and the taught syllabus became an expression of all the members of the team. We started to function well together and agreed on the same concepts. We were trying to conceptualise an integrated understanding of the significance of the mind and the body. This means on the one hand not to place a higher value on language, cognitive understanding and insight, and on the other not to idealise the organic body as being the source of the essence and truth of a person. Another important decision for us was to keep our training experiential. This was the main reason not to link up our training with an university and offer it as a MA course.

The understanding of the wounded healer and the development of the use of the countertransference grew as an important unifying element amongst us. We put a stronger emphasis in helping trainees to develop a sensitivity to the subtleties of the use of countertransference moment to moment, e.g. parallel process, projective identification, paradoxical intervention, working with the resistance, noticing our response as therapists to the client's internal therapist.

Chiron expanded further in the wider therapeutic field in the last years. We became quite well known at the UKCP Conferences and our workshops gained a respectable reputation. Several articles were published by Michael, Roz and Bernd in various magazines which you know about, but please look on the website: www.chiron.org, if in doubt. The book 'Body Psychotherapy' was very recently published, edited by Tree, containing contributions by various Chiron trainers. Over the last year Roz has gained a strong profile as a lecturer in the professional field and makes a great contribution to the reputation of Chiron. It is so essential to find a way for dialogue in a language comprehensible to those outside our field. We, Bernd and Jochen, have neglected this domain of public presentation, as we don't feel comfortable speaking in public and prefer to leave this task to our colleagues. The written word is not our strength, either. We are both clinicians and what we enjoy most is the direct contact and the work with clients.

The basic training intake has considerably decreased in the last couple of years partly due to the overall market situation and partly because we are not skilled in marketing and selling our product. We are used to serve those who find Chiron and come to us rather than target new clientele. We also want to stress that the management of Chiron has never been our primary area of work. One emerging factor in reaching a new group of clients is our website. It is very

successful and we are constantly getting good feedback for it which is solely due to Michael's computer literacy.

We have become the leading institute for Body Psychotherapy in the UK. At this stage we have 71 Diploma Therapists of whom 64 are practising at present and an additional 57 Certificate Therapists, of whom 14 have stopped pursuing their career to become fully accredited. There are about 60 students at present in the basic training phase.

Stage 7 is the current period of transition, the end of the existing and the beginning of a new structure.

We feel enriched and content with what we have created with all of you together and want to thank each of you for being involved. Chiron would not be alive without your presence and commitment. Having run the show for nearly 20 years now, we come to a stage in our lives that we want to work less and enjoy life a bit more outside Chiron. You have heard us talking about this for a long time now, as we were preparing the ground for Chiron to be taken over by others. Our first attempt to create a new business structure with a team (including both of us), sharing power with equal rights and opportunities failed. Our next attempt to hand over the business without us being part of the team, failed as well for financial reasons. When we divided all the tasks and jobs done by the two of us, to be passed on to others as paid jobs, we were confronted with the reality that Chiron simply does not bring enough profit to make this possible. The same was confirmed by two business consultants when they looked at Chiron's finances. Chiron is not financially rewarding in its existing structure and its success is not to be measured in commercial terms. The rewards for working at Chiron are more of an idealistic nature.

During this process, it also became obvious that the inbuilt power structures of Chiron as a 'community set-up' impeded change. These structures seem to confirm Bert Hellinger's 'Order of Love' theory in the sense that there are strong, underlying forces which can not be shifted, i.e. we will always remain the 'bosses' or the 'parents' and are probably unconsciously wanted by all of you to remain in charge. However, we can not endeavour to continue to run Chiron in the same way and therefore shift the emphasis in what Chiron will be doing in the future. We have come to the conclusion to slow down and gradually stop the intake for the full basic training programme. Our time plan is to have the last intake in the year 2003/04. This will give us the opportunity to make a long term announcement and let everyone who applies for training information know that next year will be the last chance to start a full training at Chiron, leading to UKCP accreditation. This will mean that the basic training will be finished by 2006/07, possibly 2007/08, if we want to allow a four-year period for those who need to slow down. Even when the intake for the full training ceases, we intend to continue offering psychotherapy groups, massage courses or basic Body Psychotherapy training courses standing on their own. Naturally, we are sad to have to give up the basic training, as its value lies in the long-term process work, which is profound and transforming.

We will continue to concentrate our energy more on the professional development and want to expand more in this direction. Courses for professionals are of a short-term nature and are therefore less demanding administratively. This will free us from long-term responsibilities. We will stay committed to further improving the Advanced Training and Professional Development

Programme and attempt to consolidate the body of Chiron psychotherapists in the wider therapeutic field. There is a growing demand from other psychotherapists and counsellors to learn more about the art of Body Psychotherapy in its wider meaning, which is our trade mark. There is still a long way to go to facilitate communication between the Body Psychotherapy community and the various groups of verbal psychotherapists.

We are also aware that there has been tension between AChP and Chiron about issues of autonomy versus control and we hope to achieve a more fruitful working alliance with AChP and to discuss constructive steps forward in this direction.

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