

# Peace in our time? How many is enough in a team?

by Mark E. Taylor

brazavil.training@yahoo.com



*"Marker" is a regular column in Coyote, hoping to encourage debate, questions and a certain regard. For reasons of space, this "Marker" is longer than in the previous edition. Normal service may resume in the next issue.*



## Peace in our time?

Thinking about the No Hate Speech campaign and one of its recent slogans "who are you going to make peace with today?" It's a nice slogan and I wondered whether I should go out immediately and make peace? Then I remembered an experience I had last year, putting into perspective those who have been through more recent conflicts.

Strasbourg is a fine city and I love living here with its great mixture of French and German influences, its European vocation and an increasingly global mix of people. I find it an interesting and lively place. If you need a haircut there on a Monday, you have to search very carefully – most barbers take that day off as their busiest day is Saturday and they need time to recover and sharpen their scissors. Unable to go to Carlo my usual Italian, I found myself in a previously unknown establishment where the owner soon had me identified as "a British" due to my "tout petit accent" as I attempted to talk with him.

After shampooing my hair with some vigour and rather cold water, he got a towel and started to dry my hair with his knuckles (when you bend your fingers to make a fist, your knuckles are the parts of your fingers which show the most). This was rather painful and after several seconds I cried out for him to stop. He grinned. I asked him why he was doing this. His reply: "That's for the Battle of Agincourt, m'sieu!" I'm still not sure whether he meant it as a joke.

Agincourt was a battle between the French and the English back in the 15th century – 25 October 1415 to be precise. It seems that it might take some time still for peace to break out. Maybe I have to get my haircut on a Monday again soon...

## How many is enough in a team?

Evaluating the successful elements of the training course we had just run, one of my colleagues sat back on her chair, breathed a contented sigh and said how happy she was to finally be able to work again in a team of three. Most of the assignments she gets these days are for working alone or, at most, in a team of two – and that with groups of sometimes over 20 participants. Cost-cutting reasons are supposed to explain what is – in my view – a growing sinister tendency.

Instead of detailing the negative effects of working with reduced teams, I asked her what was the added value of having the third trainer (or more)? An excited discussion resulted and we came up with this:

- \* The third trainer allows for more personalised contact between participants and trainers – in non-formal and informal learning situations, this is crucial when so much emphasis is placed on participant-centred learning.
- \* The third trainer is the third point of the triangle when considering any issue in the training – discussions, observations, arguments and solutions can all be so much richer.
- \* The third trainer allows the other two – quite simply – to breathe occasionally; otherwise you are always either performing or preparing – there is no respite.
- \* The third trainer might even bring light and joy and challenge to a duo who have already worked together...

This list of points could be read as a plea to course organisers and funders to think again about how many trainers should make up "a team". What would you add?



Do you know Agincourt?



## And finally

Thanks to those who write or give informal feedback. Next time we consider motivation and the "pataphysics of inner readiness".

## Sounds, words, inspirations

Brian Eno interview Paul Morley, The Thing Is... Channel 4, 1992  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sJqMkIh\\_zQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sJqMkIh_zQ)  
accessed 20 September 2013.

Laxness Haldor (2000, original translation 1966),  
*The fish can sing*, Vintage.

"The Idiot", Iggy Pop

Willingham Bill (2009), *Fables Volume One: Legends in Exile*, DC Comics.