

Archives reveal King Edward VIII visited mystic Page 3



Former nun and trainee priest serve spirit Page 4



Robin Foy's new book on The Scole Experiment Page 7



Pioneer honoured with blue plaque

THE life of Leicester Spiritualist medium, journalist and social reformer Robert James Lees (1849-1931) is to be commemorated with the unveiling of a blue plaque.

It will be mounted on the front of his birthplace in Upper Bond Street, Hinckley, which now serves as a florist's shop.

It is claimed that Lees became involved in the notorious Victorian 'Jack the Ripper' investigation after clairvoyantly seeing some of the murders.

His diary is now in the keeping of the Spiritualists' National Union.

Lees' descendants live in Rutland, Leicestershire, and it is understood that they were consulted about the wording of the plaque.



Mediumship benefits kidney research

A 63-year-old Coventry woman, who had a successful kidney transplant six years ago, has raised £720 for transplant research at University Hospital, Coventry, by holding a Spiritualist event.

More than 100 people made their way to Foleshill Ex-Servicemen's Club to watch a demonstration of mediumship by Mary Armour and Mandy Leeson.

The hospital is celebrating its 21st anniversary this year.

Dedicated Spiritualist couple pass in fatal accident on way to church

A PRE-CHRISTMAS road accident has claimed the lives of two dedicated Yorkshire Spiritualists.

Huddersfield couple David and Sally Firth were on their way to a Christmas psychic supper at a Sheffield Spiritualist church on the evening of 19th December when they were struck by two cars as they arrived.

Sally, 41, was a medium, and both she and David, 43, were popular members of their community, doing a great deal of work for charity.

Reporting on the accident, both *Sheffield Telegraph* and *The Star* described how the couple had stepped out of their car and were attempting to cross a busy road in order to reach the Broomhill Spiritualist Church when they were hit by a Toyota Yaris car. The impact threw them into the path of a Renault Clio travelling in the opposite direction.

Both drivers stopped to call the emergency services.

Church treasurer Tim Doyle, who rushed outside immediately,

said: "The worst thing was that we tended the two of them until the emergency services came, and we didn't recognise them or know who they were."

"When we found out, it was a great shock and we are all absolutely devastated."

Sue Davison, who had known the couple for about five years, said Sally suffered from arthritis and osteoporosis, and had difficulty in getting around. She had to walk with two sticks.

"Sally was a medium," she said. "Even though she wasn't local she liked to come here when there was something on. Her husband went everywhere with her because she couldn't walk outside on her own. They were very popular because they did so much for charity."

They spent much of their time raising money for Donna's Dream House, a charity which arranges Blackpool holidays for terminally ill children and their families.

All money from the psychic supper, which was cancelled, will be donated to the charity.



DAVID AND SALLY FIRTH pictured with their good friend, comedian Ken Dodd.

David and Sally were also prison visitors at Wakefield Prison, where they went twice a week to talk to inmates who don't have other visitors.

Len Curtis, chairman of Donna's Dream House trustees, said: "They were a wonderful couple. David had at one time

been an 'extra' in *Coronation Street*, *The Bill*, and other programmes. He was a major fundraiser for us and will be sadly missed."

Psychic News readers will also remember David as a regular contributor to our Readers' Forum.

Programme marred by inadequate research

ON 29th December, UK television's Channel 4 broadcast its much-publicised programme about the materialisation medium Helen Duncan.

Tony Robinson and the Blitz

Witch had been awaited with keen interest by many Spiritualists. It featured the former *Blackadder* star in an investigation of what was undoubtedly Mrs Duncan's most talked-about séance, during which a spirit person named Syd materialised – apparently a sailor who had gone down with HMS Barham after it was torpedoed on 25th November 1941.

The precise date of that séance is unknown, but it is thought to have taken place within days of the Barham's sinking.

Viewers watched as Roy Stemman, a former assistant editor of *Psychic News* under Maurice Barbanell, gave Tony Robinson details of that séance, while the two men stood in the very same Portsmouth room as had hosted



ROY STEMMAN: "Leading Spiritualists were aware of the Portsmouth revelation within 24 hours of it occurring."

the séance more than 60 years previously.

Stemman explained that, prior to the materialisation of Syd, no one had known that HMS Barham had sunk following heavy German bombardment. Summarising his understanding of Stemman's explanation, Robinson concluded, "It was top secret." Stemman confirmed that it was, until the moment of revelation by the materialised sailor.

Later in the programme science journalist Becky McCall, acting as Tony Robinson's extremely sceptical co-investigator, disputed the accuracy of that statement, suggesting that knowledge of the Barham's sinking could have been in the public domain before the séance took

■ Continued on page 5, col 1

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Christmas appeal brings good cheer

THE festivities are over, the New Year is with us and the post is once again dropping through the letter box at *Psychic News*' offices in Stansted.

£100 cheques for our deserving and long-serving Spiritualist friends were sent out well before the start of the holiday season so they could bring some extra cheer right from the start of the festivities.

On our return to the offices we were overwhelmed by the large number of letters we received from those who had benefited from our readers' generosity. Your donations meant an enormous amount to their recipients, and we have decided to publish just a few examples of the great difference your kindness has made to those who needed it most.

"I am now 97," wrote one lady reader, "and have been very ill, waiting to go on dialysis. I have high blood pressure, a heart condition, and because of my chronic kidney trouble am very anaemic. I have injections every two weeks and a big booster once a month. I now have macular degeneration to add to my problems, and arthritis in my hands, which makes it very painful to write.

"I feel the cold very much and have to keep the heating on day and night. Last year, I had very high bills, and this year, as it was cold much earlier, they put my direct debit up for my gas supply from £40 to £65. I was still in debt, so have been terribly worried about how I was going to pay all the bills. Then, your letter arrived, with the cheque for £100. How wonderful! Will you please thank all the readers of PN for their

generosity – it is wonderful to be remembered."

Another reader told us: "Thank you so much for the cheque you sent me for £100 from the Christmas appeal. It was very kind and thoughtful of you and much appreciated!"

"Thank you so much for the cheque," said another. "It will make so much difference to my Christmas and New Year. God bless."

"How thoughtful, and how very grateful I am for the big surprise I got when I opened your letter," said one reader. "It is such a welcome gift from you and all the readers and helpers of *Psychic News*."

A much-respected medium wrote: "Please note my thanks for the overwhelming generosity of loving friends who have contributed to the Christmas appeal. Such generosity eases one's material passage but it does much more than that.

"The gesture is uplifting proof that Spiritualists are indeed loving spirits, and that is food for my spirit. Good wishes are enough only if one first thanks God for the blessing. I know I have been blessed."

To conclude our 2008 appeal, we publish below the final list of contributors:

Anon	£100.00
Alison Hood	£70.00
Anon	£50.00
Bill & Lily	£50.00
Anon	£25.00
Michael Chapman	£25.00
Animal Rights in Spiritualism	£20.00
Mrs M. Atkins	£20.00
Joan Fletcher	£20.00
Miss Adcock	£10.00
A. Robson	£10.00
A. Ware	£10.00
G. Potter	£5.00

On behalf of all of us at *Psychic News*, an enormous 'Thank you' for your great generosity in these difficult times. We wish all our readers the happiest and healthiest of New Years.

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PSYCHIC NEWS ON THE ROAD

Psychic News takes a look at Spiritualist churches and centres to discover what our movement is offering within local communities.

A reporter will pay an impromptu visit to a church or centre to watch mediums and speakers at work, see what other services are offered, and what kind of welcome awaits the first-time visitor.

ENTERING this small cosy church, a Temple of the Trinity Lodge, at the corner of Green Lanes and Melbourne Avenue, Palmers Green, London N13, PN's reporter was warmly welcomed with a smile and a SNU hymn book. The church heating was very efficient – much appreciated on the bitterly cold evening of 4th January.

About twenty well-spaced, comfortable chairs were set out for the evening's service (the church holds a Sunday morning service as well).

The church interior was carpeted, its walls ingeniously panelled in light-coloured wood; the panels could be swung out to form partitions. The paintwork was fresh and bright, the lighting could be strong or dimmed.

Above the panelling were paintings, near the platform one of Christ at Emmaus, and in the body of the church two portraits, one by the famous psychic artist Frank Leah of Dr Thomas Lewis, the other of Eva F. Rayner, both founders of the church.

On the platform stood a table bearing a brightly polished brass cross flanked by candlesticks. An arrangement of fresh flowers stood between two lecterns. Above the table, a backlit stained glass panel – a blue cross on a yellow ground – and flanking the panel, two softly-lit niches each bearing a painted statuette of an angel protecting a child.

Although this is a National

Christian Spiritualist Church, PN's reporter could see neither the Seven nor the Nine Principles displayed.

The chairman introduced the medium, who, though a regular worker at the church, was deputising for another unable to attend, and then gave a reading which consisted of the words of a hymn by Eva F. Rayner. Although there was a microphone at each lectern, the chairman's did not seem to be working as his words were not clearly audible.

A free will collection was taken during one of the four hymns which were sung, in a very inhibited fashion, despite the support of an organ accompaniment, by the small congregation. Perhaps small numbers made for self-consciousness in singing.

The congregation was asked not to cross legs or fold arms. The address and clairvoyance were delivered by the seated medium – apparently under the influence of his spirit control – with closed eyes, legs stretched out in front of him, feet propped casually on the crossbar of the lectern.

The address was lengthy, though less than inspiring, partly on the theme of the significance of "home".

Eight messages were given, including one to PN's reporter; only a part of it could be accepted. The medium gave several names to most of the recipients, but it was noticeable that "Alice" and

"Andrew" were given to more than one person, and none of the recipients accepted these with conviction. Dates (in the form of months) were also given, June and September to almost everyone. These also were received without conviction.

Although the medium asked recipients to let him hear their voices, his speedy and almost unbroken delivery gave few chances for recipients to respond. Those who were able to interject a word did so hesitantly, and for the most part faintly.

Perhaps a less cold evening, and a larger congregation than the dozen people present – which might have made for more confident singing – would have offered the medium a more supportive atmosphere. As it was, the evidential standard of mediumship on this occasion was poor.

After the service, no refreshments were offered, and there was no opportunity to linger and chat. No Spiritualist newspapers or magazines appeared to be on sale. As the congregation was filing out, officers of the church were re-arranging chairs and pulling out wall panels to form partitions, presumably ready for the church's long healing session on Monday afternoon.

However, a friendly "Good-bye" was given at the door, and a copy of the church's quarterly syllabus was offered. This made it clear that healing is this church's forte.

Psychic News 60 years ago

'Dead' mother's plea to son averted suicide

A MEDIUM'S message from a 'dead' mother saved the life of one member of her congregation. He was contemplating committing suicide rather than face the consequences of a crime

he had committed. The following experience concerns a platform worker in the Midlands.

A medium, booked to attend a Spiritualist service in a village some distance from her home on a day when the weather was exceptionally wintry and snowy, was debating with herself whether she would be expected by the church officials to defy the weather. An irrepressible feeling came over her that she must go at any cost, and she went.

After the service had started, she heard someone stumble in the snow near the door, and a man came in and sat at the back of the church. Then she knew what had caused her to attend the church.

She gave the man a clairvoyant description of his mother, who asked him there and then to give a promise that he would "face the music" and go through with it, and never again think of what he was intending to do. The man,

after some hesitation, gave the promise that he would "face the music".

Shortly afterwards, a man in this village was arrested and sent to prison for embezzlement – it was the man who had received the message.

When the medium was visiting the same church some time afterwards, the man again came to the church. He approached her and thanked her for having saved his life.

He said that before she gave him the message, he had made up his mind to commit suicide rather than face his trial for embezzlement. The message from his mother in the Spirit World saved him and he took his punishment.

He lost his situation and he went to prison, but since leaving prison he got work at another job. His wife had stuck with him through his trouble, and things were going all right again.

Psychic News

Editor: Susan Farrow

Chief Reporter: Kay Hunter

Assistant Editor,
Advertising Manager,
Layout & Design: Paul Brett

Editorial Assistant & Secretary:
Rebecca Weller

Circulation Manager:
David Bardwell

Researcher & Editorial Assistant:
Magnus Smith

Advertising Assistant:
Larry Featherstone

Accounts: Anne Ratcliffe

Psychic News,
The Coach House,
Stansted Hall,
Stansted,
Essex,
CM24 8UD

Tel: 01279 817050

Fax: 01279 817051

Website:

www.psychicnewsbookshop.co.uk

E-mail: pn@snu.org.uk

Editorial & Advertising E-mail:

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Archives show Edward VIII visited mystic during crisis

BBC RADIO 4 has revealed that at the time of the abdication crisis in 1936, the beleaguered King Edward VIII was seeing a mystic.

Previously undisclosed archives tell the story of a king in the grip of Dr Alexander Cannon, known as "The Yorkshire Yogi".

A trained medical doctor, he used alternative treatments, mystic practices and "black magic".

Lambeth Palace was tipped off that the new king was receiving hypnotic treatment from Dr Cannon for a drink problem, prompting intervention by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Edward VIII reigned for only eleven months before abdicating in order to marry the American divorcée, Wallis Simpson.

Radio 4's programme *The Archive Hour* reported that the allegation about the king's association with Cannon was made by a country vicar to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Cosmo Lang.

Lang then wrote to William Brown, a Harley Street doctor, in a letter dated 9th December 1936, that he had "been informed by a credible person that a certain Dr Cannon...has been recently attending the King..."

"Would you kindly tell me whether you think this Dr Cannon is a really trustworthy person? He seems from the accounts I have received to be one who encourages somewhat dangerous methods of treatment."

The Lambeth Palace documents were studied by programme reporter, Sean Stowell, and by Roger Sims, an archivist at the Manx Museum, who led the research into Dr Cannon.



DR ALEXANDER CANNON was also known as 'The Yorkshire Yogi'.



KING EDWARD VIII reigned from 20th January 1936 to 11th December 1936. He abdicated so he could marry American divorcée Mrs Wallis Simpson (pictured).

Mr Sims said: "It was believed that Cannon was having an adverse effect on the king, who was at that time under considerable pressure, and who was having various treatments for a variety of problems.

"They were very concerned about the influence Cannon was having. He was an unorthodox medical practitioner and was becoming quite close to the king, a confidant."

Dr Cannon was the subject of an MI5 investigation and an Establishment cover-up before settling in virtual exile in the Isle of Man, where he put on magic shows and psychic performances.

Taped recordings of Dr Cannon reveal some of his beliefs and theories, from how to be happy, to the secret behind magic carpet journeys across Asia.

These were discovered at the home of an amateur magician on the Isle of Man, and are now in the Manx Museum.

Dr Cannon employed two female assistants who were put into a hypnotic trance to diagnose physical and psychological problems against a background of exotic music and incense. He learned Tibetan hypnosis techniques while he was a prison doctor in China.

Cannon lived at the neo-Gothic mansion, Ballamore Castle, where his eccentric lifestyle, flowing black cloak and winged collars led a local judge to describe him

as "eccentric".

Before moving to the Isle of Man, Dr Cannon practised in London, with consulting rooms near Harley Street.

Further evidence of King Edward's links with Dr Cannon came in a recorded interview with Piers Compton, former literary editor of *The Universal Catholic* newspaper.

He said he had been told that King Edward was in the grip of "the leader of black magic in England" who had been called in to treat him for drunkenness.

In another archive interview, John Gator, a socialite of the day, said the king had been "entrapped and ensnared" by Dr Cannon.

The tip-off to Lambeth Palace came just as the news broke of the relationship with Mrs Simpson. Eleven days later, the king abdicated, to be succeeded by his brother, then Duke of York, later King George VI.

His biographer, Philip Ziegler, said it was probable that King Edward received treatment from Dr Cannon, but his major influence remained Mrs Simpson and not "the Yorkshire Yogi".

Visually impaired pensioner requires the help of a carer to visit Harry Edwards' Healing Sanctuary and the Dead Sea next year

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c/o
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First study in human 'blindsight' a success

A MAN who was left completely blind by a series of strokes has delighted scientists by negotiating a maze of obstacles without using his cane.

Ian Sample, *The Guardian's* science correspondent, reports that the man, known only by the initials TN, walked around chairs and boxes without bumping into them in an extraordinary demonstration of 'blindsight', a strange ability some blind people have to detect objects they cannot see.

Scans of the man's brain revealed that a succession of strokes had left him unable to see, while brain regions known to process visual information were completely inactive.

Nevertheless, the man can react to facial expressions, registering emotions such as joy and anger.

Netherlands scientists at the University of Tilburg believe people with blindsight are unwittingly tapping into alternative brain circuits which let them process information their eyes are receiving.

In the experiment, scientists created an obstacle course from boxes and chairs, and asked the man to negotiate it without his cane or help from other people. When he successfully completed the course without colliding with anything, onlookers applauded in amazement.

"This is absolutely the first study of this ability in humans," said Beatrice de Gelder, who led the study, which appeared in the journal *Current Biology*.

"We see what humans can do, even with no awareness of seeing, or any intentional avoidance of obstacles. It shows us the importance of these evolutionary ancient visual paths. They contribute more than we think they do for us to function in the real world."

Scientists have witnessed blindsight in monkeys with similar



BEATRICE DE GELDER: "There is much patients can do outside the grip of being too aware of what they cannot do."

brain damage.

The study revealed that untapped neural pathways exist in the brain that allow people to orientate themselves and quickly detect obstacles, even if they are not conscious of seeing them.

"All the time, we are using hidden resources of the brain and doing things we think we are unable to do," said Ms de Gelder. "There is much patients can do outside the grip of being too aware of what they cannot do."



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Former nun and trainee priest serve spirit in America

AMERICAN former nun Janet Nohavec and one-time trainee for the Catholic priesthood Joseph Shiel are both now dedicated Spiritualist mediums, working at Janet's church, The Journey Within SNU Church in New Jersey, USA. Beginning with Joseph, they tell PN editor Susan Farrow their most unusual stories.

Joseph, it's a long journey from trainee priest to Spiritualist medium. How did it happen?

I went to Boston College as a philosophy major and went forward with priestly training, but I ended up leaving and not pursuing the priesthood. I then got married and had two kids.

Later on, after stepping away from the church for some time, I got involved again and was called to become a Deacon.

So it wasn't a loss of faith that caused you to leave Jesuit training?

The original reason for leaving was because I was disenchanted with the Church. I gave it another effort later on, but before I came to ordination, a lot of things that had been happening to me came to the surface again, including visions and mediumship, although, at the time I didn't even know what a medium was.

Had you been aware of those things for most of your life?

For all of my life, as far back as the highchair, so I decided that I needed to look into it further. The more I got involved with the Catholic Church, the more political it seemed. I was doing inner city ministries and many other different things and was at burn-out point. I was excited about becoming ordained, but confused about why I was really there. Obedience to a certain priest or bishop was becoming more and more troublesome.

The pressure was intense and caused problems in my personal life, so I stepped back from the Church and walked away. It was a real low point in my life and I became very broken. I'd had low points before, but this one really took the cake.

At that point, someone suggested I go to a place that would give me some peace, and mentioned the Spiritualist camp, Lily Dale.

While there, I received a spirit message from my mother and grandfather that was relatively evidential. As I watched, I saw the mediums doing things similar to what had been happening to

me. So I delved into it more and went to all kinds of Spiritualist churches and general assemblies in Nashville. But as I got into it I began to develop, join circles and sit with Shamans.

From there, I've really looked into the Spiritualist religion itself. A while ago, I was very dismayed about much of it – the quality of mediumship, education and understanding. The quality of church services was also poor and I felt 'anti'.

I went to Janet, with whom I could have had a fight, her having been a nun! I watched her work, and she's extremely evidential. I asked about her training and she said that she visited the Arthur Findlay College (AFC) in the UK and spoke very highly of it. I asked her if she could help me.

At the time, I had begun to do spirit artwork. I started with multiple pictures and was drawing as many as eighteen family members in a single picture. But they were taking two to four hours and a lot



JANET NOHAVEC: "I grew up seeing spirit."

of my energy. I was just a novice and there was no one to show me any different, so I felt pretty much out on my own.

Janet told me of spirit artists like Coral Polge. They had stuck to one picture and kept it more directed. I told Janet that if I couldn't do this well, I didn't want to do it at all. With her help, I worked on producing single pictures and then I developed auras.

I understand that you sometimes demonstrate your spirit art on a Native American Indian reservation?

Yes. I live in western New York and the reservation is in Canada. I travel up there once a year. They've treated me very well.

Turning to Janet, I asked about her journey from Catholic nun to SNU International representative in America.

I grew up seeing spirit, just like Joseph. I was petrified because no

one could explain it. My mother was Catholic, so by the age of five, and with spirits appearing, I was her 'demon' child and it all got put on the back burner.

My plan was to get married and have a whole bunch of kids. Then, one night, I literally heard a voice saying that I was going to be a Catholic nun. I said: "No, you're in the wrong house. That's not what I'm going to do." But the more I thought about it, the more it seemed like a good way to spend a life.

Why did it seem a good way to spend a life?

I'd lived a wild part of my life and done a lot of things, and then I thought maybe a life of service was the right way to live.

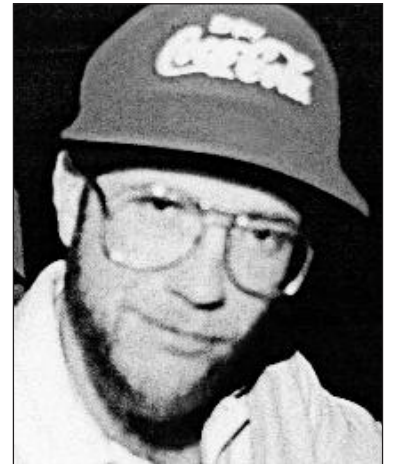
Over a period of discernment I came to believe in it, but was still smoking and definitely not your 'nun type'! So I had to find the most progressive place. At 27, I entered the convent wholeheartedly, selling my car and giving away everything. I didn't think I would ever come out of it. I thought I'd be a saint!

I took my vows and then started to see spirits again around the convent. But I attributed that to what mystic seers had always written about. So the spirit people started to come back and the convent became too restrictive for me. I wasn't going to be in love with God if I stayed there, and I didn't want to become that kind of a nun.

I worked in poverty-stricken areas of the city with detoxes, drug addicts, soup kitchens, shelters etc – and that part was fulfilling. The other part to it, for me, was going to end up looking like I was living with a great big dysfunctional family. I'd already come from one, so I didn't think that was what I should be doing. I didn't think God wanted me to continue that way.

I believe in humming through life. If you can't hum through life then something's not right. In the darkest of times, you should still be able to hum. So it was time to go. It was a really hard decision, because I felt I was leaving God – I had broken my word.

So I left, and a couple of years later met a medium, who said, "You have been seeing spirits since you were a little girl." I wondered who had told her that! I didn't respect the Spiritualism I saw in America. I then came to AFC where I had a tutor called Leonard Young. I went back and forth and opened the first SNU church in America, half an hour outside New York City. Then I



HERE is just one example of Joseph Shiel's psychic art. The comparison between the drawing and the photo speaks for itself.

worked very hard to become evidential and got an overseas tutor. Mediumship has to be done in an evidential, respectful way or I don't want to be a part of it.

So, you heard that voice telling you to go and be a Catholic nun. With hindsight, what do you make of it? What was its purpose?

I absolutely believe that, in the Spiritualist church I now have, about 80 per cent of the people who come to me are former Catholics. They are willing to come because of the respect they have. People call up and say, "Can I have a reading with Sister Jan?" Or they come to the door shaking because I used to be a nun.

So you can make Spiritualism acceptable and less fear-ridden because you once sang from the same hymn sheet as they did?

It was part of what I was supposed to do. There are people who respect our church and what we do because of that. Without that piece of my story, I wouldn't have a lot of what I have today, including my church, which we fought really hard for.

I think Joseph and I share the view that what the Catholic church made OK for the saint – the extraordinary gifts of the spirit some saints had – the Catholic church has made 'bad' within the fold. But we're not going to listen to that fear-based stuff any more. It is OK for us to have a personal relationship with God and to be able to talk to the Spirit World. People have come alive again because they don't carry the weight of centuries of that. It's extraordinary. They come to us.

In their Catholic days, Joseph and Janet recited the Creed, which explicitly states the belief that Jesus died to redeem people from their sins. I asked how they squared that most fundamental tenet of Christianity with the

Spiritualist principle of personal responsibility? Joseph first:

I was asked this question once before. I don't believe that Jesus died for me. I believe that Jesus lived for me. I follow his life as an example. He said many times, go out, heal the sick, raise the dead, and he said it to ordinary men and women.

Janet: I feel very much the same. I think he attempted to show us how to live. There's a huge focus on his death and resurrection and I don't think there should be.

So, if I suggested to you both that Jesus could be viewed as an exemplary character, an outstanding teacher and healer and arguably the most powerful medium that ever lived, would you go along with that?

Yes.

Janet, tell us more about the activities at your church.

It's a very busy church and it's soon going to be thirteen years old. We didn't have a building of our own – we rented, until one man got a very evidential message and gave us half a million dollars!

We train evidential mediums, we have healing and circles, we collect for Africa and do a lot of service-orientated work. We also do a huge amount of readings as a private practice. I have a two-year waiting list. My autobiography has just been completed and should be out within the next year.

You are now the official American representative for SNU International. What do you hope to achieve in that role?

I think the focus on the SNU going worldwide is brilliant. In America, the Spiritualist organisation has lost churches in droves. They've become independent churches. I think they are wavering in the wind, looking for a foundation. If the SNU can reach out and give them that, it will be great.

Programme marred by inadequate research

■ From page one place.

This, she argued, was a distinct possibility, since relatives of the dead sailors had apparently been informed of their deaths on 6th December 1941 in a letter sent by the Admiralty three months prior to the official public announcement of the tragedy.

But as Roy Stemman comments on his website: "It is a matter of record that leading Spiritualists were aware of the Portsmouth revelation within 24 hours of it occurring and the production team behind *The Blitz Witch* certainly had access to that information."

In 1958, the eminent Spiritualist Percy Wilson, then president of the Spiritualists' National Union, gave a lecture which included coverage of the HMS Barham séance. The following is an extract from that lecture as it appeared in *Psypioneer* editor Paul Gaunt's letter to *Psychic News*, published on 24th February 2007:

"The story, so far as I am concerned, began with an invitation to me to have lunch with Maurice Barbanell. During that lunch, he asked me if I had heard what happened at a Helen Duncan séance at Portsmouth the previous evening.

"He told me that he had had a message that morning to say that at this séance, a figure had appeared of a sailor with a cap-band bearing the words HMS Barham; it had been sunk in the Mediterranean, but that the fact was not to be announced for three months because of the political and military situation. I went back to my office. I was then what you might call a senior official of the Ministry of War Transport.

"I was in a detached building, Devonshire House, whereas the main office was in Berkeley Square House. I deliberately went to Berkeley Square House to ask some senior colleagues whether they had heard of the sinking of the Barham in the Mediterranean.

"No one had heard, but one of them said he would make an enquiry, and told me later that afternoon that it was not known in the Ministry of War Transport. That was on the day after the message had been given in Portsmouth."

As Roy Stemman pointed out on his *ParanormalReview* website, the above information was freely available to the programme's researchers yet they made no attempt to draw on it.

"This misrepresentation was the result of either shoddy research on someone's part or a deliberate attempt to manipulate the facts in



HELENDUNCAN: Channel 4's 'Tony Robinson and the Blitz Witch' had been awaited with keen interest by many Spiritualists.

order to give the documentary a more sceptical edge."

Becky McCall further suggested that Mrs Duncan could have used "cold reading" of a relative, present in the séance room, who was already aware of the Barham's sinking.

The reference to "cold reading" displayed a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of a materialisation séance, during which a medium is almost invariably in deep trance.

Cold reading is a method whereby a person faking mediumship attempts to deduce information from the sitter, whether by body language, the eliciting of verbal cues or other non-mediumistic means. This is, of course, impossible for genuine mediums in deep trance, since they have little or no conscious awareness of anything.

This fact also makes nonsense of repeated assertions in the programme that Mrs Duncan had "said" such and such during the Portsmouth séance. She said nothing. Those who materialised, or in others ways communicated, were the only ones who spoke to the sitters.

These were but two examples of the lack of serious research so often demonstrated when Spiritualist topics are covered by mainstream television.

A further example of the programme-makers' insufficient grasp of the subject matter was evident in the fake 'séance' undertaken by the ubiquitous sceptic, Professor Richard Wiseman.

If Wiseman's aim was to challenge the genuineness of Helen Duncan's ability, logic

suggests that his best course would have been to attempt to recreate a materialisation séance.

Inexplicably, then, he opted to sit, with several other people, around a large table on which were placed a tambourine, maracas, a slate, a candlestick and a ball. He then proceeded to 'summon' a fictitious spirit named Maria, urging his companions to concentrate their minds on her.

A short time later, objects on the table began to move – with a little pre-arranged help from a woman who had either entered the room or emerged from a hiding place within it after the lights were extinguished.

Those who have attended a genuine physical séance will be aware that, typically, rigorous controls are put in place to guard against fraud or confederacy. Searches of medium and sitters are routinely carried out prior to the séance in order to ensure that no concealed items, such as aids to the fraudulent production of phenomena, are brought into the séance room.

The room itself is commonly searched by a visitor to rule out the presence of trap doors, hidden entrances and exits, and any other suspicious features. The séance room door is then generally locked or otherwise secured before the séance begins.

These controls played no part whatsoever in Wiseman's 'séance'. His efforts were derisory and, yet again, based on a complete failure to understand the complexities of the subject under investigation.

One is bound to ask why the programme's producers deemed it necessary to include a parody of a table 'séance' which bore no relation at all to the conditions in which Helen Duncan actually worked.

Had they wished to make an honest attempt to recreate the events, they would simply have attempted to do exactly as Helen did. The fact that they chose not to do so raises significant questions as to their motivation.

Members of other religions would surely protest if their beliefs and practices were parodied in the crude fashion presented by Richard Wiseman. Neither is any other religion required to tolerate the constant input of sceptics whenever its practice is covered by the broadcast media.

Homeopath's advert withdrawn

AN alternative therapist who posed with a stethoscope around his neck in a TV advertisement has been forced to withdraw the advert.

The *Manchester Evening News* reports that Ashraf Zafar appeared in the advert for the AZ Homeopathic Clinic in Levenshulme, Manchester, sitting at his desk writing notes, while an on-screen text referred to him as a "consultant".

The advert, broadcast in Bengali on the channel DM Digital, featured shots of hundreds of herbal products and remedies, many not registered in Britain.

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) ruled that the advert must not be broadcast again in its present form, as it implied Mr Zafar was a doctor offering professional medical advice because he was wearing a stethoscope in a setting that looked like a doctor's office.

In the advert, he used the title "senior homeopathic consultant, together with a long list of initials after his name" which, said the ASA, "also gave impressions of professional advice and support".

Further investigations by the watchdog also revealed that, from

a list of 700 herbal remedies ordered by the clinic, only fifteen were registered in Britain.

DM Digital withdrew the advert when the ASA brought it to their attention.

The channel told the ASA it had removed the stethoscope shots, but claimed the word "consultant" did not imply professional advice, but was merely used to state that Mr Zafar was a person who worked in homeopathy.

The ASA lays down strict advertising codes relating to health products and services for the protection of consumers, and it adjudicates on any breaches of those codes.

There is no single organisation governing homeopaths, although practitioners of complementary medicine may register voluntarily with one of three organisations.

Mr Zafar, who is registered with the Homeopathic Medical Association, and has 28 years' experience in homeopathy, said he felt the ruling was unfair.

"I am totally against calling anyone a doctor who is not, and any reference to that was unintentional. Homeopaths are treated badly in this country."

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WITNESSING THE IMPOSSIBLE

Graham Jennings takes a look at Robin P. Foy's new book on The Scole Experiment

The preparatory work for the most prolific psychic phenomena ever recorded began before Robin Foy and his circle even knew each other.

In the 1970s, before Sandra met and married Robin, she used to sit with a medium she describes simply as "a little old lady". She was told she would one day live in a country house with the letter 'S' over it, with a special room she would have blessed. There, she would enjoy "gifts beyond price".

In 1977, she met Robin at a trance circle in Romford. The medium was the late John Squires. Through him, a Dr Dunn spoke of a new way for spirit to produce physical phenomena without ectoplasm. It would be achieved by harnessing natural and spiritual energy, with less risk to the medium.

On their travels, Robin and Sandra visited the Norfolk village of Scole. There they saw Street Farmhouse and thought it idyllic. In 1991, they answered an advertisement for a house to rent. Carefully vetted by the owner, who had not revealed the address, they were then driven to that very house.

The 'S' was in the name and the overhanging 'Scole Inn' sign from next door. The house also had a large cellar – perfect for a physical circle. They moved there in August 1991.

Robin, meanwhile, had founded the Noah's Ark Society for Physical Mediumship. The mediums were Colin Fry, then known as 'Lincoln', and Stewart Alexander. When the cellar had been renovated in February 1992, it was Stewart who, with his home circle, conducted an early sitting.

His main guide is White Feather. "He blessed the cellar room," writes Robin, "and dedicated it for the work of the Spirit World." All the predictions of Sandra's "little old lady" had been fulfilled.

It was apparent from the beginning that the energies of the new circle, and those of Stewart's traditional one, were different. So different, in fact, that the new spirit team could not work there until the other team's energies had been dispersed.

Traditionally, spirit operatives gather ectoplasm from the medium's body, exude it through the orifices and use it to materialise spirit forms. Here they were gathering energy from all the sitters and mixing it with the spiritual energy they had brought with them. It was an experiment to be developed and used in circles around the world.

The result, as *Witnessing the Impossible* records, was a far wider range of phenomena than was previously possible – and produced more quickly, in months rather than years. It was as Dr Dunn had foretold. He even put in an appearance, saying that as he was "between jobs" he would stay for a while to help!

The first experimental sittings produced clicks, whistles, spirit lights and apports. Sitters were still being sought for a circle of six or seven, but there were difficulties with long journeys and prior commitments.

Then the outstanding and dedicated trance mediums Alan and Diana Bennett joined. With Robin and Sandra, they formed the group's nucleus. Through their mediumship the spirit operatives were able to relay precise instructions to Robin and the circle. The first documented circle was held on 20th December 1993.

The sittings were held in darkness, but spirit provided some light of their own. Also, the sitters wore luminous armbands. Luminous tabs were placed on certain objects and the table around which they sat.

The new energy-mix, created by the spirit chemists, soon enabled the materialisation of spirit entities. It was understood they would not appear as solid as with ectoplasm. They were heard walking about and taking their seats. One even ran up the wall and across the ceiling!

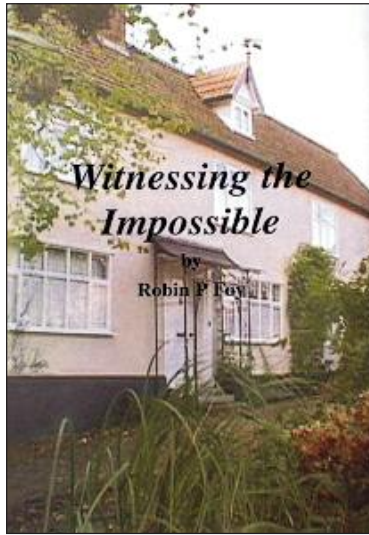
The solidifying of a spirit hand, even just the fingertips, enabled the touching of sitters and the ringing of out-of-reach bells. To do this, one spirit mused he had to balance on a chair very carefully, lest he slip and break his neck!

Some objects, left as instructed on the table around which they sat, were levitated or audibly moved. Other sounds were heard like drum rolls, but with no physical drumsticks present.

Tiny spirit lights danced frequently. At times they gave pyrotechnic displays; at others they plunged like shooting stars into the table or floor. Sometimes they passed through the table and emerged still aglow.

Other lights glowed in mid air, or inside a glass dome or light bulb. They also illuminated crystals, or appeared as luminous crystal themselves before vanishing without trace.

Breakthroughs were achieved with voice production. The spirit team claimed to have constructed etheric extensions to the sitters'



vocal cords. They could then speak at a distance. Their voices were heard in different places, even coming from a wall.

They developed energy voices too, a new form of direct voice. The results were of varying quality: most were resonant, a few squeaky. Some communicators spoke into a Pyrex dish, or plastic tub, to improve resonance.

The biggest innovation in truly independent voice production was by mechanical means. It was through a cassette recorder, battery-powered, with the microphone removed.

To this was connected a homemade device, consisting of two coils of germanium – a white metallic element. With practice, spirit communicators were able to speak through the amplifier and two-way conversations were held.

Robin had been shown how to make the device by the late inventor Thomas Alva Edison.

A diagram of the device was left on a strip of shop-sealed, unexposed film and signed TAE. The film had been left on the table. When the signature was compared with Edison's on a 1920s document, it was almost identical. Later on, Edison addressed the group in person through the new device.

Many other images were received on sealed film, either 35 mm or Polaroid. The early ones were of existing photographs, such as St Paul's Cathedral during the Blitz. Others showed spirit

faces, sundry images and handwritten poems in English and Old German.

There were apports, too, including coins, spoons, vintage newspapers (which soon yellowed with age) and a penknife. They were heard falling on to the table after being materialised.

Spirit had constructed a portal there, through which to bring the phenomena. Over this was constructed a canopy of energy. Later, says Robin, it was replaced by "a column of energy through the central table – which rose through the cellar, the house above, and reached right up into the atmosphere over the house".

During some sittings, evidential messages were conveyed to sitters through the entranced Alan and Diana. Healing by spirit lights, energised crystals and absent healing were also practised. The spirit team was most keen to develop this aspect.

The phenomena were investigated over a two-year period by the Society for Psychical Research (SPR). There were three senior investigators: Professors Arthur Ellison (twice past president), David Fontana (then president) and the journalist and researcher Montague Keen. (Other SPR members, independent scientists and many visitors witnessed the phenomena, both here and abroad.)

The SPR eventually produced the Scole Report for its *Proceedings*.

Incredibly, as the circle progressed, beings from dimensions beyond the Spirit World apparently began to visit. The sittings were still in darkness, but the visitors – called 'Stellar Friends' to avoid the term 'alien' – materialised and touched the sitters. Tiny hands could be felt guiding human hands over equally tiny faces and bodies. Sometimes they showed themselves in partial materialisation.

The 'Alice Project', so called, was also set up. This was a video camera with two angled mirrors to form a loop. The idea was not to film as such, but create an energy portal through which spirit images

could be captured and 'fixed' on film.

One Stellar Friend left his facial image on film with the date. It is reproduced in this book. He has large eyes and a small nose, but the date obscures the mouth.

Other images included apparent spirit landscapes, but most could not be fixed successfully and faded. The Alice Project was in part successful – successful enough at least to prove the Scole Experiment's undoing.

The energy portal was indeed created, but it attracted the wrong visitors. Spirit said they were time travellers. The group's work had unexpectedly created an inter-dimensional portal through which the travellers sought access.

Soon, all communication with spirit was lost. Finally, it seems they were asked by an exalted being, apparently from another dimension, and claiming to have authority over spirit, to end The Scole Experiment. His name, speaking directly through the germanium-amplifier, was (spelt phonetically) Varren-here-ic. What the time travellers were doing, he said, was against cosmic law. Thus the experiment ended.

Every sitting, though, had been meticulously documented in Robin's journal. The complete record of a thousand hours of sittings, with 180 types of phenomena, from 1993 until the final one on 6th November 1998, is given in the book.

It is a labour of love from Robin, who has 35 years' involvement with psychical research. Easy to read, though with somewhat eccentric capitalisation, it arguably also serves as a manual for a physical circle of the New Age.

■ *'Witnessing the Impossible' by Robin P. Foy (Hardback, 560 pages) is available from PN Books by Post priced at £20.00, plus £6.00 postage and packing in the UK only.*

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Sceptics' 'inadequate claims' shouldn't go unchallenged

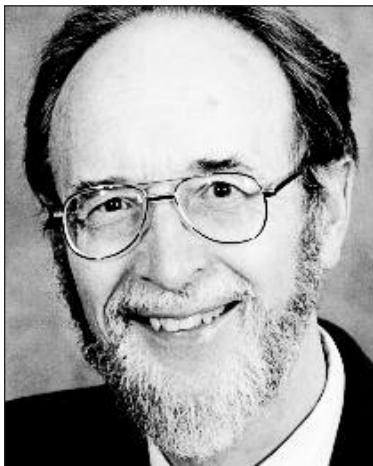
ON Monday 29th December we saw Tony Robinson on Channel 4 supposedly taking a "rational" look at Helen Duncan's mediumship.

So what on earth were Chris French's psychological readings to do with the hard facts that mediumship produces? Why wasn't he challenged on that point? Personal character readings, although sometimes unwisely included in mediumistic demonstrations, have nothing whatsoever to do with survival evidence.

And what had Richard Wiseman's tricks in an insecure room to do with normal physical séance conditions? There was absolutely no comparison to the materialisation phenomena produced by Helen Duncan.

Again, why wasn't he challenged on that? So often, alternative explanations are glibly or smugly advanced yet go nowhere near explaining the phenomena of the séance room.

Yet again we get the impression that TV producers are



LEW SUTTON: *Unhappy with Channel 4's programme.*

given instructions not to make their programmes too favourable towards Spiritualism.

If we are going to have programmes that claim to be "rational" in their examination of Spiritualism, let them be truly rational. Die-hard sceptics with an almost mocking self-satisfied attitude shouldn't get away with their totally inadequate claims going unchallenged.

Lew Sutton, by e-mail

Author replies to Devilish comments

In reply to Garth Willey's letter (10th January) I have to say that, yes, I do know that 'Mr Splitfoot' was a term used for the Devil. However, as a Spiritualist, I believe that the Devil is a fictional character and does not exist in reality as an individual personality.

Considering the conditions under which the Fox family had been living – the strong traditional Christian beliefs held at that time, and their complete ignorance of mediumistic phenomena – it is entirely understandable that a young girl would think that what was happening was being caused by the 'Devil'.

Mr Willey states in his letter that it was not until 1860, some twelve years after the event, that it was first reported that the 'Splitfoot' statement by Catharine Fox was ever made. I have to contradict this, and refer Mr Willey to a signed statement made by Margaret Fox (Catharine's mother) on 11th April 1848, only eleven days after the event. The following is an extract from her statement: "...My youngest child said, 'Mr Splitfoot, do as I do,' clapping her hands..."

My book is aimed at young children and is intended to be historically accurate. The manner in which I have portrayed

'Mr Splitfoot' is designed to remove fear and show that 'Mr Splitfoot' was in fact just an ordinary man.

The intention in using the 'Mr Splitfoot' character in future books, such as visiting Stansted and examining the Seven Principles, is simply to continue the story of Spiritualism in a child-friendly manner.

Does Mr Willey know for certain that Charles B. Rosna never visited Stansted Hall, or that he had absolutely nothing to do with Robert Owen, Emma Hardinge Britten and the Seven Principles?

Stella Upton, via e-mail

Could OBEs help people during torture?

THROUGH PN's Readers' Forum, may I offer grateful thanks both to fellow reader Helen Best and to Graham Jennings, the author of the article *The Mind is Eternal* (8th November).

Their replies (13th December) to my letter of 29th November were in very different ways most helpful and informative on the

matter of the discrepancies between bodily sight and visual perception during OBEs (out-of-body experiences).

Helen Best's experience of permanent impairment of her ability to judge dimensions by eye as a result of practising OBEs was an interesting practical caution.

At the risk of the time-honoured dictat "*This correspondence must now cease. Ed*", might I ask if other readers have noticed damaging post-OBE effects?

Practical *post hoc* disadvantages aside, however, it occurs to me that in those countries where torture is often used in

attempts to elicit information from prisoners, training for political and other dissidents in methods of achieving OBEs and thus temporary escape from pain and terror might help – by demonstrating the failure of torture – to reduce this appalling practice.

I seem to remember reading an account of an OBE which happened spontaneously to a captured British agent under interrogation and torture in occupied France during the Second World War. Unfortunately, I cannot remember the name of the agent concerned.

Margaret Wood, North London

'Animals were here first'

IF friend Bob Love (29th November) wishes to end the debate on vegetarianism, it would be better not to add fuel to the fire!

Yes, all life is sacred (and I'm so pleased God and Silver Birch got a mention!) but plant and animal life are a long way apart in terms of consciousness and cannot be equated.

Man is the most evolved creature on the planet in terms

of consciousness, and the only one with free will. Hopefully, with greater awareness, he will eventually extract himself from the carnivorous food chain and live with greater understanding, kindness and compassion for the benefit of himself, fellow creatures and the planet.

It would be a wonderful progression if Spiritualism and Spiritualists embraced the concept of living without inflicting suffering on creatures. After all, the planet does belong to the animals – they were here first!

Brian Turnbull, Lymington, Hants

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Letters continued...

'Mediums are born, not made'

I AM writing in response to Dennis Binks' letter in the Christmas Double Issue.

Mr Binks is under the impression that developing circles have a time limit on them. There are those in such circles who might be slower than others in acquiring the confidence to handle the gift in public. How, though, can anyone really learn to be a medium? Surely, one has the gift from birth? No one can make someone else a medium.

People who come to churches and centres know how dedicated they need to be in development, and yes, it is a discipline to attend

regularly.

I am puzzled, however, about the mention of homework; why is it necessary? Mr Binks says that he expects his students to move ahead with it.

I thought development of the instrument had a great deal to do with the Spirit Realm, not the circle leader.

As far as my own experience goes, I was in a development circle for four-and-a-half years, honing my mediumistic gift. There are many people who are not confident in public and who can benefit from circles so that they are able to function as

novice mediums.

Leaders are there to guide the novice medium and not to push the circle members past their own pace. Spirit know intimately each person they choose, and they should be able to convey their concerns to the circle leader.

Regarding spirituality, it comes with the way one reacts to situations. In conclusion, there are two maxims which still hold true today: 'Mediums are born, not made' and 'Many are called but few are chosen'.

Ann Prince,
Merseyside

Medium suggests South Elmsall Spiritualist Church as a template for professionalism

AFTER working the rostrums, teaching and delivering many other aspects of our wonderful movement, I now find myself in my 35th year of working for spirit.

In London and the South, I was known as Jean Milledge, and made many friends. On moving to the north of England, I decided to work under my maiden name of Jean Marie Vine. I have now been working the Midlands and the North for eighteen years.

As most busy mediums will know, you tend to work in a wide variety of venues –

churches, meeting halls, theatres, clubs, private meetings etc, and there will always be those special places that stay in your mind.

One such place is a small church in Yorkshire called South Elmsall Spiritualist Church. I had worked this venue twice a year for many years and always felt that it needed a lot of tender, loving care.

Two years ago, it was taken over by a new team headed by northern medium Mary McCabe. The transformation is nothing short of amazing. The church has had a complete

makeover. It is spotlessly clean, and the officers and congregation are very friendly and supportive and ever eager for knowledge.

You always receive a lovely welcome and there is a strong feeling of respect, with not an inflated ego in sight.

Anyone thinking of starting or running a church should visit South Elmsall and see it as a template for professionalism and success. It is a privilege and pleasure to serve this church and all the people connected with it.

Jean Marie Vine,
South Elmsall

Reader's vision of mansion's fire confirmed

I WRITE regarding the very interesting photograph of the little girl at the door of the mansion (Christmas double issue).

I didn't realise that I was a clairvoyant medium until I attended the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain in 2000, but over 30 years ago, when I was in my teens, I saw spirits or ghosts similar-looking to the person in this photograph.

There is a large, burnt-down mansion on the late Sir John Clerk's estate in a little town called Penicuik, near Edinburgh in Scotland. Sir John Clerk was an equerry to the Queen. Local people were able to visit the estate regularly, as Sir John allowed open access to the public.

Once, when I was visiting with my sister and dad, I looked across to where I saw there had

once been French doors in the ruined mansion. Standing behind those closed doors, looking out, were at least four adults and two children – one with ringlets, in Victorian clothes, displaying white bloomers under her dress.

My sister and dad were unable to see them, but another visiting child and adult could see them and were excited that I was verifying what they themselves could see.

During a conversation with Sir John Clerk – whilst he was still on the earth plane – I told him of my vision. He was surprised, but acknowledged that I was able to confirm for him that the fire at the mansion had started in the kitchen. I had seen a chef, complete with a very tall white hat and uniform, come dashing out of the former kitchen area in a panic, holding a

pan which was on fire.

On another occasion, I saw two children and two adults in Victorian dress, laying something on a grave at the then-designated 'Pet Cemetery'.

The old Penicuik House is a very haunted building, and Sir John confirmed that, unfortunately, some people had died in the fire.

Joyce M. Brown,
Scottish Borders

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Your week in the stars

RUSSELL GRANT



ARIES

(March 21–April 20)

Planning a reunion for friends is a good use of your time. Too often, you get so wrapped up with work that you neglect your social life. Take this opportunity to set aside time for the people you love most. Negotiating a higher salary is a distinct possibility later in the week. Go to talks armed with facts and figures. If you can establish exactly how you've contributed to your employer, you'll be properly compensated. It's hard to argue with numbers.

TAURUS

(April 21–May 21)

It may be time to pause and take stock of your career plans. If you've been thinking about switching industries, this is the year to do so. Alternatively, if you want to take some time off, you can do that, too. It's all a matter of budgeting. Have a talk with a respected executive who has experienced many professional twists and turns. Their advice will prove invaluable. An older friend may also have insight to your situation.

GEMINI

(May 22–June 21)

You may have to undertake a long trip for work, education or religious reasons. Make sure your passport is up to date and you lock in your air and hotel fares. Having printed receipts could save you from incurring additional costs. If you play your cards right, you could get a local organisation to pay your way. Heed your partner's advice with regard to your relationship. Just because you are satisfied doesn't mean he or she is.

CANCER

(June 22–July 23)

Money from an inheritance, tax refund or scholarship helps you to leave a restrictive situation. It's possible you feel guilty about leaving a friend or partner behind, but your very survival is at stake. Clinging to an unhealthy relationship will only make things worse. Your first loyalty needs to be to yourself. A wise friend can help you make a clean break, so have their phone number ready when you feel the urge to reconcile. Be vigilant about your vulnerability.

LEO

(July 24–August 23)

A meeting of the minds gives you renewed hope for the future. At times, you've despaired of ever meeting a person who truly understands you. Recently, an intelligent person has entered your social circle. This friend knows how to challenge your assumptions and engage your imagination. Together, you could form a powerful romantic or creative partnership. If you've been suffering from a health problem, this would be a good time to get a check up. Stop suffering in silence.

VIRGO

(August 24–September 23)

Devising a new routine will keep you happy and healthy. It's important to exercise every day. You're the type of person who stores stress in your body. Having a physical outlet for these frustrations will make you sleep better. If you're looking for a job, you could find one related to television, radio or print media. The position you are offered may not pay more than the one you already have, but at least you'll be doing work you enjoy.

LIBRA

(September 24–October 23)

Abandon yourself to books, music and movies this week. Lately, you've been spending a lot of time cooped up at home. A social butterfly like you needs to get out and have fun. True, you have responsibilities, but they shouldn't consign you to a life of drudgery. Ask a relative to baby-sit or do some additional chores. If you're on your own, you may want to consider hiring someone to clean your home every few weeks. This will give you more time for fun.

SCORPIO

(October 24–November 22)

Taking a short trip to see family could be in the cards. At first, this journey will seem like a hassle, but eventually, you'll get into the spirit of things. If a relative asks for your honest opinion, give it. Be mindful of their feelings, though – it's possible to be truthful and tactful. Take your cues from a brother, father or uncle who you've always admired. A surprising romantic relationship could be the source of speculation. Resist the urge to listen to spiteful gossip and pass it on.

SAGITTARIUS

(November 23–December 21)

It may be difficult to get off the phone this week. Everybody has been wondering where you've been. Actually, you probably haven't gone anywhere; you were just busy working. Still, it's nice to know you were missed. Take this opportunity to meet with friends for lunch, dinner or coffee. Granted, you'll feel like you're always on the run, but that's better than growing stale behind a desk. Get into the habit of writing down your dreams when you wake up.

CAPRICORN

(December 22–January 20)

You're earning more money than ever now, so it's necessary to create a financial master plan or you could waste your time and effort. Keep in mind that you won't always be this flush with cash. By putting a certain percentage of income into savings on a regular basis, you'll create a secure financial foundation. If you do decide to spend money, let it be on education and travel. Expanding your horizons will make you a valuable commodity on the job market.

AQUARIUS

(January 21–February 19)

Your ideas get lots of attention this week. Be as bold and visionary as you dare. Nobody will laugh at your proposals. We're emerging from a very cautious period. Taking a risk will breathe new life into an organisation or relationship that is threatening to go stale. Trust your instincts when it comes to dealing with a contentious neighbour or relative. Appealing to their sense of humour will cause them to be less defensive. Keep that witty banter going.

PISCES

(February 20–March 20)

You've always been a solitary person, and that's especially true this week. Daydreaming is infinitely more interesting than work. Unfortunately, you don't get paid much for fantasising. There's lots of work to be done. Therefore, you need to schedule time to expand your imagination. Wake up a little earlier so you can paint, write or take photographs. Keep this time sacred; don't use it to catch up on chores and e-mails. Ask a supportive friend to hold you accountable.

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What's On

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YOUR GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD

 WEEK COMMENCING 17TH JANUARY

East London

MANOR PARK SNU CHURCH
 145 Shrewsbury Road,
 Forest Gate E7 ***
 Enquiries:- President 020 8530 6803
Please do not phone after 8.30pm
 Sun 18th 6.30pm CHRIS CURTAIN
 Thurs 1.00pm Library
 2.00pm JO RATHBONE
 Healing after the Service
 Sun 25th 6.30pm STEVE FRAINE
 INDUCTION LOOP provided
 for the benefit of hearing aid users

WALTHAMSTOW SPIRITUALIST LYCEUM CHURCH
 39 Coleridge Road E17
 Tel:- 020 8803 7382
Church open please check for service days & times

WALTHAMSTOW N.S. CHURCH
 Vestry Road E17 9NH ***
 Tel: 020 8503 6942
www.vestryroad.com
 Sun 18th 6.30pm RICHARD NEVILLE
 Mon 7.00pm - 9.00pm Healing
 Tues 2.00pm BETTY HARRISON
 Weds 7.30pm MICHAEL REDWIN
 Thurs 7.30pm Awareness Circle
 Sun 25th 6.30pm EVA O'BRIEN

WOODFORD NS CHURCH
 9 Grove Crescent, South Woodford,
 London E18 2JR ***
 Enquiries:- 020 8989 6149
 Sun 18th 6.30pm STEVE FRAINE
 Mon 2pm - 3pm SANDY WILKINSON
 Weds Healing 2pm - 4pm & 7.30pm - 9pm
 Fri 1.30pm & 7.30pm ~ £3 ~ Open Circles
 7.30pm Open Circle for Platform Mediums
 Sun 25th 6.30pm BRENDA HANLEY

North London

NORTH LONDON SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 425 Hornsey Road N19 4DX ***
 (Buses 91 and 210 to Hanley Road)
 Tel:- 020 7272 0438
 Services:-
 1st Sunday of Month 11.00am
 Wednesday 7.30pm
 Saturday 7.30pm
 Healing:-
 Tuesday 6.00pm - 8.00pm
 Friday 6.00pm - 8.00pm

WOOD GREEN SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 Corner of Maryland Road,
 High Road, Wood Green N22 5AR
 Tel:- 020 8888 1992
 (Buses 329, 29, 121, 232 pass door)
 Services:-
 Sunday 6.30pm
 Wednesday 7.30pm
 Healing:-
 Tuesday 7.00pm - 8.30pm
 Thursday 2.00pm - 4.30pm

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South London

THE SPRING HEALING CENTRE
 St Martin's Community Centre
 Abbots Park, Tulse Hill
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 (Registered Charity No. 1116117)
Tel:- Hazel Lee 07977 703483
or Martin Mullen 07710 243586
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 Readings & Complementary Therapies
 Ring for details

ELTHAM SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 64 Well Hall Road,
 London SE9 6SH ***
 President:- 01732 882 840
www.elthamspiritualistchurch.org.uk
 Sun 18th 6.30pm DEE DEADY
 Tues Healing 12.30pm - 2.00pm & 7.30pm
 Weds 2.30pm PAULINE WOODHATCH
 Thurs 8.00pm Closed Circle
 Sun 25th 6.30pm JEAN BLACKABEE

FULHAM NS CHURCH
 Kelvedon Road SW6 ***
 (near Parsons Green Und. Stn)
 Enquiries:- 020 7736 7248
 Sunday 18th 6.30pm Service
 Thurs Healing 12noon - 2.00pm
 7.30pm Service
 Sun 25th 6.30pm Service

DAVID NASON SPIRITUAL & HEALING CENTRE
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 1 Venner Road, Sydenham SE26 ***
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www.davidnason.org.uk

Weds 21st 8pm MAUREEN RIDGEWELL
 Healing every week 7.30pm - 9.00pm
 Weds 28th 8.00pm JOAN DEMPSEY
 Healing every week 7.30pm - 9.00pm

LEWISHAM SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 Boone Street, Lewisham SE13 ***
 (behind Woodman P.H. off Lee High Road)
 Buses: 321 122 261 178 pass end of road
 Enquiries:-
 President: Dorothy Firth 020 8850 5870
 Med Sec: Marlene Devaney 07826 723575
www.lewishamspiritualistchurch.co.uk
 Sun 18th 6.30pm Service
 Mon 7.00pm - 8.30pm Open Circle
 (Except on Bank Holidays)
 7.15pm - 8.30pm Healing
 Tues 12.30pm - 2.30pm Private Readings
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 1.00pm - 2.30pm Healing
 Thurs 7.00pm - 9.00pm Group Readings
 7.15pm - 8.30pm Healing
 Sun 25th 6.30pm Service

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 Sunday 18th 11.00am JACKIE ROBINSON
 7.30pm Demonstration of Clairvoyance
 IVAN LEE & PHILLIP WARR
 Tuesday 7.00pm Healing (Inc. Animals)
 7.30pm ESI (Psychic Art)
 Wednesday 7.00pm Healing (Inc. Animals)
 7.30pm PETER PAYNE
 Thursday 10.00am - 12noon
 Healing (Inc. Animals)
 Sunday 25th 11.00am Psychometry
 SHIRLEY MONACO

West London

ACTON SPIRITUAL CENTRE
 Woodhurst Road, Acton W3 6SL ***
 Enquiries:- 020 8896 0184
 First Sunday of the month
 Service 6.30pm
 Wednesday 7.30pm Clairvoyance
 Thursday 7.30pm Healing

BARNES HEALING CHURCH
 White Hart Lane,
 Barnes SW13 0QA
 Enquiries:- 07939 548006
 Sunday 18th 6.30pm RITA GREEN
 Wednesday 7.30pm Clairvoyance Service
 with ANN McKEEVER
 Sunday 25th 6.30pm SID PRIVETT
 Healing:-
 Tuesday 6.30pm - 8.00pm
 Thursday 10.30am - 1.30pm

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 LILLIAN BROWNFOOT
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 Sunday 11.15am Service
 6.30pm Service
 Monday 6.00pm Healing
 Tuesday 5.30pm Reflexology
 6.00pm Healing
 7.00pm Short Private Sitzings
 Friday 5.30pm Reflexology
 6.00pm Healing
 7.00pm Short Private Sitzings

THE LONDON SPIRITUAL MISSION
 Spiritualist Church,
 13 Pembridge Place W2 ***
 Tel: 020 7229 2024
 Sun 18th 11am Address & Clairvoyance
 VAL TRIGGS
 6.30pm Address & Clairvoyance
 ROSIE CONNOR
 Weds 7.30pm Clairvoyance
 DONNA RICHARDS
 Sun 25th 11am Address & Clairvoyance
 PETER GEEKIE
 6.30pm Address & Clairvoyance
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 Thursday 5.00pm - 7.30pm
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 Sunday Service 6.30pm
 Followed by Healing
 Monday 7.30pm Awareness Circle
 Wednesday Healing 2.00pm & 7.30pm
 Last Thursday of the month
 7.30pm Evening of Clairvoyance
 Saturday Workshops as Arranged

Cheshire

STOCKPORT CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 46 Old Road, Stockport SK4 1TD
 President: Mr A PARKER
 Tel:- 0161 4276279 ***
 christianspiritualistchurch.co.uk
 Sunday 3pm Divine Service
 Monday 7.30pm Healing
 Tuesday 7.30pm Clairvoyance
 Wednesday 7.30pm Music & Meditation
 Friday 11am - 3pm Private Readings
 Saturday 11am - 3pm Private Readings
 Saturday 7pm Open Circle

Cumbria

SOLWAY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 Trades Hall, Browtop, ***
 Workington, Cumbria
 Sunday Services 6.30pm - 9.00pm
 Healing after Service
 Enquiries:- Tel 01228 547599
 01900 812104 or 01900 812311

Devon

EXETER SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 York Road ***
 Services:-
 Sunday 6.30pm
 Wednesday 3.00pm
 Healing:-
 Tuesday 10.30am - 12.30pm
 Friday 7.30pm Open Circle/Discussion
 Alternative Evening
 Saturday Sitzings/Workshops/Special Events
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PAIGNTON SPIRITUALIST CHURCH AND CENTRE
 Manor Road,
 Paignton, Devon TQ3 2JB ***
 Tel:- 01803 525933
 Saturday 7.30pm Clairvoyant Demonstration
 Sunday 11.00am & 6.30pm Divine Services
 Monday 7.30pm Clairvoyant Demonstration
 Wednesdays Guild 2.00pm - 4.00pm
 7.30pm Open Circle
 Thursday 7.30pm Psychic Art Class
 (First three Thurs in month)
 Friday 7.30pm Open Healing Circle
 (Every other Fri)
 Healing:-
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 Tues 4.00pm - 6.00pm
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 Mon 7.30pm TERRY MASON
 Weds 7.30pm Seekers Group
 Thurs 3.00pm ROSEMARY SPENCER
 Sunday 25th Services 10.45am & 6.30pm
 with JOHN HARVEY
 Spiritual Healing:-
 Mon 2.00pm - 4.00pm
 Tues 2.00pm - 4.00pm
 Weds 10.30am - 12.30pm
 Thurs 7.00pm - 8.00pm
 Fri 10.30am - 12.30pm
 & 2.00pm - 4.00pm

CHRISTCHURCH SNU CHURCH
 196B Barrack Road,
 Christchurch BH23 2BQ ***
 Enquiries:- 01202 463985
 or 01202 483713
 Website:- christchurchsc.org.uk
 Sunday 18th 3.30pm RON LINSLEY
 Tuesday 20th 10.00am Healing
 Thursday 22nd 7.30pm JOHN STEPHENSON
 Sunday 25th 3.30pm MARILYN FAYE

Essex

CLACTON-ON-SEA C. S. CHURCH
 19 Oxford Road, Clacton-on-Sea
 Sunday 6.30pm Divine Service
 Monday 2.15pm Clairvoyance
 4.30pm Healing
 Wednesday 7.00pm Clairvoyance
 Thursday 1.00pm Healing
 Saturday 6.30pm Clairvoyance
 First Wednesday of month
 7.00pm Open Circle

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 2.45pm DANIEL WRIGHT
 Tues 27th 1.00pm - 2.30pm Healing
 2.45pm STEWART FRAZIER

KINGSLEY SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 Kingsley Hall, Kingsley Road,
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 Service First & Third Friday
 of the month 8.00pm

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 Enquiries:- 01279 427638
 Service held Thursday Fortnightly
 Thursday 22nd January 2.15pm
 Healing before Service 1.15pm
 First Wednesday of Month
 February 4th 2009
 Fellowship Evening 8.00pm

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 Tues Healing from 7.30pm
 Thurs 22nd 7.30pm BRENDA COTTINGHAM
 Sun 25th 6.30pm CHRISTINE ARGENT

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 and Third Saturday of the Month
 Also Saturday Evening Events:-
 Meditations, Courses, Workshops,
 Circles, Clairvoyance, etc.

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 Healing:-
 Sunday 5.30pm - 6.30pm
 Thursday 2.30pm - 5.00pm

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TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 Friends Meeting House,
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 Kent TN1 2BB
 Tel:- 01892 722464
 Service every Sunday 6.30pm
 Healing before and after Service
 Different Medium each week

WEST WICKHAM SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 Surrey Road,
 West Wickham, Kent ***
 President: - Helene Pitt
 Tel: 020 8777 9375
 SUNDAY SERVICES 6.30pm
 Healing after Service 8.00pm
 and Tuesdays 2.00pm
 1st Wednesday of the month
 Evening of Mediumship 8.00pm
 2nd Tuesday of the month 8.00pm
 Open Platform
 4th Tuesday each month
 Open Circle 8.00pm

Lancashire

BLACKPOOL ALBERT ROAD SNU CHURCH
 71 Albert Road,
 Blackpool FY1 4PW
 FOUNDED 1895
 Tel:- 01253 753743
 Sunday 2.30pm Divine Service
 Wednesday 12.30pm - 1.30pm Healing
 Wednesday 2.30pm Clairvoyance
 Thursday 7.30pm Clairvoyance
 & Open Circle

CLEVELEYS SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 93 Beach Road,
 Cleveleys FY5 1EW
 Tel:- 01253 777538
 www.cleveleyspiritualistchurch.com
 Sunday 2.30pm Service
 Monday 7.30pm Clairvoyance
 & Open Circle
 Wednesday 2.30pm Clairvoyance
 Saturday 7.30pm Clairvoyance
 & Open Circle

Middlesex

HAMPTON HILL SNU CHURCH
 Angel Close,
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 Middlesex TW12 1RH
 Tel:- 020 8979 2078
 Sunday 6.30pm Service & Clairvoyance
 Wednesday 7.30pm Healing
 Thursday 7.30pm Clairvoyance

KENTON SPIRITUALIST CHURCH AND HEALING CENTRE
 35 Churchill Avenue,
 Kenton, Nr. Harrow,
 Middlesex HA3 0AX ***
 Enquiries:- 020 8621 3103
 Sun 18th 6.30pm PAT QUENNELL
 Weds 7.30pm - 9.00pm Healing
 Thurs 7.45pm DEREK SPALL

THE SANCTUARY OF THE SILVER CROSS
 The Friends Meeting House,
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 Founder:- FRANK MECHELE
 Medium's Secretary:- LINDA CHANT
 Telephone:- 07909 772375
 SUNDAY DIVINE SERVICE 6.30pm

Oxon

OXFORD CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 39a Oxford Road, Cowley,
 Oxford OX4 2EN
 Enquiries:- 01865 437278
 Sunday 6.15pm Service with Clairvoyance
 Wednesday:- Spiritual Healing
 10.30am - 12.30pm & 7.15pm - 9.15pm
 First and Third Thursdays of the month
 7.30pm Service with Clairvoyance

Staffordshire

DAVID JONES CENTRE STAFFORD SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 96a Stone Road, Stafford
 Enquiries:- 01785 600082
 Sunday 6.30pm Service
 Monday 1.00pm - 3.00pm Healing
 Wednesday 6.45pm - 7.50pm Healing
 8.00pm Service

Surrey

RICHMOND SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 97 Church Road, Richmond,
 Surrey TW10 6LU
 Denise Connolly:- 020 8979 7571
 Sunday 6.30pm Divine Service
 Thursday 7.30pm Service
 Healing After Service

Sussex

EASTBOURNE CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST CHURCH
 1A Cavendish Avenue ***
 01323 735856
 Sunday 3.00pm Service
 Healing:-
 Monday 2.00pm
 Friday 2.00pm

West Midlands

KINGS HEATH S.N.U. CHURCH
 5 Springfield Road, Kings Heath,
 Birmingham B14 7DT
 Enquiries:- 0121 4445195
 Saturday 17th 10.00am - 11.20am Healing
 7.30pm WENDY CLAYTON
 Sunday 18th 6.30pm
 MARGARET & HUGH DAVIS
 Monday 1.00pm Open Circle
 Tuesday 7.00pm - 8.20pm Healing
 Wednesday 2.30pm PAULINE THORNTON
 7.30pm Pranayama Yoga
 Thursday 7.30pm Open Circle
 Saturday 24th 10.00am - 11.20am Healing
 7.30pm PAULINE THORNTON
 Sunday 25th 6.30pm WENDY BULLOCK
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MY EXPERIENCE

Robert, Our Walking Miracle

by Susan Pell

On the morning of Monday 22nd May, 2006, our 23-year-old son Robert fell from his upstairs bedroom window. He fell onto the concrete patio at the back of the house, suffering a severe head injury.

That same evening he went through two operations, lasting five hours, to remove two large blood clots on his brain. His skull had been cracked wide open and two pieces of his skull (bone flaps) had to be taken away and placed under his skin in the stomach area, to keep them sterile until replaced in six months' time. They had to be removed to release the pressure on his brain.

Afterwards, the surgeon told us how serious Robert's condition was, saying that "miracles do happen," and the next five to six days would be crucial. Well, I believe in miracles!

The day of the accident, I contacted our other son, Andrew, who is four years older than Robert. Knowing that Robert is a true 'believer', we talked about finding a faith healer to pray for Robert and give him healing.

On the Internet, Andrew found Rex Hamilton and the Suffolk Healing Group in Southampton, and immediately telephoned Rex. They had a long chat and Robert's name was put on the absent healing list.

Our family went round to Rex's house for healing the following evening, which was lovely. We found Rex to be a really caring and genuine man.

Robert was kept heavily sedated for two weeks in intensive care at the Wessex Neurological

Unit in Southampton General Hospital. Due to his brain injury, his intra-cranial pressure was dangerously high. In order to help control this pressure, his body was also cooled.

One of the x-rays showed several fractures in Robert's neck, so he was also given a paralysing drug to keep him perfectly still to help these fractures heal.

After two weeks of sedation, the intra-cranial pressure was not coming down. Following a brain scan to see what was going on, it was discovered that around half of one side of his brain appeared dead. Devastating news. The doctors then decided to change tactics and treat Robert as a stroke patient, which meant he would gradually be brought out of sedation and taken off all the drugs, to see just what he could do.

At 6pm that evening we had a chat with the consultant, who told us that Robert may not wake up, and if he did, he could be paralysed down one side. We were also told it could take a day or two for him to come round, due to all the drugs that were in his system.

One hour later, we went to Rex's house for healing, and everyone there knew how bad we were feeling. After the healing Rex suggested we all form a healing circle to say special prayers for Robert.

This was a most wonderful experience. About nine or ten of us sat in a circle with a lighted candle placed on the floor in the centre. We all thought about Robert and offered up special prayers for his recovery. Rex and the other healers said that there

was tremendous energy there, going out to Robert that evening.

Afterwards, around 9pm and only three hours after listening to what the consultant had to say, we went back to the hospital to be with Robert. We were so surprised and absolutely delighted to find him already awake, looking around and showing a little movement in all his limbs. He seemed to recognise us. My mother said she would never forget the look on our faces (my husband Richard and I) when we saw him. Our faces were beaming. Such joy and relief!

Two days earlier, on Sunday 4th June, it had been Pentecost Sunday and at church we all said special prayers to the Holy Spirit for Robert. I am a great believer in the power of prayer.

Very many good and sincere people have prayed for Robert, and I truly believe that when we saw him awake after the healing at Rex's that Tuesday evening (6th June), a miracle had happened. Against all the odds, Robert woke up a lot sooner than expected, moving his hands and feet a little.

Rex and Carol – another healer from the Suffolk Healing Group – visited the hospital a few times to give Robert healing. They are such lovely people.

Exactly eight weeks later, Robert was doing virtually everything a normal healthy person would do. He could walk unaided and go into town on his own, dress himself, use the bathroom



Son and mother, Robert and Susan Pell.

and shower without help, and eat and drink without any problem. He could see, hear and understand almost all you said to him.

He completed six weeks at the Bath Head Injury Unit, where he had speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. They have a wonderful team there.

By the end of 2006, Robert could say any word you asked him to, but had difficulty remembering what many things were called, due to problems with his 'working' memory.

Each day, more and more words would come back to him and we could have a conversation with him, although his use of words was limited. He had to learn to read and write again.

We call Robert our "walking miracle" and thank God and all

the wonderful people who have prayed for Robert and helped him on the road to recovery.

■ Robert told PN last week that he has now made a 99 per cent recovery.

"I wouldn't be at the stage I am today if it wasn't for the healing I received," he said. "As a result, I now have a more spiritual outlook on life."

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