

Spirit Messages: Diary of a Doubter



Norman Hutt

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Spirit Messages?

Diary of a Doubter

By

Norman Hutt

Acknowledgements

The Spiritualist Churches

The Spiritualist mediums

The open-minded sceptics

Table of Contents

Introduction:

Chapter 1: Arousal

Chapter 2: First Church messages

Chapter 3: Stronger evidence

Chapter 4: More messages and readings

Chapter 5: Is it them or me?

Chapter 6: In to the physical

Chapter 7: A new life

Chapter 8: My new family

Chapter 9: What did it mean?

Introduction

There are nowadays several ways for an individual to receive or witness messages, said to originate from the Spirit World, from mental mediums. These include watching TV shows like Sixth Sense with Colin Fry, receiving private readings, attending public clairvoyance meetings, telephone readings, in closed or open development circles, and of course in Spiritualist Churches or Centres.

There must be many who have become very interested in the subject of communication with the Spirit World, but have not entered a Spiritualist Church. They might think it spooky or weird, might be afraid of what goes on in there, or what people might think about them going. Other religions sometimes condemn attendance. It is not surprising, therefore, that it is quite an effort to go to a Spiritualist Church for the first time, to see for yourself. Often a friend will introduce you, knowing that it is all perfectly safe and pleasant, and you will wonder what you were worried about. This applied to myself, when I began to attend in 1993. However, it shows how brainwashed many of us are by orthodoxy. When I first became interested in Spiritualism, in 1985, I began reading up the subject, but was unable to find any books to really deal with what happened in Spiritualist Churches, and especially about the messages given by mediums during the

services. There were odd references in books to specific survival evidence in messages, but not long term studies based upon the recipient of messages, their content, and what they meant to him or her. I decided to write up in my diaries, as accurately as possible, all the messages I received, and what I understood by them. This was for my personal reference at the time, but it resulted in me writing this book, which covers the years from 1985 to 2006.

To a naturally inquisitive person, like myself, there are several factors in Spiritualist Church services message-giving which can cause doubt. The medium gives out information about Spirit people to a recipient, who is supposed to answer only yes or no, or don't understand. This does not always happen, sometimes the recipient feeds back information to the medium which can invalidate further evidence.

The medium should not ask questions, or change the identity of Spirit communicators to suit the recipient's replies, but this can happen.

Onlookers do not know if the medium knows anything about the recipient beforehand.

Onlookers do not know how meaningful the information was, unless the recipient talks about it to you afterwards.

I was satisfied by the end of the investigation that the contents of the many messages could be seriously looked at as evidence of survival of

physical death, because of the precautions I took right through from 1985 to 2006.

(1) I told none of the many different mediums anything about my deceased relatives and friends, or anything else about me except where stated, or as yes or no to their statements.

(2) I am sure I was just a face in the crowd to the mediums in nearly every case, except where stated, and I tried to give as little away as possible for clues, to eliminate what is called “cold reading”.

(3) There was no evidence of “intelligence gathering” for the benefit of the mediums. One way would have been for the Church committee or helpers to collect information from recipients of messages or from regular attenders, and feed it to the mediums, or even in to a database, as some critics allege might happen. I never found any sign of this, recipients tended to keep their messages to themselves or discussed them with only with their friends.

(4) Mediums seemed generally to forget most of the messages they give out, and seem not to keep records, which would be very difficult anyway. A typical medium might attend, say, 50 services a year, and give typically 10 messages at each, which could be 500 messages a year. No audio recording or shorthand notes have been observed. The story begins with a visit to a clairvoyant in Weymouth, in 1985.

Chapter 1: Arousal

There are complete and utter closed-minded sceptics who will not believe in any psychic or possible Spirit phenomena, ascribing it to fraud, lying, or mis- interpretation, and do not credit the best evidence available for survival of physical death.

Committed believers in their version of Spiritualism, or another faith which includes some sort of survival, may choose to not question their belief too closely, for understandable reasons.

Then there are those who are very interested in the facts and evidence in the subject, but are not committed to a belief system.

My own investigation in to this subject has always been as an open-minded sceptic, willing to look at all facts and evidence available as analytically and scientifically as possible, but with respect and sympathy.

My investigation into Spiritualism, survivalism, and the paranormal began as a result of a chance visit to a clairvoyant named Lee Bennett on Weymouth Pier in 1985. Like so many other holidaymakers, I entered his booth for a reading out of a strong curiosity, not knowing what to expect, as it was my first experience with a psychic. Although he offered palmistry to me, he hardly glanced at my hands, and spoke for about

twenty minutes with no feedback from me until afterwards. He did not ask questions, and I tried not to give any signals to help him. Soon afterwards, I wrote down in my diary, as accurately as I could remember, what he had said. I was aged 44 at the time, I am now 65 at the time of writing.

“You have no heart or other health problems, and can expect a long life. You have just been through a redundancy situation at work, but have survived it, and will be O.K. in the future. You are in the 2nd Division at work, but will have a chance before Autumn to get in to the 1st Division. It will be up to you whether you are happy as you are, or accept an offer hard to refuse which would involve more responsibility. This will involve problems with communication and learning to express yourself more effectively.

You have an air of spirituality around you, and are capable of healing- not physical, but mental. You could help others who are spiritually down. You are a soft touch, and feel like helping lame ducks.

You seem very quiet, but you are a rebel inside and have a lot of inward aggression. You like company , but you need lots of time to yourself. You are older now, and don't have speed any more. You will have to accept a slower pace, despite still wanting speed.”

It surprised me that nothing was incorrect in the reading. Three statements seemed specific to me, others fitted my character, but the bit about healing meant nothing to me.

I had lost several colleagues to redundancy only the previous month but had escaped it, as also happened in later years.

Before the Autumn, I was promoted at work and became a Project Leader.

I had been running competitively for some time, but my best times had already been achieved in races and I was forced to slow down.

As I left , I looked at the testimonies on the wall of many well-known personalities with their photos. . The clairvoyant obviously had “something” which enabled him to satisfy his clients with information he should not have known, and intrigue them, as had happened to me. It seemed too accurate to be pure chance. I wondered what were the mathematical odds that he would be correct by chance guesswork, and whether something similar happened to all the other clients. There was no evidence of survival, however.

After returning home, my sister-in-law rang me, and said that she had heard that I was going to Weymouth on holiday. She had really hoped that I would go to see this clairvoyant while I was there, but I did not know this, or that she had also seen him some time before. She said he had been

100% accurate in telling her of her past life, including facts about her divorce, her new husband, her mother's blindness, and a so-called "spirit guide" who was helping her. This was all strangely coincidental, especially as my sister-in-law had not been in touch with me for a long time and I did not know of her interest in the subject. At the time, I had heard of telepathy but knew little about it. Mind reading? Could my sister-in-law have influenced my mind from where she lived, 40 miles from my home, to visit the clairvoyant? Is that why I felt so strongly compelled to have my first reading? Did Lee Bennett read my mind to be able to give me the information? Was it scientifically possible? Were there unknown or unaccepted mechanisms at work for it to happen?

So began the first questions. I began to read up all I could about the psychic, then mediumship, and the paranormal. Little did I know that twenty years later I would still be asking questions, with few definite answers, many doubts, but still full of interest in "how it all works". It became clear to me there were two possibilities to account for the very wide range of "psychic phenomena" I had read about. Either there was a Spirit World, and communication with it was possible under certain conditions, to explain some or most of the phenomena and evidence.

Or, there was no Spirit World, and all survival evidence had other explanations, which might be difficult to explain as yet, perhaps because there is a hidden underlying reality to life which has yet to be discovered.

My character, and work background in engineering and as a materials technologist, led me to regard the scientific method as the best way to investigate and obtain “my Truth”. This meant that, as an open-minded sceptic at first, my task would be to try to disprove the existence of the Spirit World, by trying out for myself everything I could in the field of Spiritualism and survivalism, but trying to find normal mundane explanations for phenomena as I went along. I thought that it was impossible to “prove” survival scientifically.

In 1987, an old friend began taking me to meetings of the “Christian Fellowship for Psychic and Spiritual Studies”, (CFPSS), at the Friends Meeting House in Marlborough. The Fellowship was an Ecumenical body of Christians founded in 1953, existing for the study of the wide reaches of the paranormal and extra sensory perception in their relation to the Christian Faith. The field of study included psychical phenomena, mysticism, meditation, spiritual healing, telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, precognition, and psychokinesis. I am not a Christian, but was brought up as Methodist until the age of about 13, when I lost

any belief in the dogmas of Christianity. I had no reason to believe that I had any psychic ability at all.

The CFPSS provided a safe haven to begin my investigation. The psychic is often regarded as spooky or weird, perhaps even dangerous, so the fact that some committed Christians were sympathetic, and had various psychic abilities themselves, was reassuring.

The first monthly CFPSS meeting I attended at the Friend's Meeting House in Marlborough in 1985 included a lecture by David Lorimer, who spoke about "Near Death Experiences" and introduced his new book "Survival? Body, mind, and death in the light of psychic experience". (1984, Routledge and Kegan Paul). Lorimer argued that case histories of various psychic experiences have too many features in common to be dismissed as mere coincidences. Only a hypothesis involving conscious survival of bodily death provided a complete and coherent explanation of such phenomena.

Alternatively, there is a widespread materialist assumption that your consciousness perishes with your brain when you die. If this is correct, man is not a duality of a physical body, and a spiritual body which could continue to exist after physical death. Therefore there could be no spiritual afterlife, but psychic phenomena could

still be a product of the physical body in some way.

Later that year, the well-known medium Ursula Roberts gave a demonstration of clairvoyance to the CFPSS meeting. She gave me my first ever message, alleged to be from the Spirit World. **“ A tank driver is with me, with light-coloured hair, who died not in the War, but some time after. I can see the tank driving over sand. He said that he belonged to the World Brotherhood for Peace, he encourages you to continue your interest in World Peace, and also to continue to study the psychic. Sometimes you get out-of-body experiences in dreams.”**

There was only one deceased person known to me who could possibly fit the above information, my father-in-law who I never met, but who I had been told had served in tanks in WW2. I checked with my wife, and she confirmed that her father did drive a tank in WW2, he took part in the Normandy landings, he died in the 1960's, and he was a peace-loving man. I could not remember having out-of-body dreams.

The monthly meetings continued as I continued to gain knowledge, and reassurance that there was nothing harmful or evil about psychic investigation. It seemed very matter-of-fact to those involved in it, natural to them. Healing, comforting the bereaved, and living a good

positive life seemed to be the basis. In 1989, Ursula Roberts visited the CFPSS again, and I took the opportunity of having a private reading with the medium. The “scientific approach” was strong within me still, and I must have appeared quite rude as I asked Ursula about fraudulent mediums, and how to tell if mediums are genuine. I was generally sceptical.

“ You have a green aura around you, which means to me that you have healing powers, particularly for nervy, distressed types. You are good at listening to, and counselling, those who are mentally distressed. I see a cricked neck problem with someone close to you, and you should lay hands on to heal it. I see a William, like a grandfather figure, with a book open on his lap.”

I began to see how it is possible to get drawn in to belief by making information fit yourself, and accepting advice or talents. For example, the Weymouth clairvoyant had told me something similar about me doing mental healing. A coincidence? Or do mediums say this to everybody I thought, to get them involved? And yes, I did have an uncle William, or Bill as he was known, and he had known that I was mad about books and reading when he knew me. As it happened, my wife did have a cricked neck at that time, and I laid my hands on and massaged it. It did improve quite quickly, but it may have

been nothing to do with me, this was no proof of a Spirit World.

The next month, I had the very rare experience for me of a vivid, remembered dream. I woke up suddenly in the middle of the night, in the middle or end of the dream. I had dreamt that I was a spirit being, looking down on my separated physical body. I had the absolute conviction in the dream **that Spirit controlled the body, the physical brain and body did not control the mind.** I remembered speaking the words for emphasis through the spirit form which was apparently “me”.

At the time, I put this down to my subconscious mind sorting out my problem with the brain/mind relationship and telling me what it thought I wanted to hear. On the other hand, it could not be disproved that perhaps “something in the Spirit World” was trying to convince me of it’s reality.

The medium, Stephen O’Brien, was advertised to demonstrate clairvoyance in the local area to a large audience in 1990. I decided to attend, to try to find out more about the claims of Spiritualism and evidence of life after death. He talked about the philosophy of the Spiritualist Movement, and gave ten messages to members of the audience. His method was to ask the whole audience to listen to him as he gave out information like names, places, events. A single person was then

established who understood and accepted the information. Stephen claimed to act as a kind of “telephone exchange” for Spirit communicators. He talked to the recipient, who was supposed to answer with a yes or no, about information he claimed to be hearing from “the Spirit side of life”. The recipients seemed like ordinary people, not actors, and it seemed to be spontaneous. There was a lot of very specific information given out, and most of it was apparently accepted. On the face of it, there seemed impressive evidence all evening that the medium was indeed passing on messages from the Spirit World to our physical world.

Unless you have a very evidential message yourself, and therefore know that it cannot be “fixed” in any way, a rational person cannot be really convinced. Collusion and fraud would seem very unlikely, as actors would have to be “planted” with pre-arranged scenarios, and I had no feeling that that was possible in the circumstances. However, given honesty and sincerity by the medium, with no reason to believe otherwise, there were drawbacks to leave large doubts.

Firstly, the recipients were self-selected when accepting the information. The medium would then already have some knowledge to work with when he began the message. Of course this does not prove that those mediums who are able to pick out an individual before delivering evidence give better or valid evidence. However, if a Spirit

communicator is really speaking through the medium, why not tell the medium who to go to, to save time and confusion, and make it more believable for a sceptic?

Secondly, it is impossible to judge the accuracy of a message unless you are able to de-brief the recipient afterwards. Questions like, does he know anything about you, how many facts given you were wrong, how specific were the correct facts, etc.

The investigation continued, and also in 1990 an interesting coincidence happened. While I was driving to Bath to run in a half-marathon road race, William Roache, who plays Ken Barlow in Coronation Street, my favourite TV soap, was speaking on the radio about the death of his 18 month old child. At the funeral, he saw a very strong vision of his deceased child, and said that his grief was lessened. He then believed in life after death, the physical body is a shell, the spirit is what counts. As I listened to the programme, I saw a hitch-hiker thumbing a lift. Something made me stop and give him a lift, a thing I never do, it was a one-off. The gentleman had an amputated arm and a bad leg. We discussed what I had heard on the radio, and he said that he had once “died” with a heart attack, but had come back to life. It had been extremely peaceful, and he had not been happy about returning to life. I had recently read a book about near death

experiences, but I had never met anybody who had suffered one.

The doubter in me said that it was just a mild coincidence, but what if it wasn't, perhaps an inspiration from the "other side" ?

Later that year, the CFPSS hosted two spiritual healers, who gave healing to seven of our members. This kind of thing was new to me. How did they know that the healing "worked", and how did it work anyway? After the healing, one of them went in to "trance" and explained how Spirit worked. Cause and effect rules, both here and in the Spirit World, re-incarnation can happen for "karma", and we don't control when we die, it is planned. This was the first time I had witnessed a trance address, when a Spirit communicator is supposed to speak through a medium who allows this to happen while his own spirit "stands aside".

Another experience of so-say working with Spirit, but I had no idea if any of it was valid, or if the healing had any effect.

A later speaker at the CFPSS was a Christian cleric who was opposed to psychic research and investigation. He thought that the Devil and evil spirits were a reality, and it was best for natural psychics to control themselves and avoid opening themselves up to these bad entities.

An open-minded sceptic should at least consider the possibility that all psychic events and Spirit

communications are engineered and controlled by the Devil, or evil, low, or earthbound mischievous spirits. It is possible that supposed communicators could be impersonated to deceive us. If there is a Spirit World at all, if “good spirits” can communicate, why should “bad spirits” be unable to?

The type of evidence produced, and it’s effect on behaviour, good or bad, would provide a clue. Why would an evil spirit persuade us to lead a good life, for example?

My doubting, analytical mind was by now working out more possibilities. What if the medium was “reading the mind” himself rather than being told information by Spirit? What if “aliens”, (not evil spirits,) who were adept at mind reading and thought transfer to mediums, were providing the information for the medium?

During this later period of searching, while within the CFPSS, my mother, and a brother, died in 1992. Because they figured later in my search for evidence to try to disprove the claims of Spiritualism, a few facts about their lives will allow a comparison with information given to me by mediums.

My brother died in July 1992. He had suffered with cancer of the colon which killed him. For some time before his death, he had turned against me, for reasons I could not understand. He

refused to acknowledge me as his brother, and wrote to me that I would not be welcome at his funeral. If I did go, he wanted me to sit on the left with the non-relatives. I must not go near his coffin, and I would not be welcome for the wake afterwards. There was a long history of him falling out and having conflict with his wife, sons, and brothers and sisters, for no sensible reasons. He had ginger hair, and a violent temper, and seemed opposite to me in every way.

My mother died in October 1992, aged 91. In her eighties she moved to a flat in a sheltered accommodation, after falls, and the onset of dementia. She insisted on taking a candle to bed, which we tried to stop, and we removed her matches because of the danger of fire. Somehow it continued, and one night as she slept she knocked over the lighted candle as she moved an arm. The flat caught fire, but she was able to pull the emergency cord to summon help. She was lucky to be rescued and get out alive. The Fire Brigade put out the fire which had taken hold, and it left quite a charred mess.

Mother then needed carers to help her, so was moved to a home with just her own bedroom. I visited her every week, and she would complain about the same things nearly every time. She was unable to lock her bedroom door to keep people out. Money and possessions had been stolen. She accused the staff of taking her money, and made other complaints against them, upsetting them

greatly. When I searched her room, I would find that she had hidden money away and forgotten it was there.

In June 1992, mother was so ill that she was treated in hospital in a geriatric ward, could hardly speak, and did not want to eat or live. I fed her a little using a spoon, there was a slight improvement, and I was told that I must arrange for her to transfer to a Nursing Home, to free up the bed, it was official policy. She did not want to leave, and complained bitterly that she wanted to die where she was. Family members had a hard time persuading her it had to be done. She looked shrunken and very thin. I had to find a Home and arrange the finance with Social Services.

In the Nursing Home, mother seemed hardly conscious of her surroundings much of the time. She did not believe in God or an afterlife, and thought that Spiritualism was a load of rubbish when her mind was sound. When she knew I was interested in the subject, she would not discuss it. "When you're dead you're dead", she would say. On October 10th, mother was making strange noises, and as I left she murmured "It's all over now, one way or the other".

Next day, she died very peacefully, sitting in a chair after lunch.

Later that month, after the funeral, I attended the latest CFPSS meeting where a Spiritualist medium, Sheila Webb, demonstrated. She gave several accepted messages to members of our

small group, but one link did not work. The medium said, “ **The communicator wants a “Norman” on the Earth plane, who is a scientist, there was a rift between brothers, he was sorry it had happened, and was sad about it.**” The message was not properly accepted, it did not fit the man who the medium went to. I did not speak up, although I understood it perfectly. My name is Norman, I was a scientist, and there was a rift between me and my deceased brother, as outlined previously. I did speak to Sheila afterwards about it, and she wished that I had spoken up, so that she could have expanded the link. We had never met before. In a group of about ten, what were the chances of one of them matching an unusual name, Norman, a fairly unusual occupation ,scientist, and a rift between brothers, probably unusual even if you have brothers. Could it have been mind reading again? If it was, it was still remarkable, and not accepted by mainstream science.

By now, my reading and experiences had led me to believe that the psychic was well worth investigating, but I felt that it was essential to look inside the Spiritualist movement and take part, to ensure that all was what it seemed to be, and what mediums were like and how they trained. Most of the sceptics and de-bunkers criticised mediumship from the outside, without knowing, or taking note of, the full facts available.

I had often thought of attending my local Spiritualist Church, but I was a little afraid, as other people's attitudes do affect you. Colleagues might think you were a nutter or a crank, it might be creepy or dangerous, and some Christians thought that it was evil, and Satan was at work, diverting you from "the real faith". The opportunity arose when a friend from work, who knew of my interest, invited me to go with her to the local Spiritualist Church to see an up-and-coming medium named Mark Brandist. The small Church was packed with nearly a hundred people, and Mark gave lots of correct names "from Spirit" to people he selected, together with descriptions of events and appearances. It was relaxed, humorous, and down-to-Earth, with a pleasant atmosphere. It was not what I had expected, as there was a prayer, and hymns were sung, but it was more cheerful than an orthodox type of Christian service.

I felt a strong compulsion to attend the Church services on Saturday and Sunday each week for six months, and also try anything else going on there. I would be able to see a wide range of mediums, the quantity and quality of their message-giving, meet some of the Church regulars, and see how genuine it all seemed to a doubter like me. It was almost like a challenge to the Spirit World to prove its existence to me. I resolved not to divulge information about myself,

and look at events with an open-minded, but
critical and rational outlook.

Chapter 2: First Church messages

As I entered Swindon Spiritualist Church (SSC) on July 3rd 1993 to attend my first service, I saw that Jeff Woodhouse was the medium, I felt alone and quite apprehensive. I would probably not know anybody, my wife strongly disapproved as she was a Christian fundamentalist, and I thought that I was a non-psychic. I sneaked unobtrusively up the path, hoping that nobody I knew would see me go in. Someone gave me a friendly handshake at the door, a hymnbook was given to me, and in I went, a Joe Bloggs off the street for six months. I sat down, and read the Seven Principles of Spiritualism on a poster on the wall.

The Fatherhood of God
The Brotherhood of Man
Communion of spirits and Ministry of Angels
Continued existence of the human soul
Personal responsibility
Compensation hereafter for all the good and evil
done on Earth
Eternal progress open to every human soul

No sign of any evil there I thought.

After an introduction, hymns, and a collection,
Jeff began the mediumship.
Some messages were accepted, but there was
nothing very convincing. I felt at home

however, and the service ended with a hymn and notices. It was quite like a Christian service, except that hymns were adapted towards Spiritualist principles, and the clairvoyance replaced a sermon. I wondered what I, or anyone else, had worried about. With about forty in the congregation, and five messages given, that was a one in eight chance of getting one yourself. If this service was average, in six months I would attend about fifty times, and might expect perhaps six messages on average, if all things were equal.

The next day, Sunday, the service was longer and contained a philosophical address before the clairvoyance. Sylvia Charlewood at SSC gave the last message to me.

“ I see you looking for peace, in old ruins, a Church or Abbey. I felt great peace, it was cool, water was nearby. (Yes) You are drawing in to yourself for peace, sometimes you cannot achieve it? (Yes) Are you connected with Wales? (No) Did you have a teacher or Professor, who was Welsh? (No) He was very enthusiastic, with a wisp of hair at the front, his head nodding up and down.” (1)

I had taken a long walk with my sister round the Dorset coastline the previous month. This had been an escape to peace because I was considering divorce from my wife. It was cool, and we rested in Church ruins by the sea. My form teacher at my Grammar School in the 1950's was Welsh, vaguely fitted the description,

and was quite friendly to me then, but we have had no contact since. Why would he bother to contact me?

On July 24th, Margaret Mead at SSC gave me my next message.

“ I can see a spirit policeman very clearly behind you. He is saying you are unhappy and in conflict.(No) You are considering taking the law in to your own hands, although you are law-abiding. (No) (2)

The medium was disappointed, and tried to get me to accept this communicator. I was unable to understand any of it. When I got home and told my wife about the failed message, she told me that her father, who I had never met, had been a Special Constable in the 1930's, and her mother had a photo of him in a police uniform. Her father had previously communicated through Ursula Roberts as a tank driver, as described in Chapter 1. The “conflict” could have related to my wife's attitude to Spiritualism, which she thought was condemned by the Bible. This caused arguments.

The third message to me was delivered by Janet Harris at SSC, on August 15th.

“ I have with me a relative of yours who was the first in the family to own a car. You travelled in it on a family outing. It was a Ford Prefect. Also with me is an uncle who drove for a living. And there is a lady who passed in

to Spirit in the last year. She tells me that you are retiring in to yourself too much now, get out more. She is concerned you are not doing the gardening now, and the marigolds are not growing properly.” (3)

I was able to understand all of this message. A deceased cousin named Sam was the first to own a car out of all my relatives. I checked with his brother Peter, who was working for the same Company as me, and he told me it was indeed a Ford Prefect. Myself and a brother travelled in it with Sam to attend a Court case in about 1954. An uncle, Bill, drove a coach for a living, and was very friendly with Sam. They had died at about the same time.

My mother died within the last year, and it was true that my wife had taken over the garden and I did no more on it, and the marigolds had shrivelled up.

As the medium selected me, an unknown, and all the information fitted well, this was quite promising. What would the odds be? If it was just luck, then an evidential message something like this would not be expected very often.

Janet Harris served the Church again on September 26th, and she gave me my fourth message. It was very evidential. Janet wanted a recipient in the area where I sat, who could understand a lady who passed over with dementia, or Alzheimer's. Then she asked who could understand a Pauline and a Gerald, on this

side of life? I was the only one to accept this, so she worked with me.

“Gerald has suffered a bad illness recently, perhaps a heart attack. The lady with me was always misplacing things, like putting slippers in the fridge. She had trouble with her carers, and would not let them help properly. She wanted to lock herself in her room. There was a fire. There has been family conflict for twenty years, she thinks you are capable of sorting it out. She would like to bang some heads together! The family made her go in to a Nursing Home, she did not want to and resisted. She gives a memory of baked potatoes in their jackets. She was physically active until near the end of her life, but her mind deteriorated earlier. You keep your life in separate compartments, but should integrate them. She gave you a brown leather wallet which you still have.” (4)

This message was extremely accurate, and I understood and said yes to it all. Some of the information matches up with the notes about my mother in Chapter 1.

My mother once misplaced her slippers in the oven, and misplaced money and objects frequently. She did have trouble with her carers, accused them of taking her money, and was awkward to deal with due to the dementia. She complained to me often that she was unable to lock her bedroom door when she lived in the flat. She was mobile until her last few months, but her

mind did deteriorate long before that. All her family, two sons and two daughters, had great difficulty persuading her that she had to go in to the Nursing Home. Perhaps a lady with dementia might be expected to behave in a similar way, so perhaps there were lucky guesses, a doubt is there.

Mother started a serious fire when she knocked over a candle, so that could fit the phrase "There was a fire".

My deceased brother was the cause of family conflict for many years, and mother would think this. His partner, still alive, is named Pauline, and I have a cousin named Gerald.

I do still use an old brown leather wallet, but I cannot remember how I acquired it, it could have been from mother.

It occurred to me that I knew all the information given, so could it have been "read" in some way from my mind? Or did it just happen to fit by chance? The Spiritualist explanation, that spirits, guides, and helpers organise things on the other side of life to pass messages through the medium, seemed less likely, although possible, so it was not disproved.

The following week, I had the opportunity of a private reading with the medium Geoff Hayward. He told me several accurate things about myself which was not survival evidence, but he said that he saw my father and mother together in the

Spirit World. He said that my father had had ear trouble which upset his balance, which was true, and he gave his correct name, George. He also said that my Mum's eyes were affected before her death, which was true, as I had to take her for an eye test and new glasses at that time.

Although mediums I had seen so far had appeared sincere and honest, with a caring attitude, I was still not intellectually convinced that discarnate spirits had yet communicated with me via a medium. It would be a big jump to go from validating evidence due to psychic reading, however it is achieved, to believe that spirits were telling the medium what to say. After all, Spiritualists say that we are spirits clothed in a physical body, so why cannot all spirits while living on Earth be able to communicate with each other to an extent "psychically"? Mediums are able to do this more effectively perhaps. If we all carry our memories and feelings, connected with us in some way, around with us, then Spirits on the "Other Side" are not necessary to explain mediumship.

Stronger evidence of survival would be provided if a significant amount of specific information claimed to be from deceased persons was not understood when it was given out by a medium, but when researched, was found to be true and accurate. If the recipient did not know the information, it obviously could not have been

read from him or her. Other theories then have to be considered. There are claims that there are “Akashic Records”, which contains all information if tapped in to. “Super-ESP” is another possible explanation one can read about.

Other forms of strong evidence would be signs of planned intelligence and long term commitment behind mediumistic messages, not just one-offs, and no, or little, false information being given to eliminate shrewd guessing. For example, if enough names are given out, the chances of one fitting increases, and the ones that do not fit can be glossed over or ignored.

Chapter 3: Stronger evidence of survival

At the end of October 1993, I invited my sister Rose and her husband Clive to a public clairvoyant evening, their first experience of mediumship. The medium, Marian Bishop, spoke to Rose, who was sitting between me and Clive.

“ I have a man with me who died of a stomach condition. He is saying ‘ A rose between two thorns’. I also have a lady with me, talking about a fire, and matches”. (5)

My brother, as described earlier, died of stomach cancer. Rose told me that he had used that expression when alive. My mother had set fire to her flat as also described earlier, when knocking over a candle lit by matches which I thought I had confiscated. This linked up interestingly with that message, or was it coincidence?

The next day, a medium from Stoke-on-Trent named Janet Hebblethwaite served the SSC. When she selected me for a message, I was unable to understand or recognise any of the information she gave. The medium insisted it was for me, and did not change it or give up.

“ I have a gentleman with me who was lame before passing over, he had a bad limp. He loved sport. His working environment was with cranes. There was a Social Club, with a football team, which he watched play. Papers are mentioned. And there was a telephone call

connected with this man in some way two weeks ago ”. (6)

I said no to everything she told me, which I had found happened rarely in the Church. However, next day it struck me that I had an uncle Joe, my father’s brother-in-law, who I had hardly known, when I was young. As it happened, one of his sons, Sam, was the relative who I had understood in a previous message by Janet Harris as the first in the family to own a car. Also as it happened, at the time I was working for the same Company as his other son, Peter. I had asked Peter to telephone Gerald, who was described in that same message as having had a bad illness, and ask whether this was the case, as they were in regular contact. I had not been in contact with Gerald for fifty years. Gerald confirmed that he had had a bad illness about a year ago.

I then checked out with Peter the information from the communicator who I thought might be his father. Peter said his father used to drive cranes at one time. He belonged to a Workingman’s Club with his father, it had a football Club, he played for that Club, and his father used to watch him play. His father sold local newspapers, as did my father, if that is the meaning of the papers reference.

I began to see how it was possible to grow to believe in Spiritualism. It was friendly, non-threatening, had a good philosophy for living, and now it appeared that there was some

significance behind the messages I had received so far. It would be easy to imagine a scenario as follows.

‘There really is a Spirit World, where we all go to after physical death, naturally, and unchanged. As spirits with a spiritual body, they are able, under some conditions, to be aware of what we are doing and thinking on Earth, and can communicate, particularly through mediums. If an individual on Earth is sufficiently interested and persistent in finding evidence of survival, those in the Spirit World will also take the trouble to try to provide it, bearing in mind the difficulty of doing so. In my case, those who wanted to help me in the Spirit World inspired and influenced me to visit the clairvoyant in 1985. This whetted my appetite. They knew I was a bit afraid and wary, so they led me gently towards the safe and reassuring CFPSS. My deceased father-in-law knew that I was having a bad marriage relationship with his daughter, made worse because of her dogmatic religious views which condemned Spiritualism. He spoke to me twice to try to prove his Spirit world to me, though I never met him and knew little about him, through mediums Ursula Roberts and Margaret Mead.

My cousin Sam, a forceful confident man, and my mother decided to contact me from the Spirit World to give me more evidence. Janet Harris managed to pass this on to me in the Church, and it was correct and evidential. When they

observed my scepticism, as I already knew the information, mother decided that she would have a real go at convincing me using the same medium. She gave as many facts about her later life as she could think of, and none were incorrect.

Someone in Spirit then inspired me to have a private reading with Geoff Hayward, knowing he is a very kind and genuine man who would further reassure me it was not at all evil or dangerous to look in to the subject. My mother and father tried to make themselves known through him, together, which he described, and gave the correct name of my father to convince me it was him. Other information about myself was given, and advice.

My brother then took the opportunity to speak from the Spirit World to my sister Rose, and husband Clive, because they were very friendly when he was alive. What he said was correct and understood. He had tried to speak to me in my CFPSS days through Sheila Webb, but I had not taken the message.

Because of my scepticism, and the six month trial period being nearly over, Spirit people decided that they would ask my uncle Joe to provide a message which I would not understand at the time, but would understand by inspiration later. Later they influenced my mind, to check it out with the only person able to validate it – my cousin Peter. They knew that he was available to

me, and would help, although he was a non-believer in the Spirit World.

Those in the Spirit World then thought that they had accepted the challenge and succeeded. They had given convincing evidence of survival, including when I had to research the information, then they waited to see what I would do next, as we have free will.’

Of course, I still doubted. That’s what doubters do! There could be another explanation I had not come across yet. The evidence and connections might not have been as significant as I thought. Perhaps it was all coincidence, as out of all the many receivers of messages from mediums some must fit well, we don’t hear about the failed messages.

On November 27th, I attended a service with my sister, Rose, and her daughter who wanted to know what it was all about in the Church. The medium said:

“ Does anyone know the name Bella, or Isobella? Rose put her hand up. It was her deceased mother-in-law’s name. She is saying that you have her ring. Rose’s daughter was actually wearing the ring mentioned. She’s telling me there is a birthday very soon. Bella’s son had a birthday the following week. (7)

There were no more messages for me during that six month trial period, but Tricia, who had introduced me to the Church, received one when

sat next to me at a December service. She had often told me that she would love her mother, who had been a Spiritualist, to come through a medium for her. The medium, Sheila Webb, described **“a red centrepiece on a table, two places set with a candle, and the name of Kathy.”** Tricia took the message as she understood it all.

Later, she told me that her mother’s name was Kathy, and they went out for a meal together just before her mother died. A red poinsettia was in the centre of the table, there was a candle lit, and two places were set.

“ She is telling me about a December birthday, a piano being played, lilies of the valley, passed over in February. (8)

Tricia told me after that her mother did pass over in February, she did love lilies of the valley and had lots of them in her garden, she played the piano a lot, and her birthday was on December 11th.

It was “as if” Spirit gave this message for a purpose. Tricia had introduced me to the Church, and she had been repaid by a comforting message just as the six months were ending. I had not received a single false message in that time, and evidence had all fitted together in a kind of natural progression.

Spiritualism seemed to be all about trying to find truth, it seemed. Scientific thought and rational thinking was allowed its place, along with the

general philosophy embodied in the Seven Principles.

My quest to try to disprove Spirit communication had failed so far. My next objective was to continue at times going to the Church, to see if more evidential messages would be forthcoming. Meanwhile, I would try out for myself other activities within Spiritualism where possible, to see what happened when a non-psychic tried it out for himself.

Chapter 4: More messages and readings

While I branched out and tried out for myself various activities allied to Spiritualism, I continued to occasionally attend services at different Churches as well as the original one in Swindon, and also had some private readings with mediums when the opportunities arose.

Janet Hebblethwaite, who had given me the evidence which I had to check out and found accurate the previous year, served the SSC again in January 1994. I booked a private reading with her. I don't think she recognised me.

“ You helped nurse a lady, now in Spirit, for a long time. She had difficulties with her eyesight near the end of her life, but this was not the reason for the caring. The lady is saying that she was surprised with how well you coped with things connected with her, better than she hoped for. She had treatment at home and at hospital, and medication was given periodically. You had to learn what to do, and how to solve problems for this lady. She is giving a fear out, of being out of her home. You have had a change of attitude lately, there is an excitement, an ambition is coming about. You have waited a long time to a visit to a place. It's come out of the blue, not planned. The visit is like a beginning, you will learn a lot, you will have a thirst to go to other places. I now have a man with me, he is giving

fruit trees in the garden, and a driving or car connection, not full-time. He is giving you support from Spirit.” (9)

The information about the lady fitted my mother very well. I took the “visit” as being an unexpected forthcoming mediumship training weekend in Swansea, which I had agreed to take part in, following attendance at the Church Open Circle. An old neighbour of mine had several fruit trees in his garden, and he did car valeting for a living, possibly part-time before retirement. I did not know how he died.

Just before the Training Course in Swansea took place, I had to visit London, and felt like having a reading at the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain (SAGB). I booked with a medium ,Shirley Smith. She asked my name, then prayed to Spirit.

“ There is a lady coming in with love, saying you have worries around you, but there will be an easing of the situation. She says she went over quickly and unexpectedly, after lots of restrictions, but she is now free. She kept her feelings to herself on Earth, but is saying she loved you, and shared a valuable and unique relationship with you. She is showing hands, why? I encourage you to lay hands on and heal. Coming in now is a gentleman, giving his name as George. He is giving the name of Wellington, and College also. He says that you have been in a teaching situation as well as

gaining information yourself. You have spiritual learning also, which is to be used, it will not be wasted. You need to move forward with courage to expand yourself. At times you receive guidance, take notice of what you get, sometimes you doubt it. Be true to yourself. I am shown the marguerite flower, white petals and golden centre, I am feeling spiritual unfolding for you. I see climbing, mountains, where is Everest? I am given Anapurna, hold this, it might mean something later on. You are having hearing problems, spiritually. A lady is coming in with a bad stomach, is it cancer? She says she is linked with three on Earth now, giving Ernie who sends his thoughts. John and Jack, and Mary. Not family. Jack wishes to be remembered.” (10)

The first part fitted my mother well. George was my father's name, we lived near a Wellington Street when I was young, and I used to take betting slips to a bookie's house there (illegally). My father sent me to a College Street School, and I studied later at The College, Swindon. I have done a small amount of teaching connected with my profession. I am a doubter. Some time later, plants were shown on a TV gardening programme, and it was said they originated in Anapurna, in the Himalayas. The lady with a bad stomach could have been my grandmother, mother's side, who I never met. Ernie was the name of her deceased son. The three on Earth link fitted, because she had two

remaining children and a daughter-in-law still living on earth.

In May 1994, I arranged a reading with a local medium, Shirley Townsend, who was said to work with Spirit , rather than psychically. She knew by now that I worked in science, and that I was searching “scientifically” for evidence about the existence of the Spirit World, but knew little else about me.

“ I asked Spirit earlier for a name to see if I was linked up, and they gave me a Rose in your family. You went in to further education among young me. You have a Charles in Spirit? I have a Mrs. White you knew when you were young. You have a Tom in the Spirit World. I am being given a special pen, I know you write up spiritual things as you are doing now, but are you writing up anything else at this time? Your mother is in the Spirit World. She is saying that you lacked a lot, and wished she could have done more. She is helping you from the Other Side. You and your mother remember a cat sticking it’s claws in and out of you. One piece of crockery was kept. You have links with Portsmouth, and sea links. Have you traced your family tree, I am given back to the 1600’s. A faulty plug or socket needs fixing, there may be a faulty connection. You had a nest of bees or wasps at your house? Did you have a near miss on your bike recently? You will either go, or you have been,

to somewhere very hot. Mrs White says that she has seen you doing something with shirts in your wardrobe recently. She is a wise woman. She is aware of a disagreement with your wife. Be aware of June 21st. Have you done something to windows in your house recently, something wrong with one, and the effect on the others? Your father wore dark rimmed glasses, looked like you, smoked Players, took snuff, wore brown shoes. Liked a drink, before you were born. He is right by you, I can see him, he's just like you. Oh, your face is changing to that of your father, looking like you but a bit older. It's uncanny, I have not really seen anything like this before.” (11)

Rose is my sister. I have a deceased uncle Charlie. A Mrs White I knew lived in the next street to us. A Tom is my brother-in-law's father. I had been presented with a special pen to commemorate my Company receiving the Queen's Award for Industry, and was in the process of writing a Project Report for this technology. When I was young, our cat would nestle inside my coat and stick it's claws in and out, sometimes painfully! My sister Rose did keep a serving dish belonging to my mother. Rose's husband lived with her in Portsmouth, and sailed from there with the Royal Navy. I had traced my family tree back to about 1830, but later traced back to the 1700's. After the reading, my wife switched on a shaver light in the bathroom, and it blew up with lots of sparks. This was the first

electrical problem in the house for years. We had a nest of wasps two years ago outside the house. A car had recently drove straight at me on my bike on the wrong side, I steered to the gutter and just missed it. I went to a hot Florida two years later, having forgotten this message by then. I had just moved short-sleeved shirts from one wardrobe to another for the summer. My wife thoroughly disapproved of my interest in the Spirit World. My carport had three old panes of discoloured plastic, one of which had broken. I had replaced them with one long piece. My father did take snuff often, and smoked. He looked rather like me.

A few days later at the Church, medium Heather Davies came to me.

“ I have a lady with me who had a walking stick for a long time. She had bad painful legs. She says she has thrown her stick away now. Leave the spade alone, don’t bother with gardening now. You have a George in spirit. A Tom in Spirit. I am given a birthday card you have just got, it is a postcard type with film on the front, and has a rose on it.” (12)

Mother did have bad legs and used a walking stick for much of her later life. I had stopped gardening, my wife had just started doing it instead. Father’s name is George, and Tom could be brother-in-law’s father. I had bought and delivered a birthday card with flowers on that day.

Two weeks later, a friend took me to a different Church in Swindon, Somerset Road, (SRC), where I was completely unknown. To my surprise, the medium Gerri March came to me with a message. This was my first visit, with about thirty people present.

“ I have a lady with me who is concerned about you worrying. She is saying that it was very distressing for you watching her before she passed over, but it was not as bad as it looked, she was getting ready for the Spirit World. She is very happy over there, and has friends better than family in some ways, and there is a lot behind that statement. She is your mother, quiet and a thinker, like yourself. Let it drift, don’t worry, external circumstances will control what happens.”(13)

I had been worried about where I was going in the investigation, and I and my mother had experienced family conflict caused by my brother, as described before.

On 19th June, 1994, I was introduced to Melksham Spiritualist Church for the first time. Lorraine Davies served a congregation of about forty. I felt a tingle round my head and neck and felt rather cold, causing me to wonder if it was connected to “Spirit” or not. She came to me with a long message.

“ There is a man, like a sergeant major on parade, his troops are in front of him, he is

telling them what to do, but he wasn't a bully at all, really. He's saying that you lack discipline. He's saying that the world would be a better place with conscription, and you would think that. There are times when you have to shout. You have memories and records of him. He is showing a medal, he was not one to boast about his medals, he says. You like reading, and once you get your nose in to a book you close down to everybody else and until you understand the book. You like good writers as well, and travel books. I have a Mum in Spirit, giving the name of Emily, and she talks about a row of houses where you lived, with neighbours on both sides, the people used to leave their doors open, and you use to call everyone Mr and Mrs. And did you go to a Grammar School? A man, very strict, with a short cane. Another teacher used to throw chalk. You have also had Religious Instruction, this has stood you well, the foundation stone. You have questioned it all since. You love old buildings too. Would you know a Cannon, or a Canon? (A Canon) He would like to prove life after death. You are interested in physical mediumship, but are not quite sure if it's the right thing to do. I see a man pulling a bell at a Church. I've still got this gentleman, sergeant major type, who is talking about discipline and all becoming as one, important that you remember him, and bring people together. Have you had a funeral

recently? The person has arrived, is happy and at peace.” (14)

I understood all of this, except the name Emily. I did think my father was a bit of a bully. He was awarded the Military medal during the First World War. I went to a Grammar School, the headmaster was strict and used a cane, and a teacher did throw chalk at pupils. There was a local C of E Vicar and Canon who was a good friend of the lady who first got me to join the CFPSS. He had been a member also I believe, and the reference to pulling a bell at Church could have referred to his Church. I had never before heard a reference to physical mediumship among the hundreds I had heard so far, but in fact I was very interested. However, I was not quite sure about it. Perhaps a bit of fear. I had that very day been reading a magazine from The Noah's Ark Society about the subject of physical mediumship.

The next message was at the Swindon Church, from Pat Pitcher.

“ A lady is with me who passed recently. She was reserved, but appreciated talking to you. She loved flowers. The name of Arthur. You can do healing. You have no confidence in this, but you are a good listener and people feel better after talking to you. Healers who can listen are badly needed.” (15)

It could have been my mother, she was reserved and loved flowers, but that could fit many. I did not understand the name Arthur.

In August 1994, I decided to apply to attend a training course at Arthur Findlay College at Stansted, which I had heard a lot about. I hoped to learn more about mediumship and how it was supposed to work. A lady name Margaret I knew from the Church asked if she could travel with me, so we made arrangements as we sat together at a service on the 27th. Derek Marney was the medium, and he came to me during the evening. **“ You are linked spiritually with the lady sitting next to you. Things seem down a bit for both of you lately, but it is not important. You are linked together to help each other. You have a scientific approach, you need to share your information with the lady to do good. You know that science is accepting the spiritual more and more now. There is a Chinese guide with you. Have you worn a uniform? Ah, he is a military man, putting a forage cap on your head. A Rose connected with him? Spirit side, going back a long way, a fruit and veg stall”. (16)**

Perhaps it was father again, or my brother who served in the Territorial Army. Rose could be my sister. My grandfather had once owned a greengrocer’s shop.

At Arthur Findlay College next month, Mary Duffy, a well-known medium, gave me a private reading.

“ They are showing a pendulum, swinging regularly, there is a lady laughing – there is not enough time. Almost all are thinking you are achieving more than they thought possible, but you must live as well.

The lady, who loved you, had a long illness , and is helping you to achieve now. You have the right people around you, but don’t overdo it. Meditate a little, your level of consciousness begins with meditation. You will start to feel you are on the right track. The present time is wonderful for you.

With you is a Buddhist monk, with saffron robes, he is very disciplined but gentle and kindly. He is giving you teachings. There is a vicar from your past, he will help you to speak. There is a nervousness, you can’t get the words out. He will reach out to give you confidence to express yourself. They will collaborate for you.

I am given Frank. There is a sharing of ideas with him, he is being impressed from Spirit. You are finding yourself. What has knocked your self-confidence? You are capable physically, but have no confidence to do it spiritually. Learn from everything and everybody.

I see water, calm water, a future with a new lease of life. Go to, or live near, water.

Somewhere near the coast.

You have a lot to do before you retire. You are giving a great deal to spiritual and psychic development. Your business life is separate, but you choose more and more now survival interests. You have managed to keep a balance. You have two helpers and the lady who loved you, they are content with your progress.

Your Dad is here, everyone you've known and loved are surprised you have turned to this, but the pendulum shows it is the right time, the situation is right, there is nothing to stop you. He is saying he was good at mental calculation, and is very interested in you. They are calling out son, do you have a son? Give a lot of love to your son. He is estranged from you at the moment, and will go on his own pathway differently from you, but later you will have more in common, and share interests more.

With you is Joe Benjamin from the past, a Cockney, a livewire medium.

I am given a name, unusual, a lady, is it Sandy? You are going to share a great deal, you have a lot in common.” (17)

Not much hard evidence was given, but it was mostly understood. I had by now tried out healing and message-giving in development groups. My mother did have a long illness, and “had come

through” as they say before. The vicar mentioned could have been the one given at the Melksham Church. I had just met a Frank at the course, and had talked to him. I was spending a lot of time now on this project.

My father was good at quick basic money calculations when he sold newspapers.

My son had largely isolated himself from me and my wife, due to our bad relationship and the bad atmosphere in the house, made worse because she disapproved strongly of my investigations. Much later, I helped him a lot when he bought a house after moving out. We were married in name only by now, and each thinking of divorce, but not openly.

I had not heard of Joe Benjamin at the time, but later I found that he once gave incredibly detailed survival evidence, the kind I was looking for.

I had just met a lady with a similar name, Cindy, in a message-giving development group, we were getting on very well, and she was a big influence on me.

Later I talked to a fellow student who claimed to be able to give readings from Spirit, and she offered to give me one outside the building in private.

“ I have a lady with me, she is full of love, and is saying you did the most for her. You had to do everything for her after her death. Your wife really disliked her, and wanted you just

for herself. The lady played a part in the dislike as well.

You are not suited to your wife, spiritually, and divorce is forecast. You will meet someone else, from the Church.

Names given are George, John, Peter. This lady, your mother, is full of emotion.

Your father is behind you as well. There is a gamekeeper with a shotgun.

I am given tin mines and cottages. Cornwall, did a brother live there?" (18)

I was the one to arrange the funeral, registration, will etc. my mother and my wife did not like each other. I did divorce eventually, and met and married a Church-goer whose mother had been a Spiritualist. Father's name is George. Peter could have been the cousin mentioned before.. Gamekeeper I could not place. My brother did live in a cottage once, and also lived in Cornwall.

Chapter 5: Is it them or me?

The following week, when I attended the SSC, my right ear tingled strongly and itched before the medium began the service. He gave me his last link.

“ I have a lady, passed in her nineties, looked that age. Everyone expected her to pass after her seventies, but she hung on and on with a long illness. She is giving the name of Alice. She is giving the name of Rose. Her face is very shrunken. She was quiet and reserved in the family, at home mostly. She is saying ‘my boy’. She is saying that Christmas is very significant to you , 2 or 3 days before. An April birthday, is it 23rd? You may think you are coming to the end of your life now and retiring soon, but you have a lot to do yet! Someone around you is saying one thing, and meaning another!” (19)

The description fitted my mother well. Alice is the name of my mother-in-law. Rose is my sister. I was born December 21st. My other sister Sylvia’s birthday is April 21st.

Another message was given to me at SSC on the 1st October, by Maureen Tearl.

“ I’m in love with Amy. Do you know an Amy? (No)

A man saying Battle of the Somme, 1914-1918 War. He is giving the names of George, and William. William was stern, you looked up to

him. They are saying you know what you should do, but are not doing it. They are watching and encouraging you to spiritually unfold, as a free spirit.” (20)

Father fought at the Somme and was awarded the Military medal. His name was George. William could have been uncle Bill, who had come through before. He was strong and drove a coach, so I looked up to him I suppose. I did not know ‘what I should be doing’.

The next week, Agnes Davies at the SRC came to me.

“ I have a military man, 5’10”, a dominating sergeant major type. He was very strict at home, and is pulling his shoulders back. I see him polishing shoes, would he have cleaned shoes, very particular? He is very strong, telling you to get on with it. Are you in a development group? Have you worked on the platform? He is pushing you hard, an unfolding white rose bud is shown. He is saying you are a bit soft. He did his duty, he says. He is not like you in temperament. He is holding the hand of a smaller, quiet lady, and drawing her in. She is very proud of you. She was not one to give you a good cuddle, but she is giving you one now. They are holding hands, right behind you. Your father, was he away from home a lot?” (21)

My father was about that height, and had come before as a sergeant major “type”. He did polish family shoes at one time.

On 23rd October, 1994, Anne Miles at SSC selected me for a message during the service.

“ Can you take a William, and a man with a limp?” (Yes)

A lady, showing an old black firegrate, giving out the only warmth in the house?

(Yes) The only love and concern you got came from her. You lived in a row of terraces, with a main road at the end. (Yes). There is a

railway connection with you, I’m being shown like models of engines. (Yes). There was a

railway bridge over the road near you? (Yes)

A pub, The Cricketers Arms. (Yes). You are interested in lots of things, but they are saying you should concentrate on one thing at a time.

You observe a lot, and are very interested in people psychologically. A lot of ladies are around you now. You should treat them all the same, they are telling me, in the way you approach them. You should come out of yourself, and mix more.” (22)

William (uncle Bill?) came again, and uncle Joe it seemed, with the limp. We lived in a row of terraces off of a main road, and I my first job was in the railway workshops. The pub as described was close to us, as was a railway bridge. The development groups which I had joined contained a lot more women than men.

I had recently began to experience strong facial tingles and tickles when doing Spiritual activities, like in meditation, during services, and in message-giving development groups. I wondered why this was happening now for the first time. I had met two married couples, and we had all worked together in various ways in groups, or Circles as they were called, to try to develop mediumship for ourselves, and learn all that we could about Spiritualism.

Before my next message, in November 1994, in the SSC, I again began to feel tingles and tickles all over my face. I supposed that a convinced Spiritualist would believe that it was a Spirit person drawing close to me, ready to deliver a message through the medium. I was unable to explain these sensations, which I had never known before. The medium, Moira Avis, came to me near the end of the service.

“ I have a gentleman with me, who believes that he has been making his presence known to you, trying to convince you of the reality of the Spirit World, for a long time. He is saying he is your father. He did not look in to this himself, but you are spreading your knowledge to others around you, it is of great value. You are blessed and helped, and having your patience tested. Do you know anyone who used to do fishing? And something about use and re-use, re-cycle?” (23)

My father had apparently communicated several times since 1993. The rest of this message was not understood.

In December 1994, Gerri March served the SRC, and gave me the following message after selecting me. I had strong facial tingles just before she spoke to me.

“ I have a lady in her nineties, very frail and small, it does not seem possible for such a small lady to have a son so much bigger. You looked after her for a long time with lots of love. The love is now being returned from her to you. Florence is with her. There is a man with her, military, wearing a uniform, looks like you but older, liked discipline. He had a very loud voice, but is changing in the Spirit World. He had a moustache. He is saying, at work you need to be firm, you are gentle but need to be harder at times. John, Jack, and James should have significance, or funny. The lady is saying that earlier this year you had to make a big decision, it was painful, but you are on the right pathway now.” (24)

Again a lady in her nineties, like my mother. Mother had shrunk and become very thin in her later years. I did my share of looking after her, for a long time. She had a sister, deceased, named Florence. The military man, because he had a moustache, could have been my cousin Sam who had come through before and had been an NCO in the Army. I had been told that there

was once a family tradition of using Christian names beginning with the letter J, and when I did family history research I found two Josephs, two Johns, and a Jesse.

The big decision could have related to me giving up on my marriage, and going ahead with this investigation despite my wife's opposition.

Another message was received soon after, on 20th January 1995 at SRC from Freda Murphy. My face was tingling again.

“ I have a man with me, was in the military, giving the name of George. He is saying you know what it is you should be doing, why are you not doing it? He is quite strict about it. He is saying you are not blowing your own trumpet enough.” (25)

My father this time, as his name is George. I never did know what I was supposed to be doing, why did the messages not tell me? This medium knew nothing about me and had not heard my father's name given at that Church.

Back to the SSC, and Dennis Jones was the medium. Before he came to me, I felt a bit sleepy, and then had hot tingly feelings travelling over my face. I had begun to associate this with a feeling that I might get a message, as had happened three times before.

“ A man in the R.A.F. , to do with flying. There is someone doing ground support for aircraft, I can see trolleys and things around.

Have you had a dream or ambition, like a re-examination to take? Go for this, the physical goes with the spiritual. You don't blow your own trumpet do you, but he is very capable, and is doing it. I have a lady, 5'-2", very thin, sharp features, of an older generation, on your mother's side. She is giving you support from Spirit. You have been supporting and helping someone the last few weeks, giving a lot of support.”(26)

I couldn't place the R.A.F. man, but I did work for a while on ground support for an R.A.F. Maintenance Unit. I was considering upgrading my professional MIM qualification to Chartered Engineer. I had been helping someone for a few weeks.

On the 5th March, Janet O'Shea served the SSC. Near the end of the service, I began to feel tickly tingles between my nose and lips. I also saw a kind of light halo behind the medium. I wondered if spirit people could identify themselves by the subtle differences in the tingles I could feel, providing they were there of course. I still wasn't convinced. She came to me.

“ I have a man with me aged 60-65, passed with a heart attack. He worked with his hands all his life, he says. He did not have much time to himself, was very busy. He was always putting an alternative view to you. He says you love walking, and get a lot of thoughts then, and he is with you. He is showing me a

book, he is a forceful man, and he says you should be getting on with it, you know what you should do. You are picking up a book, and putting it down again. He is saying you are critical, and analytical.” (27)

This fitted my father again. Was it a coincidence that soon after I had complained that I did not know what they were keep telling me to do, this message indicated it was something to do with a book. Was it me writing a book, from my diaries and notes?

Later that month, the SRC accepted me to be a trainee healer, which I had been practicing in circles. My wife and I had almost decided on divorce. On the 3rd April, I attended a spiritual evening with some circle friends in Wokingham. I had three readings there, but only one was very evidential.

“ They are giving me the name of Dorothy. A man, Second World war, three stripes. A man Jesse in Spirit. You have a big burden on you, a worry to deal with. You are stressed and tense over something. You have a circle around you, helping and supporting. These are new friends. Your old friends are not around you now, there is nothing in common. One particular lady you confide in, and she is helping you up to a point, but you have freewill, and have to do it yourself. You know what you should do. But it is difficult, and you are holding back. You have a lack of self-

confidence. At work, you won't hurt anyone by going for a better job, go for it." (28)

Dorothy was my wife's name. Her father did serve in the Second World War, as came through before. My grandfather, who I never met, was named Jesse. It was very difficult for me, sorting out whether to divorce or not. I had confided a lot in a friend, and she supported me and agreed that divorce would be the best for me and Dorothy.

At the SSC on 14th May, Geoff Hayward gave me a short message.

" I have a George in Spirit. He smoked a lot, he says, and passed with a bad chest. He did not look after himself. He is showing me roses growing over a path. He was observant. You like walking in the country, he is with you there. He has been helping you. Edward or Ted?" (29)

Father's name is George again. I did not understand Edward or Ted.

A further message at the SSC was delivered by Maureen Flynn on the 27th May.

" I have a lady, a mother, in Spirit, saying you were a good son. There was a strong bond between you she says, and she is proud of you. Who is Hilda with her? Was she like a mother to you? There is a man with you, in a First World War uniform, he's very erect and smart. He is showing medals. He is saying he

carried over problems from the war for a long time until he passed. Not old was he, 50's? You've been digging in to things lately. He's showing old photos and things. The medals are in the right place now aren't they. Send out healing thoughts to Lesley.” (30)

A Hilda was a landlady who looked after me when I first left home. Father was awarded the M.M. as said before, and although he sold them all years ago, my brother got a replacement set for his son to keep. We had been tracing his war history and looking at some photos of him. Lesley was a spiritual friend.

On 11th June, Alan Thomas served the SSC, and selected me for my next message.

“ Someone in Spirit was in the R.A.F. There is a man behind you, looks like you but a little thinner in the face. He is showing medals. He was proud of them. He stooped over a bit. He passed with a chest condition, bad breathing? You do a lot of writing. There is a lady with lots of love for you, she says it seemed to take for ever for her to pass over. She did not believe in this, thought it was a load of rubbish. You see lights, don't you? Drawing boards are shown me. A little dog is with you, brown and white? There is an Eric, and a John, from Spirit, some time back where you used to make things. A Maurice is mentioned. Eric went just like that?” (31)

I did not understand the R.A.F. connection, or the Eric and John connections. The rest I could make sense of. Father with medals again. Mother taking ages to pass over. I see a light “halo” behind mediums sometimes. I did technical drawing years ago. My wife had a brown and white chihuahua. My other brother is a Maurice.

On the 23rd July, before a service taken at SSC by Anne Miles, my right cheek was tingling, which had not happened at meetings lately. Anne asked if anyone knew a train driver named William, way back. I said yes, because it was the Christian name of the long deceased husband of my friend, Joan Jefferies, who had introduced me to the CFPSS. He had been a train driver, and my deceased brother was an engine fireman and knew him, so there was a link.

“ He had a metal lunchbox with a blue top. Name of Faulkner associated with this man. They are saying that you need to speak up more, you are in the right. They are saying there is a lady around you, she think she’s right, but you are right, and you should stick to what you know. She is dominating. I hope she’s not here! (No!) Oh good, but you do need to go your own way. They are giving me the Sinatra song, I’ll do it my way.” (32)

My friend Joan confirmed that her husband William’s lunchbox did have a blue top. Faulkner could not be placed. My wife was sure she was right about her religion, and was dogmatic about

it. The song was a favourite of, and was sung by, my deceased brother Raymond.

Robert Fitzell at SSC gave me my next message, after my face was tingling strongly during the service.

“ A lady with me, spent some time at the end of her life in a Nursing home. She is saying remember how it was earlier in her life, not the end. She has been trying to make her presence known to you. Not all that long passed over. She says she has been helping you. There was some trouble in the Nursing Home.” (33)

All the above fitted my mother yet again.

Chapter 6: In to the physical

On 1st September 1995, I joined the Noah's Ark Society, which was devoted to the safe practice of physical mediumship. I was now practicing message-giving and healing in Circles, doing trainee healing at Somerset Road, was beginning to practice physical mediumship locally, and now I had joined the specialist national group the NAS as well, in which you could attend dark séances, and seminars. There followed a period when I experienced various physical phenomena in seances, but I continued to attend Church at times.

In March 1996, Agnes Davies gave me a message at SRC.

“ I have a military man with me, very strict and disciplined, and not apologising for that. He brought you up very strictly. This man is a relative, and is patting you on the back. He is helping you a lot. Do you heal? A man in a white robe is helping you, a higher guide, there is lots of love around you. A kindly lady , a relative, did not stand any nonsense or sob stories, be careful what you believe. Besides healing, there is something else you want to do spiritually. There's lots of love and support. You're not retiring yet, there's a lot more for you to do.” (34)

My father once again, it seems. My mother might have been warning me about my wife, from whom

I was now separated within the house. I wanted to experience all I could in physical mediumship, and had started out investigating.

At the SRC on 31st May, my face was tingling again, and the medium Myfanwy Jones came to me.

“ Your father and mother are with you, and Charlie. They are saying you want to do something badly, go ahead and do it, don’t hold back.” (35)

I had a deceased uncle Charlie who I got on well with. I had recently met a lady named Rosemary, who had taken part in healing and other Circle activities, and we had talked about sitting in a new Circle together. We had meditated, and I had seen her face changing and blanking out as I looked at her. Physical and trance mediumship development together had been discussed, and I was thinking of doing so. Rosemary was thinking of leaving her present Circle.

Alan Thomas was serving the SSC on 2nd June, and Rosemary had asked me to attend, although I had not intended to. She said she would be there with her boyfriend. I sat on my own.

“ Who is moving? Are there worries about it? You have to move, it is necessary to move your location. Did a lady send you here tonight, or persuade you to come? On the material, who is Cynthia? And Graham? Has he had health

problems lately? Could you pass it on to get checked out? Jack, cancer in the head, face eaten away, connected with the lady who sent you here. You deal a lot with Spirit, there is a big question mark over your head. You don't know what to do, but it will be solved in your sleep state, dreams, you'll wake up and find the answer. A man with one eye is with me, operations on the other? A Susan on the material? You are opening and closing a book.” (36)

I was in the process of selling my house so that I could provide half of it's value to my wife as part of the divorce settlement, and looking at options for a smaller house. Rosemary had asked me to attend. Cynthia (or Cindy as she was known to me) was a very good friend who had helped my development. Graham was a work colleague who had been ill. Jack with cancer could not be understood, nor the man with one eye. A Susan was connected with my Circle activities. Opening and closing a book, and writing, had been said before. I was still recording everything I was doing.

On June 7th, Cissie Howden gave me a message in the SRC.

“ A man is with me you knew from Chapel, Methodist. You used to laugh at him a bit, he was like a lay preacher. A man with a violin is playing ‘O for the wings of a dove.’ You have been down in the dumps lately, and feeling

lonely, there is no need to hide it, be honest.”

(37)

I had attended a Methodist Church for many years as a child. We did laugh a bit at a male Church member who was the pianist, and sometimes thumped the keys hard and got a bit carried away when he held meetings. I had been very lonely as the divorce was being settled, and had confided this to a few friends at work.

As though my prayers were answered, two of my female colleagues fixed me up with a blind date, who was named Joanna. This was to lead to my second marriage. I was told that she had no car, liked home life and did not go out much, was quite involved with a C of E Church, and did not mind that I was much older than her. Her mother had been a Spiritualist at the Somerset Road Church, and had died two years ago. I rang her, and we arranged to attend the Somerset Road Church for our first date, on July 12th. We got on well.

Next day, I attended the SSC, served this time by Steve Pinnington. I received a message.

“ A very tall man, very strong in the arms, is with me. A bad pain in the stomach region. There are others who are tall, with him. He’s saying you should go with your gut feelings, you get these. He was a deep thinker, like you, and has gone on, Spirit side. He’s very pleased with you, you are relaxed and not getting

wound up. He had a similar problem, but you are handling it better than he did. At work, there are lots of changes, but don't make any moves, let others do this and it will work out for you.” (38)

My brother Raymond fitted the description. He died with colon cancer. He was also divorced, but there was lots of aggro about it, not with civilised agreement as in my case. My department at work was closed a year later, and most were in panic, trying to get new jobs, but I relaxed and waited until a good redundancy offer was made to me.

On 9th August, Joanna came to SRC with me, and she received a message from Sylvia Thorne.

“ A lady with me. Passed with a heart attack. She wore glasses. You have a brother. Be sure you read a piece of paper before signing it.” (39)

Jo's mother passed with a heart attack, and she wore glasses. She had a brother, John.

Freda Murphy served the same Church on 30th August, and gave me a message.

“ You have a worry, but are on the right pathway now. You do healing? Are you in a Circle? They are saying you are thinking of going in to a Circle again, you have potential. It's Norman isn't it? There is another Norman in Spirit. You like a little tipple. Your health is good. (40)

I knew two Normans in Spirit.

Peter Symonds then gave me a message at SRC on 6th September. I had settled in to a relationship with Joanna. I wondered whether I would still get messages from my usual family communicants, or whether Joanna might be included, now we were together.

“ You have a worry to sort out. You are on the right pathway now, but be patient. You are a very deep thinker, concerned about the whole scheme of things, but get yourself, and those around you, right. Doris and Rose are given. Two years ago was your lowest point, but it’s better now. Keep going with Spirit, they say. A lady with a very bad stomach is with me also.”
(41)

I had applied to re-mortgage to pay off my wife, and was waiting for the offer. Rose is my sister, but I could not place the Doris. Two years ago was the time when I had first began moves to get divorced. My mother and grandmother had bad stomachs before their deaths.

Shirley Olive then served the SRC on 22nd November.

“ I have with me Winnie, a very small lady who loved you, and a brother. A Thomas as well. You should be developing for philosophy. She says you’re not doing enough, get off your backside! They’re telling me, you’ve seen trumpets flying about in a deep Circle. Be

patient, don't expect everything in five minutes! You doubt a lot, a doubting Thomas, and analyzing, just go with the flow and accept it! The're giving me the name of Norman."

(42)

Winnie is the name of a deceased cousin, my mother was very small, and I have a deceased brother. Thomas could have been brother-in-laws father. I had seen trumpets flying about with no apparent means of support at NAS séances. My name is Norman, but she could have known my name as I knew her slightly.

Next message was from Sobat Ali Din at SRC on 21st February, 1997.

" I have with me a lady with a walking stick. She was stooped right over, but she has thrown her stick away now. She had a bad stomach. She says you love music. There are changes around you now, she is happy for you, it's all going to work out, you will be happy. Come out more, don't be so serious. She pats you on your shoulder, right behind you." (43)

My mother stooped badly near her death, had a walking stick, and suffered from a bad stomach. Changes could have referred to my new relationship, and a marriage date set for the next month.

Jean Hole then gave me a message on May 9th at SRC.

“You have lots of energy, you give out a lot, you have been healing for the last 5 or 6 weeks a lady close to you. A lady and a man from Spirit are with you. The man is helping you. There is a teacher who respects you. Your life is unfolding like a book, many changes. I have someone with me who sat regularly here at the front in the same seat, liked the colour green, was about 5 feet tall.”(44)

I had been doing healing in the Church.

Joanna’s mother had always sat in the same seat in the front row, was about 5 feet tall, and did like the colour green.

Next it was Reg Chapman, on the 23rd May, to give me a message at SRC.

**“ I have a man, 5 foot ten, with hair like you, fatter in the face, paunch round his middle. He passed with a heart attack. You are a healer, hands on or head. They want you to continue and work to become a more open channel. You are holding back, and feel like giving it up. Don’t. Carry on. There is a man close to you with a bad heart, reassure him it’s O.K.”
(45)**

My father did get fatter in the face and had a big paunch just before he died, and he was about that height. I was considering giving up healing in the Church, because although I had passed the C17 course run by the SNU for healing theory, and had practiced healing for over a year, I was unable to really believe that I was a medium

through which the Spirit World passed the energies to heal the patient. My father-in-law had a suspect bad heart, and I told him not to worry about it, although he did not believe in Spirit.

Alison Bird was the next medium at SRC to give me a message, on 6th June.

“ Your father is with you. You have had a very bad two years, but now it’s changed for the good. A good sum of money is coming your way. Is there Scottish ancestry? You have seen your mother. You know Susan, in the physical. You have to find out things for yourself. I see three candles, do you have Roman Catholic connections?” (46)

My new wife Joanna sold her house and we pooled the proceeds. She moved in with me, as I was able to pay off my mortgage with redundancy money and it was a bigger house. I could not place the three candles. Her maiden name was McDonald, which was probably Scottish in origin.

On the 5th July, Derek Thompson in the SSC Church came to me.

“ Your job, work, is not working out as you expected? A Tom in Spirit. Your father is jabbing me in the back. I have a man who repaired shoes and boots, leather, a craftsman. You have lost a ring. Have you been to Glastonbury, there is a guide behind you, he will help you. Do you dowse? You are quite

good at it too? Does Nelson mean anything to you? Watch your money, you should be more careful with it. You have a bunch of keys, with long ones on it.” (47)

I had just taken redundancy and early retirement, and was considering being a househusband to look after my new wife’s children while she went out to work, and possibly back to her profession of nursing. My father had been very friendly with a master bootmaker and repairer who traded near to us when I was young. Losing a ring might mean divorce, which had just happened to me. Some friends from a football team long ago called me Nelson, because I normally wore glasses but did not while playing football, as one eye had practically perfect vision. I did have long keys on a bunch, but so might most people.

Next was Derek Marney at the SSC, on July 27th.
“ The thinker. For the last four weeks you have been thinking about a problem. It will be solved. A Robert or Bob, he has more hair than you he jokingly says. Elsie. There was a shop. Look around there. There was a passing four years ago. She had lots of love for you. She says you see mist. She is here, and you see with her help. There has been some loneliness, but that will be solved. Do you work in the open now? (No, but gardening?) That’s what they mean, and have you planted rose bushes lately?” (48)

I did not place Robert, and I only knew an Elsie in the physical, a friend. My grandparents did have a shop. My mother passed over four and a half years ago. When I see face changes when in a Circle, it resembles mist as the sharpness is lost of the outline. I had planted two rose bushes recently.

Chapter 7: A new life

Maureen Tearl, at the SSC on the 17th August 1997, asked the congregation if they understood a man in policeman's uniform, London connections, and Holland. I put my hand up, the only one, because my ex father-in-law had come through before as a policeman, he came from London, and his surname was Holland.

“There will be some stresses later on.

Something very significant happened to you 25 years ago. A May anniversary. A lady , a fine singer. A small white dog is with the man.”

(49)

I married the communicator's daughter in September 1972, almost exactly 25 years. She had once owned a small mainly white dog. The May date and the fine singer I did not understand. My ex father-in-law apparently acknowledged the divorce by coming through for the last time, perhaps.

A period followed when I believed that I had received more than enough messages purported to be from Spirit, and I attended Church more rarely. I was building my new marriage, and was still investigating physical mediumship in various ways. Despite this, I continued to receive the occasional message.

Mary Duffy gave my wife this message on 14th June 1998 when we attended the SRC.

“ There are three in Spirit for you. They are behind you, they say you are in hospital visiting and healing, giving love and support, and do you like poppies? She is showing me red poppies and marguerites.” (50)

Joanna worked as a nurse, and her mother loved poppies, though her father, still alive, thought they were weeds. Poppies and marguerites happened to feature on the wallpaper pattern in her mother’s house when she lived with her husband.

On 21st August 1998, Agnes Davies came to me when I took my wife to the SRC again.

“ A man, tall, father’s side, and a lady 5 foot four. He is dressed smartly, he’s aware it’s difficult to talk to someone close to you, but you need to get it sorted out. The lady is of slight build, never used makeup, except special occasions. She was confused at the end. (Then she spoke to Joanna). You’re the same. And you worry about the future too much. Live one day at t time.” (51)

The relationship between my son and my new wife was a problem at home. My mother never used makeup to my knowledge, neither did my wife, who was a worrier. My mother had a confused mind at the end.

I received a message from Connie Butler when I attended the SRC, on my own, on 16th October 1998.

“ You are having hearing problems. You’ve felt your father’s presence, and he’s about you. You’re on a different pathway now, less pressure, you’ve finally lightened up. He’s saying that, before, you were handcuffed, but you know you’re all right now. Your mother is here, also giving her love to you, she had a routine every week, and is proud of what you’ve done. Is there a celebration coming up to do with a sister? It’s not only you, it’s others in the family. She says you’re a silly boy, not being nasty, you care a lot don’t you, but you’re always doubting, like me! They had to open me up with a tin-opener. You are young in heart, and always will be.” (52)

I had been ‘handcuffed’ unhappily to my former wife. It was my sister’s special surprise birthday party the next day, when unknown to her, her relations and some friends were due to celebrate it in a hotel where it was set up. I am a doubter, as the medium claimed she had been.

At the SSC on 14th February 1999, Phyllis Rumney gave me my latest message.

I have a military gentleman with me. Erect bearing, and wearing an old uniform. Passed a long time ago. There is a problem around books or papers.” (53)

Fitted father again.

On 30th April, Sharon Cound ay SSC came to me. **“ Spirit’s telling me that you’re a little down in the dumps at the moment, but you came here to to get peace, and it’s working. I have a Scotsman with me, dressed in a kilt and all that they wear, smiling and laughing. He’s saying cheer up, and have a laugh, no need to feel so down. Have you worked with Spirit? He’s saying he’s helping you, when you meditate focus on his brooch, whatever they call it. You come here for comfort, but in your past you had nowhere to go. Lately, you have not linked in very much, you should quieten down and meditate, if only five minutes. Are you interested in philosophy, and find you are giving it out to people sometimes? You’re being inspired. This Scotsman, I asked him who he is, and he said that’s my business! Your shoelaces, have they broken recently. Remember to cheer up, he said. You’ve been helping a lot of people lately. (54)**

I had been grumpy about problems with my step-daughter. I have no idea who the Scotsman is, but my wife’s family name was McDonald and is probably of Scottish origin. A bootlace had recently broken as it happened.

Reg Chapman, at SRC on September 1st, said that he had been to told to go to me.

“You are in a void at he moment, there are two roads, whichever you choose it will be all

right. I have a tall figure, a military man, your father, supporting you. You have a guide, a very black man, who is with me. An April anniversary you will understand. There is a man close to you with stomach problems, give him healing. I am shown an airmail letter, and going abroad on an aircraft.”(55)

My father was described once again correctly as a tall military man. My sister’s birthday was April 21st. An unexpected holiday in Florida occurred the next year.

At SSC again on 11th November 2000, my face itched and tingled, which had not happened to me lately, before Joyce Withall came to me with a message.

“ You are big-hearted, and a sense of humour has got you through, it is gentle after a breakup, you have started a new path. Your father is saying ‘Pack up your troubles in an old kit bag’. Your intuition is correct now.” (56)

My father usually comes through as a military man, and the song mentioned was popular in World War 1 . Coincidentally, father stored soot in kitbags when he swept chimneys in later life.

Wendy Palmer was the next to give me a message, on 28th April 2001, at SRC.

“ I have with me a man, well-built, working in a factory, he had a bad accident. A younger family member is angry about something, a

resentment against you, he is male. Are you unsure what to do with yourself, for your work? Do your eyes itch, have you had them checked lately? Do you drive a car? Have you checked the tyres lately, seriously they are saying you need to check, you're having a soft bumpy ride.” (57)

The man described fitted my brother, who lost some fingers in a cutter in a factory which led to amputation of his hand . My son was resentful against me and my new wife, as he did not get on with her. My eyes do itch sometimes, and a tyre was soft when checked.

The next message was on the 26th May 2000 in SSC, from Andy Nolan.

“ Is your mother in the Spirit World, I see your mother behind you. She looked quite like you. She had a routine, always gave you tea about five. She is saying, why haven't you done what I asked? She is worried, you have a medical condition, it's only minor, but you should get it sorted out. Are you getting healing? Try it. Do you know an Elsie, this side? She is travelling somewhere. I'm given green, green, grass. A Tom as well, this side? Has he got a problem? He's getting on a bit, isn't he. Pain in his toes? Does he drink?” (58)

Mother did give me tea most days about five when I lived with her, when I came home from work. I had a friend Elsie, who was due to go to France soon after. A Tom is my brother-in-law,

but he had no problem when I asked him. I was still puzzled about the several times I had been asked 'why haven't you done what I asked' when it was not obvious to me what it was .

There was then a long gap before my next message, at SSC on 2nd February, 2002, as I was attending Church less often. The medium was Marilyn Webb.

“ There has been a parting of the ways. There is the letter M in the family. Someone is sad around you, but will improve. You are healing just by being there. A man with me, you helped him before his death. A strong tall man is helping you, lots of power. An Arthur on other side, Peter on this side.”(59)

My divorce, and marrying a M for McDonald, could account for part of this. My stepdaughter was having serious problems. The name Arthur had been given before but not recognised, but Peter could have been my cousin again. I helped my father-in-law just before his death.

Diane Orchard was the next medium to give me a message at SRC, 8th March 2002.

“ Do you have a ring? They say, take it off. Do you get tingles on your face and ears? I have a man with me, with bad stomach pain, died from it.” (60)

Divorce from the ring off reference? Tingles on the face often happens to me when in Church, as

said before. My brother died from colon cancer, very painful.

On 6th September, Sylvia Thorne at SRC gave me the next message. I had experienced facial tingles earlier.

“ Your father has passed. Are you still writing? He’s saying, just write it down, do you feel inspired? Do you know your guides and helpers? He’s saying you are too analytical . He was not in to this, did not believe. He’s close to you, from the other side.”
(61)

Linda Abbott was the medium at SRC on 2nd November 2002, and gave me this message.

“ I have a brother with me, not like you, chalk and cheese! You are an old soul, learned all your lessons, you listen well, have good healing powers, you are much more patient now, and it’s time to help others, not time to go over yet. There will be a celebration in one or two weeks time.” (62)

My brother, as described earlier, was totally different to me and I did not get on with him. I attended my son’s degree presentation ceremony ten days later.

My next Church message was by Chris Pugh on 3rd January 2003 at SRC. My head was itching and tingling before the service, so I thought once

again that I had a good chance of a message. He selected me.

“ Your father is standing behind you. He was a strong character, but did not express his emotions to you. A Bill or William, a stubborn strong man, is with him. Do you have links with Scotland? There are hospital links around you. There is a problem around you, you can deal with it in two ways. You will make the right decision, don’t worry , it will work itself out. A Mary, on this side? A Peter, about 43, who will help you financially. A lady, stout in the middle, apron folded over. The name of George is given me.” (63)

Father and his name was given again. Uncle Bill again. Probably a reference to my stepdaughter’s problems . My wife was working as a nurse in a hospital. Mary I did not understand. The stout lady I could place, but there was no other evidence with it. Peter could have been my cousin again. My wife’s ancestry probably Scottish, by her surname.

Chapter 8: My new family

There followed a period when there were communications apparently from my new wife's deceased father and mother.

On 21st June 2003, David Appleton, who was local and known to me, was at SSC and selected me for a message. He knew nothing about my relatives.

“ I have a man with me, was in engineering. He was not just shop floor, but higher, where they were making things. They're telling me you have had toothache, I've got it, it aches. There's a lady, 5'-4", hair down low, very slim, in the garden. Have you been cutting a hedge or branches? He's been with you, helping and watching. I'm getting chest pains, like a heart attack, from him. But he says he found it hard to breathe before that, his body was closing down. You were quite close to him. He's talking about a song, 'Put another nickel in, in the nickleodeon' does this mean anything to you? (64)

My father-in-law was an engineer who became a planner in the management of a factory. I had been suffering from toothache, and it had been extracted the previous day. My father-in-law did have breathing problems before his death, could not whistle as he liked to, and an autopsy found that he had motor neurone disease. The song meant nothing to me, except that he knew I

played a keyboard a lot, and there is a line with 'music,music, music' in it.

Marilyn Webb gave me a message at SSC on 16th August 2003. The left side of my face itched and tingled, as I thought of Mum and Dad, and my father-in-law and his wife, hoping they might come through the medium.

“ I have a quiet man with me, worked all his life, not rewarded , but more so over there. He’s saying a young boy came in to your life, he had a hard upbringing, you’ve made a difference and supported him. You are cynical, but lots of love is around you, and you need to open up more. Names of Mary and Robert given. A man is also here, a broken arm in plaster, giving name of Michael. I don’t like giving guides, but a very strong Chinese man is with you. You have been in a circle. You’ve a lot more to do yet. Do you ever wonder why you’re here? You don’t want to come back here again do you? (65)

It could have been my father-in-law again, especially as the young boy he mentioned could have been his grandson , my stepson. Mary I did not place, but Robert may have been my wife’s ex-husband’s name.

On 6th September, my wife Joanna came to the SSC with me, and Geoff Hayward was the medium. He came to Joanna near the end of the service.

“ I have a lady with me, is your mother in Spirit? She is lively, a good communicator, and took a lot of responsibility at home. She is giving the name of John. Your Mum is worried about John, you are the capable one, to keep an eye on him. You have improved your financial situation to ensure the future. Do you have any Scottish connections? I have a lady with a broad Scottish accent. Did your mother have any interest in the Scottish connection? You don’t have a Scottish accent. Can I take it your Scottish connections were further back, on your father’s side? Also a Mrs Shaw you will find on your father’s side. I am being given a Scottish name, McDonald.” (66)

Joanna has a brother named John. Her maiden name was McDonald.

On 14th February, a medium at SSC whose name I failed to record said to me:

“Your father and mother are with me. Do you do healing? Your Dad wants to change, and be more like you.” (67)

At a service at the SSC on 1st May 2004, the right side of my face itched and tingled all evening. Shirley Olive selected me for a message.

“ I have Cissie Howden with me. I want to go to the gentleman with the polished head, that is how she would speak! (Laughter). A young girl, disabled, is with her. She is helping to

look after her. You have a William in Spirit. Your television is playing up lately. They know what's going on.” (68)

Cissie was well known to me from the Somerset Road Church, and she had a good sense of humour. The medium served that Church and knew her, and might have remembered seeing me there, in fact she gave me a message there in 1996. My friend Cindy had a deceased disabled daughter, who I believe was known to the medium when she served the Swindon Church. William could have been Uncle Bill again. My TV picture had been bad, due to a faulty Sky dish.

Mervyn Quinn selected me for a message at SSC on 22nd May 2004.

“ I have a man who passed with a stroke. You need some uplifting, you're a bit low. Have you been decorating? A lady is with me, short, wearing glasses, with bad painful legs. I feel it myself, take it away! They have been laughing at your efforts with the wallpaper. Is there another room to do? June will be better for you, a depression will be lifted. At Christmas, do you have a family get together? They will be there with you.” (69)

The man with a stroke was not understood, or feeling low. The lady could have been mother or mother-in-law. I had been stripping wallpaper with a steamer, ready for wall plastering. This was completed in June. My brother and sisters

and families always meet up together at one pub, at Christmas.

On 21st August 2004, Marilyn Webb at SSC selected me for a message.

“ You have a tribe of Red Indians with you, in full regalia. I don’t give guides as a rule. Your father is with me, he is very proud of what you’ve done in the last year. You’ve stopped writing though haven’t you? Poetry is it? It will come back, you have to deal with your Earth life. You have done healing, that’s on hold also isn’t it? Your father has respect for you, but you wouldn’t want to get on his wrong side.” (70)

I had stopped writing poems for the local newspaper, and about spiritual activities. Healing had also stopped.

Again at SSC, on 28th August 2004 Lorna Woods selected me.

“ A man is with me, bad breathing in the chest area, very active earlier in his life and didn’t mope around, saying you had a meeting of minds with him. He gave you a ring. He is showing a box, a jewellery box. He is saying there is another ring in it as well. There was loneliness. You lived in several houses. Was there a lilac tree where you grew up?” (71)

My father-in-law had breathing problems as said before, and we got on well with him. I respected

his ability to make anything with his hands, and although he was an atheist we discussed survival. I have lived in several houses, and a lilac tree grew in one of them. He gave me and his daughter two rings which had belonged to his wife, and we had them altered for our wedding rings.

On 21st May 2005, Richard Holmes at SSC came to me with a message.

“ Do you understand a monk with you? There is someone here with lots of letters after his name, PH D’s etc.? He’s saying you need to expand your knowledge. You need to see things more in black and white, you make it too complicated. Your grandfather, mother’s side, was an educated man.” (72)

Nothing was understood in this message. My grandfather was a farm labourer’s son with little education.

David Appleton at SSC delivered the next message on 10th December 2005.

“ A man is with you, in his 70’s, you had a friendship, to do with engineering or physics. He’s getting closer now, he had a little moustache. To show he’s here, he says your left leg has a problem, pain or stiffness? You are doing a lot of research, not to make money, and reading books. He had breathing problems, and slowly everything was closing down, a bit at a time. You get tingles down

your face and on your head. You know, they are coming close to you, from Spirit. There are more, your mother. She is saying there were five sisters. Does August 9th mean anything? And May or Mave?" (73)

My father-in-law died in his 70's, and he was an engineer which we had in common. He had a small moustache when I knew him. I did have a stiff left leg, as a result pf too much jogging. Research and reading this subject was still ongoing as for years. There were four sisters including my mother, as far as I knew. I had a neighbour once, named May.

The final message to the time of writing was given by Sharon Spence, on 28th January 2006 at SSC.

" You've been doing a lot of decorating lately. I have a man with me, 5'-9 or 10, balding, not much hair in sides, showing medals on his chest, more than one. There is another man, fatherly, loved his garden, had a difficulty walking, and was very practical. There is someone else, older than you, is it an uncle, you fell out with him. You don't know where you are at the moment, you are starting to look at a new project, this project will have two sides to it, will go two ways. Also a lady, not tall, she used to feed you up well and spoil you. I am shown a fire bucket with sand in it. You like old films. I am shown camps, like

Army, or Butlin's. You need to see a doctor, but you won't." (74)

I had been renovating the house. The man showing medals was father's usual way, and he was as described. The other man could be my father-in-law as described. My mother suffered a bad fire, which could explain the fire bucket. I should have seen a doctor about my left knee, but hadn't bothered. I had been studying physical mediumship again, and had joined the Zerdin Fellowship. I was also thinking of writing up properly all my messages and their meaning, as they seemed to be coming to a natural end.

I felt that the time had come to evaluate the investigation and present it in a readable form.

Chapter 9: What did it mean?

Now was the time for the summary of results from the messages and readings for myself and close family, from July 3rd 1993 to 28th January 2006.

42 messages and readings from the Swindon Devizes Road Spiritualist Church.

23 messages from Somerset Road Spiritualist Church.

1 message from Melksham Spiritualist Church.

1 private reading at the SAGB.

1 private reading by Shirley Townsend, a local medium.

1 private reading by Mary Duffy at Arthur Findlay College.

1 private reading at AFC by a student medium.

Communicators

Mother 28 times.

Father. 26 times.

Ex father-in-law twice

Second wife's father, 6 times.

Second wife's mother, 4 times.

William/ Uncle Bill.

My brother Raymond, 4 times

Uncle Joe, twice.

Bella, my sister's mother-in-law, once.

Uncle Charlie, twice.

Aunt Florence, once.

Grandfather Jesse, once.
Hilda, a former landlady of mine, once.
A cousin Winnie, once.
A cousin Sam, twice.
Cissie Howden, once.
Boot repairer (Les Hoyle)once.

Evidence of long-term communication

Mother: She was described many times as old or in the nineties, having Nursing Home conditions, Alzheimer conditions, trouble with carers, and her last years' relationship with me.

Father: He was described many times as a military man, medals, World War 1, strong and liking discipline.

Names given

Very few incorrect, but not many given..
George was given correctly many times for father. Although George was a common name for that era, an incorrect name was never given for him. It was his second name, which we called him in his later years.
Mother's name was never given.
Brother Raymond's name was never given.

Final thoughts

It would be easy to look back and believe that Spirit was behind the messages, with a long term

plan to convince me, and others, of their existence. Psychic reading of the recipient is always a factor in any message, but the one message which had to be checked out and was found true, and the long list of messages from mother and father from different mediums giving similar information each time, point to an intelligent plan.

Professor David Fontana, in his excellent book “Is there an afterlife”, (2005, O Books, ISBN 1 903816 90 4)), points out that there is no scientific laboratory evidence to support the alternative explanations to survival for various phenomena. The mental medium, when giving messages, has variously been described as “reading the aura”, using telepathy, psychic reading, ESP, SuperESP, or Akashic records. Fontana, as a distinguished Professor of Psychology and former Vice-President of the Society for Psychical Research, gave his reasoned arguments why he preferred the explanation that evidential information came from discarnate sources, rather than otherwise.

On the other hand, a doubter can see that seemingly very easy evidential information to give, like surnames, unusual Christian names, addresses, are very rarely given. Why not, when, often, lots of unwanted advice and generalities is supposedly given by communicators?

Again, not one of the many messages I have heard tells us anything about what the communicators actually do all day in the Spirit World. Accounts I have researched in books, by “direct voice”, or by trance addresses, are not at all convincing and seem like wish-fulfilment, of dreams of how they would like it to be on Earth.

The totally sceptical interpretation is hard to accept. There is just too much, too many “coincidences” and “lucky guesses”, to believe that there is nothing either from the psychic or from Spirit in the totality of the investigation.

The dedication of all those who run the Churches and Centres, and the mediums, who work so hard for little financial reward, has to be admired. I would like to thank them all for keeping it going, in this age of materialism and reluctance to “serve”.

What do I think? I would like to believe that Spirit did all this for my benefit and comfort, and to convince me and others I contact that they are really there, trying their best to give evidence, although it is very difficult to get a clear channel through the mediums. The philosophy and way of life is very appealing.

If “they” are there, it seems that we are not meant to know what it is really like, and what you do all day with your spiritual body. It is

ambiguous, probably with a good reason. We never stop learning, there is always more, in this vast subject of Spiritualism and Survivalism. We will have to wait and see.
We can only hope. Even doubters hope!

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