

GARY MANNION EXPOSURE: THE DEBATE CONTINUES

OUR REPORT on the videoing by Banyan Retreat of a Gary Mannion “physical séance” that revealed him to be cheating (PN July 2016) and the accompanying images were focused on the evidence.

These showed clearly that the “phenomena” – from breezes and trumpet levitations to the “materialisation” of “ectoplasm” and a full-bodied “spirit” wandering around the circle – were all produced by him and not by disembodied spirit entities.

This was devastating news for the many who had sat with him in the past and been convinced that what they were experiencing was genuine. They included three of his circle leaders who gave *Psychic News* their astonished reactions to the exposure.

While Mannion has been uncharacteristically quiet, issuing a brief statement claiming that the spirit team were “in control at all times” – presumably meaning they produced the fake phenomena – a promised bigger statement has yet to appear.

Banyan Retreat’s decision to record the séance covertly has raised a number of questions, some of which have been received directly by *Psychic News* via letter or email, while others have been posted on social media, notably on our Facebook pages and elsewhere.

To avoid repetition, we are combining them into this short list:

Was Gary Mannion the first physical medium you have filmed?

Why was he chosen?

Were you not aware of the risks to the medium of using infrared?

Will you now film all other physical mediums who sit for Banyan Retreat?

And will you make all those videos public, as you have done with the Mannion tape?

Nic Whitham, manager and co-owner of Banyan Retreat, had already agreed to provide *Psychic News* with the answers to these questions for this issue and they are contained in the following article in which he explains the background to the recording and the decisions that were taken.

You will also find on the subsequent pages comments from others who have experienced Mannion’s “physical mediumship”, including Minister David Bruton, president of the Spiritualists’ National Union, as well as statements from those who continue to support Mannion, such as the Wallacia Development Centre in Australia where he has given many demonstrations, though these appear to have stopped.

There will be many more questions, and hopefully answers, too, in the coming months. *Psychic News* will continue to ensure that the subject is given the coverage it deserves.



Steven Siu and Nic Whitham, co-owners of Banyan Retreat in Kent

SPIRIT MESSAGE CONFIRMED NO ONE WOULD BE INJURED IF WE FILMED 'PHYSICAL' SÉANCE

NIC WHITHAM reveals the events that led up to Banyan Retreat’s sensational exposure of Gary Mannion

MY co-owner and co-founder of Banyan Retreat, Steven Siu, and I decided in July last year to invite Gary Mannion to visit us and demonstrate his physical mediumship ability. We had heard many good things about his work and we wanted an opportunity to witness it for ourselves. Gary’s initial response was that we would have to wait until next year, as his diary was so busy. He later came back with a date in late July 2016, which was then brought forward to May 2016.

Gary was no stranger to Banyan Retreat as he had worked here several years earlier with his psychic surgery. In November 2015 I was contacted by Adam (Gary’s partner) who requested contact details for the event so that he could promote it on Gary’s website.

I explained to him that this was to be



Gary's jaw moving to make the ectoplasm appear as though it was moving.

Having seen real ectoplasm with a couple of genuine mediums we both know exactly how it should appear – there is not normally a need for the medium to move at all. This left us extremely concerned, as we were not comfortable with any part of the evening's events.

Some people have asked how Gary managed to

slip out of the binds. Although he uses very strong cable ties they are fastened over the top of his onesie at the thickest part of his forearm, which I presume allows him to slide his wrist to the cable tie, slide out the onesie and just slip out of the binding. Similarly, with his leg binds, they are just fastened around the thickest part of his calf allowing them to slide down with minimal effort to his ankles.

There have been occasions where Gary has stopped the séance after five minutes or so and told the sitters they will need to try again in 10 minutes' time. I suspect on these occasions he was not able to slip out of the bind and needed a second attempt.

Cable ties should be fastened fairly tightly around the wrist with just enough room to slide your finger through. This accommodates any swelling that occurs during the sitting. With the legs, the cable tie should be fairly tight around the ankles, with a secondary tie holding the first to the chair.

Not sure what to do about our May booking with Gary, we decided to leave things for a little while and make some further enquiries with people who have sat with him before. The picture began to build and there was more negative feedback than positive. We had thought about filming Gary but were undecided as to whether or not that was something we wanted to do.

A couple of weeks later, and completely taken by surprise, we received a spirit communication through a reputable medium which said that nobody would be injured if we were to go ahead with recording the event.

Sourcing the appropriate camera, we were set to go. The events which took

place [see: GaryFiles.co.uk] during and after that night were detailed in last month's *Psychic News* ["Video shows 'physical medium' Gary Mannion faking phenomena", PN July 2016].

Taking some positive action from this situation, it has come to our attention that, with some people, there appears to be a serious lack of understanding regarding physical mediumship and ectoplasm. This is especially true when it comes to situations involving video recording, working in lighted conditions and the use of infrared cameras.

Some people either do not know their history or have forgotten about the great mediums of the past who have been injured by exposure to light, such as Helen Duncan, Gordon Higginson, Alec Harris, Estelle Roberts and Leslie Flint, to name but a few.

Infrared light, even though it cannot be seen by the naked eye as it is outside the visual spectrum, is just as dangerous to a physical medium as daylight. The medium needs to work progressively in light to allow the ectoplasm to become accustomed to greater degrees of illumination. There is no fast track to this process.

In order to help with general education and give a better understanding of our pioneers' achievements, we have set up a Facebook group called "Spiritual Ambassadors" and an associated website, spiritualambassadors.co.uk, where information regarding pioneers and others will be posted. Each month we plan to focus on two individuals who have contributed significantly to this movement.

We are currently working in conjunction with the spirit world to explore the possibility of recording all physical mediumship events here at Banyan Retreat. One of the avenues we are currently investigating is the use of thermal imaging. However, for the safety of the medium, we will not be pushed or coerced into creating and imposing man-made conditions on how any form of mediumship unfolds.

We will, in the fullness of time, share with everyone our progress in this matter.

Unlike infrared cameras and night vision viewers, thermal imaging does not emit any infrared light or any other form of energy into the space being filmed. Thermal imaging is a method of improving visibility of objects in a completely dark environment with no ambient light by detecting the objects' infrared radiation (such as body heat) and creating an image based on that information.

an experimental sitting. We were not promoting it publicly; it was purely an opportunity for us to assess Gary's work with a view to future bookings if all went well.

We invited a small group of sitters who are familiar with séances and the protocol adhered to at Banyan Retreat. The invitation pointed out that this was an experimental sitting and in no way were we endorsing his work at that time.

In an attempt to get us to promote the séance, Gary invited us to attend a public séance in Brentwood, Essex, in February this year. We turned up on the day as requested, met with a couple of people we already knew who had arranged to attend and the evening started.

During the sitting, Steven was dragged on his chair to the middle of the room. Later I was asked to stand in the middle of the room for healing (although the attempt at diagnosing a problem was unsuccessful). The unsuspecting sitters who had been singled out were left standing in the middle of the room to find their own way back to their seats. Chairs that had been dragged out were also left for the sitters to move back by themselves.

Steven and I have attended between 250 and 300 séances over the past 10 years or so. You learn to sense the presence of the spirit and most of the time, with mediums we sit with regularly, we know who the communicators are even before they speak, just by sensing their presence and energy.

When sitting with Gary there was absolutely no sense of a presence. His demonstration of ectoplasm was the final confirmation that something was seriously wrong with what was taking place. When the red light was used, I could clearly see

MANNION'S 'SPIRIT TEAM' CLAIMS IT WAS IN CONTROL

THE Wallacia Development Centre published a long and rambling commentary about the Banyan Retreat séance on its Facebook page on 21 June. Titled, "Who is in control during a séance?" it is said to be a "statement by a spirit team, whose way of working is questioned".

In other words, this is a statement from Mannion's own "spirit team", which presumably means it was dictated through him "in trance".

It's far too long and confusing to publish here but can be viewed in full on the Wallacia or the *Psychic News* Facebook pages. It includes this statement:

"Do understand, we gave the medium the impression not to sit and the location of the camera [at Banyan Retreat] but, again, we were given the signal to go ahead with permission from the medium, so we worked the best way we could and worked with what is our limitation.

"We have worked with your technology if and when we have chosen to and we

have been happy with the results, but we do that at a time and place when we dictate and the time and energy is right to do so.

"The best argument we can give you with your statement going forward is, we worked with the situation which was provided to us. Under different circumstances we would have attempted to work differently. Just because your equipment cannot pick up everything we were attempting, does not mean fraud is automatically the result, as has been demonstrated by other mediums throughout the years.

"In regards to the night in question, yes, we used the medium as our blueprint, as the base to work from. Indeed, if we had not gone through it this way, it would have manifested in another way, in a more harmful way, for the medium's body...

"In regards to the night in question, that was a great opportunity for us to experiment to try something different and, indeed, many who sat there that night were worked with and they felt our side of life and their loved ones and they experienced phenomena.

"Yes, we used the medium as a blueprint, as a base to extract that phenomena, but what they experienced for

themselves was real.

"As we have spoken earlier, it's a new experience for us, as we normally work with the ectoplasm and it was a very different and strange experience. When we work that way we work with the medium's mind and the personality. And, indeed, we are happy with that experiment and I know from your side of life you do not understand it and are unhappy, which we hope to correct, but we were happy with what we were able to achieve."

Editor's comment:

However one chooses to interpret it, this is a blatant confession of fraud. It's either fraud on the part of the "medium" or fraud on the part of the "spirit team" working with him. Those who paid money to experience his "physical mediumship" were expecting the real thing, not cheating by the medium or the manipulation of him by his spirit team to simulate genuine phenomena.

The video tells a different story. If Mannion was really under spirit control, why did he need to use his hands to feel his way around the darkened room?

Only the most gullible will be taken in by such a ludicrous statement.



GARY MANNION EXPOSURE

SNU PRESIDENT MINISTER DAVID BRUTON CAUTIONS CHURCHES ABOUT PHYSICAL SÉANCES ... AND TELLS OF HIS OWN EXPERIENCE WITH GARY MANNION

I WATCHED with interest after the worldwide exposure via the internet of the "medium" Gary Mannion as a fraud, following the recently held "physical séance" at which he was covertly filmed. Infrared technology was used at Banyan Retreat to reveal what he was actually doing when the lights went out.

Personally, I have no sympathy for Mannion following this exposure. He has acted to dupe and manipulate honest people for personal gain and profit. These are not the acts of a true Spiritualist.

My concern is for the wider Movement and the untold damage caused to the reputation of Spiritualism internationally and to the many people, including myself, who have been conned by this man.

Last year, I received an invitation from the president of Stourbridge Church to sit

in a physical séance with Mannion. Over the last 10 years or so I have sat with six or seven different physical mediums and am always ready to experience the work of different mediums in the field.

The séance was conducted in the upper room at the church and there must have been 30 or so people present on the evening. It was conducted in the dark, with loud music and the occasional use of red light, which conforms to the pattern I have experienced at other séances.

During the sitting, I was asked to stand in the middle of the circle to receive healing from the "guide". I certainly felt the touch of a hand and a presence standing behind me. But it is all but impossible, when subjected to the sensory deprivation of this type of séance, to assess fully what is actually experienced.

Towards the end of the meeting, I personally felt quite ill; it could have been the hot atmosphere of the room with so many people crammed closely together that caused this feeling. But in nearly 40 years in Spiritualism and as a medium, I have never before come out of an experience of working with the spirit world and felt this way.

The Spiritualists' National Union (SNU), some 18 months ago, issued a protocol for the conduct of physical séances at The Arthur Findlay College (AFC) and, as a result, no dark séances are held there without being recorded using infrared cameras.

At the time, this decision was considered in some quarters to be highly damaging to the Movement and the SNU.

The AFC and I, as its principal, received a considerable amount of vitriolic comment on social media from many quarters. However, I should also put on record the many letters and emails I have received, fully supporting this policy as an attempt to move the debate and practice forward.

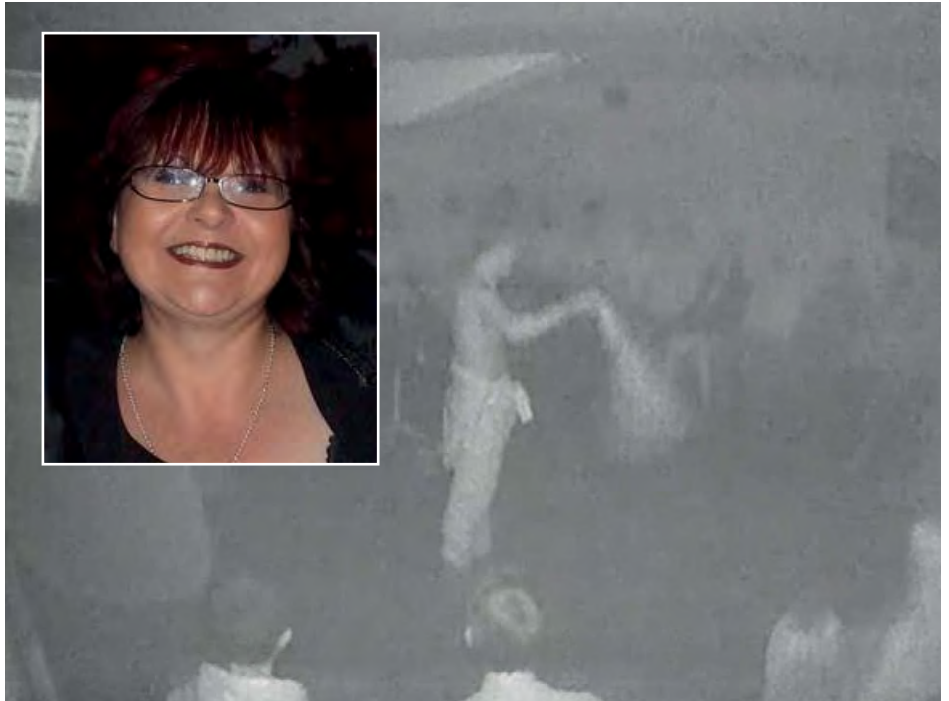
Infrared cameras have been used in physical séances since the early 1930s with a view to applying a scientific approach to investigating Spiritualism. I find myself sceptical of the howls of protest from those who claim it causes potential damage to the medium.

I am proud to call myself a Spiritualist and I have no wish to conduct my chosen religion in the dark. If we are honest and true and have nothing to hide, surely the Movement should embrace new and old technology to test and develop the evidence the spirit world provides.

If physical mediumship cannot meet this challenge, perhaps it is time to consign its practice to history and remove once and for all the potential for fraud and fraudsters who do untold damage to Spiritualism and its reputation in a sceptical world.

As president of the SNU, I would urge seekers for truth everywhere, and particularly our churches, to take great care in the future when engaging mediums to conduct public or private physical séances.

I fully accept we cannot tar everybody with the same brush. But we need to put in place appropriate checks, when working with this aspect of mediumship, which will protect the innocent and further advance the understanding of the true message of Spiritualism.



MEDIUM JAY GAGE RECOUNTS HOW SHE WAS DUPED BY 'MATERIALISED SPIRIT'

I'M DEVASTATED AND ANGRY TO REALISE MANNION WAS POSING AS MY DEAD FATHER

I AM A medium and run my own spiritual development and training business – Inspiral – as well as a not-for-profit spiritual centre, The Haven, in Grays, Essex.

I like to think I am fairly astute, having spent most of my adult time dealing with people on both sides of life!

I employed Mannion to work on one occasion, on a paranormal night, where his attitude and behaviour were not those that we would expect from an Inspiral group leader. He also demonstrated psychic surgery at the Haven on two occasions, but on the whole I did not take to him on a personal level, and I did not offer him any further work.

However, earlier this year I began to hear quite astonishing reports about his physical séances and, because of my interest in physical mediumship, I attended twice.

The first time, he was fastened to the chair using cable ties (which I now know can be doctored to make them easy to slip off) and was sitting in a small tent. There were several items scattered around the room, including a small table, trumpet and balls.

Sitters were searched at the door to the

séance room and were told that they were not to leave without strict permission.

We were seated on a semi-circle of chairs surrounding the tent. Some people were asked to move to different seats without explanation.

Soon after the séance commenced, the tent began to shake violently. This was quite unnerving – even to someone with my experience of Spirit. I felt something was not right – it felt hostile and angry. I was concerned as to what was in the tent with Gary. Of course, I now realise the shaking was for dramatic effect to conceal the very earthbound process of removing his restraints and leaving the tent.

Objects started to move

After some more loud singing, the evening began in earnest. There was some appropriately spiritual waffle from one of Gary's "spirit team" who had a preposterous Irish accent, and then objects started to move around the room and luminous items were paraded in front of the sitters.

I then experienced a "spirit man" standing in front of me. He appeared to be naked – certainly his top half – and he took my hand and ran it over his chest and belly.

He felt cool to the touch and a bit slimy.

The second séance was far more damaging to me. The process was exactly as above, but then a disembodied voice asked for:

William – I have a William here or Bill (my father)

He wants to talk to Jackie (my real name)

He says he died two weeks before his birthday (true)

Your birthday is the 12th of April (true)

He wants to give you something to add to your collection.

I was then aware of someone standing in front of me. They took both my hands and I was under the impression that it was my Dad. I was extremely emotional, as it was a recent loss, and I idolised my father, so to have him here with me once again was beyond my wildest dreams.

My Dad then stroked my hair and face, and touched my knees ("he wants to give you healing"). I am a wheelchair user so do have pain in my legs.

He then took both my hands and placed a small object into them, pressing my hands back together over the object, and the voice told me it was to add to my collection and not to look until I got outside.

I was sobbing, and indeed several other sitters were also in tears as it was such a moving experience. The séance then closed as before.

Outside of the séance room, I looked in my hand, and there was the tiniest white feather. I have a strong connection with feathers, as there were several strange

occurrences with them during the time of my Dad's passing. So it was a totally appropriate gift. I took it home very carefully, and had it made into a pendant.

I now know that it was Gary posing as my father and I am devastated. Not a day has gone by without my thinking about the incident, and feeling so angry at being cheated in such a cruel way.

Gary could have got the information given by "Spirit" from Facebook, which I am very active on, and I also think that he targeted me specifically (no-one else had anything like this in either séance I attended) as I have a large network of clients and contacts in the spiritual arena, due to running my business and working as a medium.

When I was sent the video clips of Gary cheating I immediately engaged him in a Facebook chat – the content of which is attached (see panel). As you can see, he admits to having left the tent at the Banyan, but not at the séance I attended! He was very evasive and I had to become quite repetitive in my questioning to get him to reply truthfully.

I am so angry and disgusted with Gary's behaviour. I do not want to see this man giving séances again – he is a fraud and a very, very cruel fraud: preying on others to boost his own ego.

I am also horrified at the damage he has done to the Movement as a whole and to physical mediumship in particular. It is disgusting that he feels this was appropriate. Money and ego. Hateful.

This (uncorrected) Facebook dialogue between Jay Ann Gage and Gary Mannion took place on 15 June:

Jay Ann Gage

did you leave the tent?

Gary Mannion

in your séance no

Jay Ann Gage

in other séances?

Gary Mannion

only at the banyan and as of yet I do not know why

Jay Ann Gage

is this video not at the place I went to?

Gary Mannion

No

Jay Ann Gage

So you left the tent at the banyan and did the other things these tapes show? you soooo didn't need to do this you know – ppl are impressed by you enough without you having to resort to cheating

Gary Mannion

I did not cheat I maintain spirit stayed in control why I do not know yet but I aim to find out

Jay Ann Gage

Simply answer this for me please – did you get out of the tent and do the things shown in the videos at banyan whether you know why or not

Gary Mannion

According to the video spirit took me out of the tent at the banyan séance as of yet I do not know why

Jay Ann Gage

Ok so the videos are genuine thats all I need to know

Gary Mannion

Apparently I haven't seen them

Jay Ann Gage

<http://www.garyfiles.co.uk/>



Inge Crosson (Photo: Facebook)

'INACCURACIES AND LACK OF SAYS INGE CROSSON, MANNION'S AUSTRALIAN CIRCLE LEADER WHO RUNS THE WALLACIA DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

THIS open letter [posted on *Psychic News'* Facebook pages on 13 July] addresses inaccuracies and lack of journalistic fairness in your recent article on Gary Mannion.

Aside from the use of excerpts from an unauthorised and unauthenticated video, you also used unverified statements given by former disgruntled associates.

Some points to bring to your attention: you neglected to contact Mannion's current circle leader of two years, or solicit a response from his home circle in Australia.

You failed to demonstrate basic professional impartiality for not only the benefit of your readers, but also for the sake of fundamental truth and ethics.

For example, Mannion was made aware

of the cameras. The stated event Michael [Mayo] refers to happened at my centre and I can assure you that the statement given and published by your magazine was incorrect.

Christine Parkin also presented a somewhat selective interpretation of events which unfolded here in Australia between Gary and herself.

My question to you is why would your magazine selectively report a one-sided view?

Editor's response to Inge Crosson: You have clearly lost sight of – or are choosing to ignore – the incriminating evidence against Mannion that the Banyan Retreat video provides. As well

EDUCATION IS THE ANSWER

HOW very, very sad. My article, "Understanding Physical Mediumship", was written to encourage other circles to sit and develop what, to my mind, is the most evidential form of mediumship of all. But there, in the same issue of *Psychic News*, is the exposure of deliberate fraud by a so-called physical medium.

I have never sat with Mannion, so cannot comment directly on his case. However, physical mediumship is more open to accusations of fraud than any other, because of the nature of the evidence produced.

To argue that all séances should be conducted in light shows little understanding of the nature of physical phenomena. It would be preferable, of course, but physical energy is very light sensitive and few, if any, séances could be conducted in a lighted room.

Fortunately, we are living in a free society, but there have always been the gullible who will be susceptible to fraud. To my mind education of how and why physical mediumship works is a far better way to bring fraud under control.

Fraud has always happened in all walks of life and always will. Education will not prevent it, but will certainly help to curtail it.

– Freddie Giddings

ACCENT ON TRANCE

THE questions being asked about Gary Mannion's "physical mediumship" inevitably cast doubts on his other abilities, notably his trance work.

The same spirit team who are said to be responsible for the production of physical phenomena also communicate through him when he is "entranced" at other times.

Is it possible that these "channeled" entities are as fake as the phenomena filmed at Banyan Retreat?

If so, it would require him to be adept at speaking in different voices and accents. Those who have met him may view that as an unlikely ability. But one of those discussing the exposure video on the garyfiles.co.uk forum (which has almost 100 posts) has drawn attention to Mannion's show business dreams.

His profile can be viewed at starnow.com/garymannion# where he is listed in its talent directory as "Actor, Model" based in Australia.

He reveals that he studied acting in high school and college and "attended drama clubs for as long as I can remember". Mannion also refers to a BBC TV documentary about his psychic work, adding: "I would love to get more involved in TV, theatre, etc."

He then lists the accents he can do:



“ I would love to get more involved in TV, theatre, etc ”

Irish, UK Cockney, UK English, UK Posh. Coincidentally, these happen to equate rather well with those of some members of his "spirit team".

JOURNALISTIC FAIRNESS' IN PN'S REPORT

as reporting on that, *Psychic News* went to great lengths to question those who have been closely connected with Mannion and his "physical mediumship" over the years, to seek their responses to what had been exposed.

Describing the video as "unauthorised and unauthenticated" is irrelevant. Why don't you offer an opinion on the deliberate cheating that it shows?

You assure us that Michael Mayo's statement – a reference to him finding the medium's chair empty during a séance – is incorrect. How do you know? What is your evidence?

And you suggest that Christine Parkin's interpretation of events was "somewhat selective". She was not asked for a blow-by-blow account of why she ceased being circle leader in Australia. Our focus was on her reaction to the video and what it showed.

As for your claim that *Psychic News* is selectively reporting a one-sided view,

it must surely be obvious to our readers that this is not the case. As well as drawing attention to the Banyan Retreat's recording, we went out of our way to report the views of three circle leaders. And, most importantly, I contacted Gary Mannion via his Facebook page and invited him, on 15 June, to give his version of events.

I did not hear back from him until 23 June when he said: "Heya, sorry for not coming back to you sooner. I will give a response in due course. At the moment I am focused on dealing with all the life [sic - lies?], defamation and harassment I have received."

I have not heard from him since. Our columns are open to him and to you, Inge, or anyone else who has a useful contribution to make about the Banyan Retreat séance and what the video depicts. That was the focus of our July issue report and it continues to be our main concern.

No amount of unwarranted allegations about unfairness or unspecified inaccuracies in our reporting of these events will change that.

“ Our columns are open to anyone who has a useful contribution to make about the Banyan Retreat séance and what the video depicts ”