

# Modesty of a miracle worker

Both feted and hated for his powers, the flamboyant psychic will today hold a mass hands-on session

**M**ATTHEW MANNING greets me wearing a canary yellow shirt, Versace-style waistcoat and pony tail. He likes to smoke heavily, drink, stay up until 3am and could be mistaken for a celebrity hairdresser. Outside his part Elizabethan house in Suffolk, he has a Bentley and camp bust of Caesar. Inside he has life-sized china leopards, photographs of himself with Sir David Frost and Uri Geller and five cats. Pure showbiz?

Matthew, 41, is the world-famous healer who has effected miracle cures simply by laying his hands on sick people.

His book, *No Faith Required*, is full of testimonies: from people who've had progressive brain damage reversed, "incurable" cancer arrested and the Marquis of Tavistock who suffered the loss of sight in one eye after a stroke but regained 80 per cent vision after treatment. Matthew sees 14 patients a day, five days a week for £50 a session and is booked up until 1998.

Today he's running workshops and demonstrating his gift at the Mind Body Spirit Festival. "The exhibition is going to shut down commercially for 15 minutes," he explains. "Then we're going to do a mass healing where up to 5,000 people will link hands and send out healing thoughts." He lights yet another cigarette and drinks his strong coffee.

He treats individually only those with life-threatening conditions, making children a priority. Others attend his healing circles. He's selective about his patients: legally in Britain healers are not allowed to treat sexually transmitted diseases, animals and children without parental consent.

Nor does he treat psychiatric illness. "I've never had any success with it. I don't know why," says Matthew. "After 23 years, I still don't understand the mechanics of what I'm doing."

He tends to be down to earth about what he does, never using the words miracle or cure. "Sadly I can't heal about a third of the people I see," he says. "I still don't know why it will work with one person and not another. But as a healer, my role is as much to help somebody die in peace and dignity, without pain."

For eight years until 1982, he submitted himself to rigorous scientific experiments in laboratories in Britain and America, participating in tests with some of the world's leading scientists, including Britain's Nobel Prize-winning physicist Professor Brian Josephson. Matthew demonstrated his skills with medical doctors who examined his subjects before and after treatment.

He proved how he could influence another person's brainwave patterns, the growth of seeds in test tubes and the clotting of blood in sealed jars. How he could even retard the growth of cancer cells — sometimes even killing them. It was also discovered that, when healing, Matthew produces a unique brainwave



**Matthew Manning**  
HEALER

**The Caroline Phillips**

Interview

pattern originating from a cerebral area previously considered dormant.

One experiment — on the impact of healing on intractable pain, carried out at London's Royal Free Hospital in 1980 — came into being through Palace intervention. It was the result of a dinner for 20 people, including Mountbatten and Angus Ogilvy, to which Prince Philip had invited Matthew in 1979. "The evening was for discussing the paranormal and what positive uses it could be put to," says Matthew.

When healing, Matthew becomes attuned to his patient by placing his hands on the person's body. Then energy starts to flow through him and he may experience a tingling sensation. Where he places his hands is based on intuition often guided by symbolic or literal pictures that appear in his head. His breathing and heart rate slow down, and the brain patterns of patient and healer become synchronised.

Matthew doesn't believe that faith is necessary. "I was an atheist," he says. "I'd been raised believing in God as an old man on a cloud who punished and judged, but was also loving and compassionate. I couldn't reconcile the two."

But his work over the last two decades has given him a belief. "Where does the healing energy come from? I'm certain there's something out there: a God, great spirit, universal love, essential life force or whatever."

I was in an accident 15 years ago and have had treatment, latterly physiotherapy, ever since for a bad back. So Matthew did healing on me. He placed his hot-as-radiator hands on me and played at disco decibel level something called Kitaro music, which included what sounded like water going down a plug. I sat trying to be spiritual and mystical, whilst feeling crabby. The treatment lasted half an hour.

**A**FTERWARDS I felt chirpy, but still had my physical symptoms. "You may find nothing has changed or that it has had an immediate permanent effect," says Matthew. "Or the problem could disappear in three days, for example, and then return. I'm just starting a process." It hasn't improved but I remain on the soft side of sceptical. He seems so genuine and nice that I'd try his healing again.

Matthew, the son of an architect, and product of a middle class upbringing, was raised in Cambridge. He discovered his gift when he was 11-years-old,

following an outbreak of poltergeist activity in his home. "Knives started flying through the air. Ornaments and vases began moving. Once my father saw a coat hanger float up the stairs in a loop like a boomerang."

In desperation his father called upon Professor George Owen, at Cambridge University, the world expert on poltergeists. "Owen assured them that the movement wasn't due to demonic intervention or possession," he says. "Then he started to investigate me scientifically."

Matthew went on to make his mark at Oakham School in Rutland. "Bunk beds in the dormitory would rise in the air and move around like dogdams." The school sent him, aged 15, to a psychiatrist in Leicester. "What else could they do?" he asks. "Shortly afterwards, a pile of dinner plates appeared out of nowhere during a lesson, dropped from the ceiling and shattered over the floor."

He discovered, by accident, that the way to control the poltergeist activity was through the technique of automatic writing, often in languages and scripts unknown to him. "I felt something outside myself controlling me." Then, despite a lack of artistic talent, he found he could think of any artist from Durer to Matisse and immediately his hand, beyond his own volition, would draw pictures in the manner of that artist.

He left school aged 17 and wrote his best-selling book, *The Link*, which has sold millions worldwide in 16 languages. He had plenty of witnesses to his claims. But he was thrown into the life of a "performing monkey," promoting the book like a globe-trotting pop star, subjected to massive publicity and scrutiny. "It was hard to handle. The cloistered existence of public school hadn't prepared me."

He met hostility. On Start The Week in 1974 he was lambasted as a fake and a charlatan. "A guest started banging his fists on the table and callers were



TREATMENT: Matthew with Caroline

**'Poltergeist experts studied me when, at 15, knives flew around our home'**

ringing in to ask if I'd been assaulted," he recalls. "I was 19-years-old and simply didn't know what to do. But over the years I've had endless demonstrations from fundamentalist religious groups who stand outside with placards and banners and tell people I am the work of the devil."

In fact, Matthew maintains that the Catholic church turned to him in 1976 when Pope Paul VI was dying. "I was

approached by two Vatican officials who asked me to diagnose the Pope's illness by using automatic writing. I was given a birth date and then my hand started writing in a hand that wasn't my own."

Afterwards the church denied the story, saying it was unthinkable that archbishops would seek help from a psychic. But Matthew claims they sent him a papal medal, which hangs now in his waiting room.

It was also found that Matthew's presence had a disruptive influence on electronic equipment. On the Frost television programme in 1974, for instance, the monitors broke down as did the links between studio and theatre.

In addition he started diagnosing people's illnesses through an unknown 19th-century doctor. And he began to have premonitions of disasters. "I found that frightening and tried to block it."

So in 1977 he went to India to "find himself", searched for a guru and instead had a spiritually moving experience when he seemed at one with the mountains, felt a presence and experienced God. "It was as though I'd become part of the mountains and they part of me."

He also heard a voice urging him to help people and follow only those paths that led to healing. Which is what he has been doing ever since.

● *The Mind Body Spirit Festival is at Royal Horticultural Halls, Greycoat Street, London, SW1, from today until June 1.*

Matthew Manning can be contacted on 0171-938 3788.



**GIFTED:** Matthew has a magic a successful career out of his amazing powers and books, but says his main motivation is simply to help the sick



**INNER STRENGTH:** Matthew aims to synchronise his brain patterns during healing with those of his patient