

Hi-de-HELL!



My husband, John



Me at the holiday camp



Daughter Carolyn in the pool



Michelle, having fun



GREETINGS FROM PONTINS PAIGNTON, SOUTH DEVON



Pat's trip to a holiday camp should have been a week of family fun. Never did she dream that she'd end up being exorcised

What the evening had in store for us, we didn't know. But one thing was certain, it was going to be interesting. I was on holiday at Pontins in Paignton, Devon, with my husband, John, and our daughters, Carolyn, then seven, and Michelle, two. During a Hawaiian night in the ballroom on our first evening, we got chatting to Bob and Sally*. We met up with them the following night, too, which was when they made a startling revelation – they were both psychics. I'd never met a medium, so I was keen to find out more. 'Show me what you can do,' I urged them both. 'I'll tell you what, we'll come to

your chalet and do a demonstration for you,' Bob suggested. So here we all were... John, a sceptic, sat there disinterested. But I watched in awe as Bob went into trance and started speaking in a Chinese accent as he channelled a Buddhist monk. 'Amazing!' I whispered. But they weren't done yet. Next, Sally went into trance and made contact with a nun. It was amazing to witness. But, as I sat watching, a feeling of unease crept over me. And it wasn't my imagination. My toes felt icy, and a freezing cold chill was slowly crawling

through my body. Soon, I was shivering uncontrollably and really struggling to breathe.

Then everything went black. In the darkness I could hear a woman crying.

She sounded frantic and terrified. Although I knew she was speaking French, I couldn't figure out what she was saying. She kept repeating the same mysterious words over and over.

Slowly, her voice faded, and our chalet swam back into view. Bob and Sally were staring at me, gobsmacked, and my face was wet with tears.

'You just went into trance,' explained Bob. 'We didn't realise you were

so open to Spirit!' gasped Sally. 'W-what?' I stammered.

'A spirit took you over. You were talking in French,' explained Sally. 'Did you know you were psychic?'

'I... But...' I mumbled, unable to

comprehend what they were saying.

Had I really gone into trance and channelled a spirit? And had it really been me crying and speaking French?

If so, who could this spirit be, and what did she want with me? Strangely, I was more embarrassed than afraid. I must have looked ridiculous, jabbering away in a foreign language.

Confused, I turned to John, but he just looked really angry.

Leaping up, he practically threw Bob and Sally out of the chalet.

It was an understandable reaction. He must have been terrified seeing me like that, and he wouldn't even speak to me about it after they'd left.

'I don't want to hear anything more about this,' he fumed. 'Tonight never happened, right?'

It was another three days until

I was shivering and struggling to breathe

That feeling of dread swept over me

Bob and Sally's holiday ended. But John was so angry, he wouldn't even make eye contact with them. He felt that they had put me in danger.

To try and take our minds off things, we took the kids for a drive and spotted a sign for Berry Pomeroy Castle.

'Why don't we have a look round?' I suggested. Places like that always interested me.

'Good idea,' smiled John. The four of us had a lovely time wandering about the 15th-century ruins. After a couple of hours, we headed towards the cafe in search of a cream tea.

John was walking ahead with our daughter, Carolyn. I was pushing Michelle in her buggy when, suddenly, that same feeling of dread swept over me, just as it had in the chalet when I'd fallen into trance.

Stopping short, I felt my toes and legs turning icy as the same freezing chill crept through me.

The scenery around me faded to black, the overpowering smell of damp earth filled my nostrils. And, again, I could hear the same French woman crying and mumbling uncontrollably – this time in English.

'Help me... Bury me... Pray for me,' she begged. 'Help me... Bury me... Pray for me.'

I heard the same words over and over between heart-wrenching sobs. Seconds later, the castle and its

grounds snapped back into focus, and so did little Carolyn's horrified face. She was crying hysterically.

'You did it again,' hissed John. 'You're embarrassing me – pull yourself together.'

'Did what?' I asked, baffled. 'You just stopped dead and started muttering and sobbing like the other night,' he snapped.

'For the second time I'd gone into a trance and been possessed. But by whom and why?'

Consoling Carolyn, we headed to the cafe for a calming cuppa. And it was there that I got chatting to the couple behind the counter.

Before long they were talking about the legends and ghosts linked to the castle.

'I've actually seen one of the spectres,' said the woman, leaning closer. 'They call her the White Lady. She's Lady Margaret Pomeroy, who was originally from

France and lived in the castle in medieval times.'

The story went that Margaret's sister, Lady Eleanor, was jealous of her because she was engaged to a handsome knight whom Eleanor secretly loved. So mad with envy, Eleanor locked Margaret in the castle dungeons and left her to starve.

'For hundreds of years people have spotted Margaret's ghost, roaming the grounds, sobbing and asking people to pray for her,' added the woman.

As she spoke, I was transfixed.



Berry Pomeroy Castle

OUR REAL LIVES *My deadly holiday*

◀ CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Everything she said seemed to relate back to the terrifying trances I'd experienced over the past couple of days.

Was Margaret the one possessing me? It made sense – the icy chill I'd felt and the smell of damp earth could have been from the dungeons. And I'd also been heard crying out for help.

'I think I know who's possessing me,' I whispered to John when I sat down at our table.

But he was having none of it.

Spooked, he marched us all back to the car. But each time he tried starting the engine, it cut out. And, even though it was a summer's day, the air inside was freezing.

Finally the car started, and he drove us back to Pontins in silence.

But my mind was still reeling. Had I really been possessed by Lady Margaret? And, if so, what did she want?

I had no idea. But over the next couple of days I continued to experience cold chills and the smell of damp earth.

Then, a few nights before we were due to head home, I dreamt I was walking in the sunlit grounds of Berry Pomeroy Castle.

But instead of it being a ruin, the castle was just as it had been during the 15th century.

The sun warmed my face, the smell of flowers filled the air, and birds were chirping...

Then suddenly I was grabbed from behind. A hand covered my mouth as I was bundled into a sack and carried down a flight of stone steps.

As I was thrown against a hard, cold floor, the sack split open. Blinking, I tried to adjust my eyes to my dingy surroundings.

The smell of damp earth was everywhere. That's when it hit me – *I was locked in a dungeon and about to suffer a terrible death.*

Next thing, I was wide awake and crying. John was already sitting up in bed beside me.

'You were whimpering in your

sleep,' he said, looking concerned.

'I had a dream, about Lady Margaret,' I sobbed, still able to feel the echoes of her fear from the nightmare.

Neither of us could understand what on earth was going on. But John wasn't prepared to find out, or entertain my belief that I was being possessed.

'I've had enough,' he snapped. 'Tomorrow I'm putting a stop to this once and for all.'

Some people would think he was being unkind. But I knew this was just John's way of trying to deal with something that frightened him and was beyond his comprehension.

The following morning, John drove me to a Catholic church in Paignton.

While I waited in the car, he headed inside and explained to the priest that I was distressed and needed help. He thought he'd be laughed at and even thrown out. But the priest told him to bring me in.

Yet when I tried to step over the threshold into the church, I couldn't. I was frozen to the spot.

Placing his sacred

stole round my shoulders, the priest helped me inside. I then explained about Lady Margaret. Together we said prayers for her soul.

As we did, tears streamed down my face. A huge feeling of relief washed over me. Then I heard a tiny voice inside my head.

'I'm on my way home,' it whispered.

The priest told us to come back the following day. As he said more prayers for her restless spirit, again I felt a heaviness lift from my shoulders. It was an amazing sense of relief.

'Rest in peace, Margaret,' the priest said softly.

Just then, an enormous gust of wind blew through the church.

'Thank you,' a voice whispered as the candles guttered and blew out.

I knew then why Margaret had wanted to possess me.

After hundreds of years roaming the



ruins of Berry Pomeroy Castle, she finally wanted to rest in peace. In a strange way, I felt honoured to be the one to help her towards the light.

That was in 1978, and I never forgot about Margaret.

After that, I started developing my psychic skills and visiting a Spiritualist church.

One day I was there with my daughter, Carolyn, when the medium approached us.

'I have a message for you, love,' she smiled at Carolyn. 'A lady is standing here and she's come to apologise for frightening you as a child. Her name is Margaret.'

We were stunned. After all these years Margaret had come back to say sorry. But in truth, no apology was necessary.

It's down to her that I found my path in life and now work as a full-time psychic. Although there are still sightings of her ghost at the castle, I know she's just visiting now and no longer trapped.

Our week at Pontins might not have gone to plan, but I went on a journey I'll never forget.

● **Pat Putt, 70, Rayleigh, Essex;** for information or readings, call 01268-784082 or visit ankhara.com

'Rest in peace, Margaret,' the priest said

