

On the level with spiritualists

April 12, 2001 11:59: It's not about sitting in the dark and calling up the dead, discovers EMMA COUTTS-WOOD who met two mediums who say spiritualism is not a cult, nor is it spooky.

I MUST admit I found it a little spooky when I arrived ten minutes late for my interview with spiritualists Chris Connelly and Kathy Rayfield and they told me they knew I was going to be late.

But once I sat down and started talking to the two mediums, they seemed professional and my prejudices soon disappeared.

Chris Connelly and Kathy Rayfield from Gravesend have been working together as spiritualists for two years and have held services in churches in Kent and Essex.

Spiritualism, or mediumship, is the ability to communicate with loved-ones, family and friends in the spirit world.

Both Chris and Kathy are passionate about spiritualism and want to improve its image.

Chris, 28, said: "Unfortunately, spiritualism has a bad name because of the number of rogue mediums. We don't make any money out of spiritualism but the few bad apples spoil things for the rest of us."

"Another misconception is that it is spooky'. When people tell me that, I tell them their relatives were not spooky when they were alive, so why should they be when they are dead."

I put it to them that some people say spiritualists are too vague when they give information about a dead person.

Promoted stories

Kathy said: "Proper spiritualists have had training and when they communicate with dead people they can often get specific details such as car registration numbers, telephone numbers and addresses.

"Qualified mediums will admit when they don't have that much information and wouldn't dream of making anything up."

Asked if they had always been spiritualists, Kathy, 57, said her mother had possessed the gift of second sight.

And while growing up there were times when she, Kathy, would be frightened of going into a room if she was sensed something. She became a healer and then eight years

ago decided to do a mediumship course.

Of the two, Kathy is the more experienced medium and she has taught Chris a lot about spiritualism. Chris said when he first went to a spiritualist church, with a friend, a few years ago, he was sceptical.

But he soon had cause to think again. He said: "I couldn't believe it when I got a message from a medium about my grandfather and it was not general information.

"I then became curious about spiritualism and joined a development circle.

"After three weeks, I got a message about somebody and I realised I had the gift of mediumship."

Chris and Kathy say the decline of orthodox religions has created a place for spiritualism in the 21st century.

They also say many people have mediumship abilities and do not realise it.

Chris said: "We are living in an age in which orthodox religions have lost their impact and any religion which can overcome this influence has to be scientific which spiritualism is.

"Mediumship has proved more than other religions that there is definitely life after death."

I Kathy and Chris are holding a mediumship course over the May bank holiday (May 4, 5, 6). Call 01474 355034 or 07890 472526. And if you live in south east London and want to visit a spiritualist, call Angela Baillie on 07899 947531.