

Decluttering the mind



Franc Micklem. Photo: Eoin Hennessy

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Franc Micklem's practice of 'space clearing' involves mental lifting as well as physical effort, Katharine Blake finds out.

ONE of the things I do is space clearing," says Franc Micklem, over the 'phone. "What about if I come and do some space clearing at your house?" The rooms of the house flashed through my mind's eye and I thought well, they're all fine except for this one; my study.

"You could do space clearing in my study," I said, unable to hide my excitement. "Great," said Franc enthusiastically, "I'll be there tomorrow at 2 o'clock."

All day, the thought of finally having my study cleared produced smiles of delight and when Franc appeared at my door at 2 o'clock, I was a little surprised to see her holding a dowsing rod. Franc is not a space clearer in the sense of a declutterer but rather in the sense of a mover of energy.

"I get called in if there is perhaps illness in a house, stress, or where people feel there is something just not structurally right in their house and it's taking its toll on them or, in one case, I was asked to deal with some poltergeist activity," says Franc. "It's all totally resolvable. I ask what's going on and if there are any hard energies coming up, I ask them to leave."

Ask whom, I wonder.

"I ask the infinite organising power of the universe," says Franc, after a little thought. "I believe in everything. I work with people in church groups, prayer groups, all sorts of groups and individuals. I am not judgmental. As things come up as I walk around a house, I talk about them with the people who live there and just by talking about them, awareness is created and from there we can move on until the tension passes."

Talk turns to the causes of tension, upset and anger in homes and from there to cultural heritage.

"If you bring to the surface what you have always believed and release it, you feel lighter," says Franc. "You know we all grew up with beliefs such as 'beggars can't be choosers' or 'life is hard' and we readily accept that life is about suffering. One of my assumptions was that I had to fight for my rights, but if I assume that I will receive love and respect everywhere I go, there is no more fighting. We can release the old model, experience the full spectrum of our personalities and become more resourceful and relaxed."

We are now drinking a large pot of mint tea. I had thought we would need pots and pots of it as we worked our way through paper, books, newspaper cuttings, postcards, photographs and the tangles of cables which I shove unceremoniously under my desk rather than tackle.

"I'll start at the bottom of the steps to the house and work my way in," says Franc, as she shoelessly makes her way back outside.

Once at the bottom of the steps, the dowsing rod held between thumb and forefinger and pendulum at the ready, she begins her ascent.

"Sometimes I have a proper pendulum and sometimes I have a spool of white thread hanging from a piece of string," says Franc. "Today I'm using the spool of thread."

The pendulum waits for its call to action as the dowsing rod leads the way following Franc's spoken instructions.

"Show me the flow of energy," she says, and the rod moves a little to the left and a little to the right as Franc walks up the steps. "The flow of energy usually meanders as it's doing now. Whenever the rod meets a vortex – a spot where the energy is being sucked away – it will spin and when it meets a condensation – an area where the energy is too much – it will spin then too."

Right on cue, the rod spins as Franc walks towards the end of the patio. She holds the swinging pendulum slightly aloft and waits patiently until it settles. Once the turbulence has been cleared, we move on into the house. The rod spins again near the cooker and again near the television and its attached machines.

"We have many different energy fields," says Franc, "mental, physical, spiritual, etherical and I work with all of them. Every trauma and every person in your life leaves a mark. After clearing, you, of course, still remember all of the things that have happened or affected you in your life but the memories don't trigger a reaction. You just have a neutral reaction to them. After clearing, difficult stuff can come up because there is space for it to come up."

Franc leads the way up the stairs and I open the door to my bedroom. The rod behaves itself until it gets near the bed. I am a little alarmed.

"It always does that near people's beds," Franc assures me. "It's possibly because of all the brain activity and processing which we go through while we're asleep."

I recall that recent nights have been filled with vivid, not-very-pleasant dreams, the atmospheres of which have lingered on into the following days. As the pendulum stills after swinging, I wonder if the dreams will now be banished.

As Franc said, dowsing for people, places and animals is just one of the things she does. She is also an accomplished horsewoman and horse riding instructor. She worked in the administrative side of things in Virgin Recording studio in London, before which she worked in Pink Floyd's studio and before that, she worked in Georgetown Recording studio (now Courtyard Studio), most famous for Radiohead and Supergrass.

"The Radiohead guys were school friends of mine," says Franc, who hails from Abingdon, Oxford. "They went to the boys' school and I was in the girls' school. When I got the job in the studio, I brought in their demo and got them some studio time. I remember when they brought their finished demo to London, I thought, there wasn't one hit on it. I think they had hits with nearly all of those songs," she says, throwing her head back and laughing.

While working on the Peace Project, which was to gather musicians from north and south in Ireland, Franc visited Belfast for the first time and ended up attending Queen's University and obtaining a first-class honours degree in philosophy and theology.

"The first time I took a philosophy class, I thought, yeah, give me more of that," says Franc, smiling. "After Belfast, I went to work with the homeless in London and then was offered a job in Foulksrath Castle here in Kilkenny and I've been here since. I built a geometric house in Castlewarren which was an amazing experience. It's called Harmony Hall and I hold workshops there. We also hold a monthly vegan dinner, a Conscious Community dinner, for anyone who wants to come.

"There has been an acceleration of consciousness across the planet, everything has speeded up and now we have two options; we can go into resistance, which will lead to mental and physical illness, or we can get into the flow and facilitate the change which is taking place, the change from perfectionism to wholeness. If we stop trying to control every aspect of our lives and allow ourselves to step into the flow, we can get just as much work done but in a healthier way. We all need to spend more time in a place of stillness and silence. This will lead to less violence and anger. Acceptance and forgiveness; that's the only way."

As we talked, we walked through the house and the pendulum which had swung back and forth in the study was now at rest. The turbulent energy had been cleared; the rest was up to me.

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