

Life and Death in France

Cynthia Henderson came to see me because she had read my first book about reincarnation and felt that she wanted to make "the inner journey." The mind, with its multitude of secrets, to most people remains much of an enigma. Not content with this, Cynthia wanted to know more, and as it turned out, had an excellent trance ability.

Under deep trance, Cynthia recalled a life in the American south as a young, black, female slave and another life in America as the wife of a farmer in Dayton, Ohio. She recalled a further life in France as the daughter of a wealthy merchant and a life in Egypt around the year 1800 B.C., near the city of Thebes.

She recalled the life as a slave as one of considerable pain. Returning to that life her accent changed dramatically and she spoke in a broad Southern US drawl. She spoke of a Mr. Johnson, master of the plantation and owner of all the land around where she lived. It appeared that Cynthia was recalling an isolated community containing only a few white families, with a small school to accommodate the few white children. She talked of the degradation and humiliation suffered by the blacks at the hands of the whites and recalled the pain of living as a black person in a white owned land, where they toiled long and hard, where the food was barely enough for their subsistence, and their quarters poor and inadequate. As servants and slaves, she recalled they were treated worse than cattle, with no personal freedom, no personal aspirations or hope of achievement, nothing to look forward to, and little hope of escape from the unpleasant realities and abuses of the day.

She remembered the life was lived sometime in the 19th century in the state of Louisiana, and she remembered talk of the great Mississippi River. According to her memory, the male slaves worked in the cotton fields while her duties were mainly in the house. Her father was the white man they called Mr. Johnson and her mother was a black woman, but she was never allowed to talk of that. She was about 14 years old when she died and under hypnosis she spoke of what led up to her death. She recalled that she used to slip out secretly to meet one of the plantation slaves with whom she planned to run away. Finally they made their escape, but only to be discovered and dragged back to face the consequences, which in her case was a flogging that she didn't survive. Under hypnosis she saw herself tied to a pole, her young body hanging limply. The anguished cries of the young male slave went unheeded by the plantation masters. He was thrown back to join the other slaves. Young and strong male slaves were too valuable to kill. Tears ran down Cynthia's face as she lay in trance and recalled the sadness. Her voice was strongly accented at times, especially when she talked of her mamma and of Mr. Johnson.

The life recalled was set in a place where even today little may have changed in regard to streets and buildings. The house may still be there and possibly the little schoolhouse, yet I thought the location was too vague to risk a research expedition. A young black girl wouldn't have had schooling at that time so she would have known little of geography, maps, or her location in relation to the rest of America, nor would she have ever travelled far beyond the plantation. I did not investigate this life more than just uncovering the experiences. After this, I took Cynthia to her other life in the USA.

She recalled she was born in Wisconsin, in a small farmhouse. She couldn't remember the name of the town she lived near, only the fact that it was small. Cynthia recalled the area was very green, set in rolling hills, with large old trees covering the countryside. The grass formed a carpet across the landscape, stretching from tree line to tree line, being broken only by the sandy coloured roads that wound their way around the hills and valleys. The house where she was born was situated in one of these valleys. Cynthia recalled that it was a home built of timber by her father. The farm took care of most of their needs. There were cows, a few horses, fruit trees and a vegetable and herb garden. There was a buggy, which her father hitched to the horses when he wanted to go to town. They weren't wealthy people, but they weren't poor, either.

Cynthia recalled that her family at the time consisted of her father, her mother, three brothers and a younger sister. Her father was recalled as a big, kind man with traditional values, very down to earth, a man who believed in hard work, reasonable frugality, and the acquisition of property. He was recalled as a man who

adhered to Protestant ideas of morality and was devoutly religious; a man who was kind to his children and interested in their welfare. It was recalled that the ideas of life and the attitudes toward children were slightly different than they are today, in that children were given adult tasks to perform. They had to work hard and pull their weight as soon as they were able. Despite this, she remembered being happy. She had no recollection of going to school.

Cynthia recalled being a shy girl who was not inclined to mix with boys, but instead preferred to listen to music being played on the fiddle and squeezebox. She recalled a friend who used to push her a little and try to get her to mix, until one night she met her husband to be at a local dance. After a short courtship, consent for marriage was given by her father. Following their marriage they travelled many miles to Dayton, Ohio, where they set themselves up on a farm. Parting from her parents was recalled as a final affair and she never saw them again. Her father had helped her and her husband as best he could and now it remained for them to make the best of their life together.

Cynthia recalled that their first job was to build a home. The area around their new property was different to Wisconsin. Instead of green, it was brown, and the grass was long and dry, with less trees and greenery to break the monotony of the grasslands. She remembered a big old oak tree near the house, which helped to give added appeal to the homestead. She recalled a life of relative isolation, with their only friends being the neighbours living on the nearest farm, but it was still not very often they went to visit. Soon the children came along. There were two boys, one after the other. They were blonde with blue eyes and quite stocky. Cynthia recalled that this part of her life was also hard, but not unhappy.

She remembered travelling in the cart to Dayton. The trip was slow, but very peaceful. The old cart was made of wood, with four wheels and a flat top, which they used to carry their provisions. There was a bench seat at the front. Sometimes she would travel into town on her own. At other times she would take the children. Her husband spent most of his time developing the farm, trying to improve their station in life. Cynthia talked about that life.

"It had its good points and its bad points. If you got sick you died young. You got what you worked for. There was plenty of land to be had if you were willing to work it. Because of the way of life you were encouraged to look after yourself. If you survived to be an adult you were usually pretty tough. There was no one to fall back on, no social security, and I never saw my parents again after leaving them."

"I remember when I died, I think I had a heart attack. I was about 31 years old. I was at home on the back verandah doing something when I felt a severe pain crushing my chest. I called out and my husband came running, but by the time they got me into the house I was dead. I felt myself leave my body and began to observe the occurrence as a spectator. I stayed around for a while. I felt bewildered and tried to talk to them. It took me a couple of days to realise that there was no way I could, so I just went off."

Before that life, Cynthia recalled living in France, as Amelie de Cheville, the daughter of a wealthy merchant. Her mother and father were reasonably kind to her and gave her most of the things she desired in life. She had a private tutor and was taught English and French. She had brothers and sisters and lived a good, happy life, immersed in the pleasures that were so easily attainable if one had wealth. The Chateau had a porch out front and large, long windows at the side. It was made of stone and boasted a large ballroom, with various other living rooms and servants' quarters. There was also a downstairs kitchen with a servants' entrance.

Cynthia had fond memories of that place. She recalled a lake near the house and green lawns and beautiful trees that adorned the property; a large estate that commanded magnificent views over Normandy. Iron torches burned outside the front of the building while a long drive led up from the road to the front door. She particularly remembered the towers at the side of the building that as a child she was never allowed to climb. The Chateau was recalled as magnificent; two stories high and made of cut sandstone blocks, like a small castle on large grounds. There were many parties by the lake, with guests dressed in finery and minstrels playing music throughout the night. It was here that Amelie spent her early years. As a young child she would play ball with her father. He would hold the ball high over his head and the children would jump high to try to get it.

Cynthia recalled that her father joined in many games.

"I had a very happy childhood ... all games and fun. My father spoiled me. I loved my father; he spent so many hours playing with us. My mother was always a little remote, but my father played games with us all the time. He would tell us stories. He'd sit me on his knee at the bottom of the stairs and tell me about the ancestors. He would point to their portraits as he talked. He was very proud of a portrait of his grandfather, which was at the bottom of the stairs. They were so big and so high, I couldn't reach the frame, so he'd hold me up to see them."

"I remember how Philippe, my brother and I, would run into the kitchen and steal apples when the cook wasn't looking. We weren't allowed in the tower. We'd pretend that we had been there, but we wouldn't dare really. Father would be angry if we tried to go into the tower, he was afraid we would fall off."

"I can remember the parties that were held at my father's chateau. Sometimes I would stand outside. I remember the cool air and the beautiful summer nights. I got so hot in the ballroom. I could hear the music and the laughter, sometimes I would walk by the lake and the night would be still. It was lovely to hear that laughter and the music."

"Before I was old enough to attend the parties, Philippe and I would hide by the kitchen door and watch the guests arrive. Sometimes the parties were so big. The visitors would come to the chateau in big coaches; some of them had as many as six horses. On some occasions the guests would wear masks and there'd be so much music, dancing, and laughter, they'd go on until sunrise the following day. The poor servants would have to work so hard, so much food piled high on silver plates. Sometimes the party would decide to eat by the lake, so the servants would have to work even harder to carry everything down there."

"I remember as a child, when we went on our holidays, it was great fun packing the trunks getting ready to go away. The coach would be loaded up until it was so heavy ... it seemed to take all day to get the coach ready. We would all be so impatient to get going. Philippe and I would be so excited. We loved to go on our holiday and finally we would leave. It seemed to take so long. We had to stop twice to change horses. We spent a night in the inn on the way. It was so exciting... then we came to the place where one could see the abbey of Mont St. Michel in the distance. The abbey seemed to stand like a giant fairy tale castle against the sky. We would visit the village at the base of the abbey, which stood about two miles from the house of my father's friend. We used to stay there for our holidays."

Cynthia recalled how, when Amelie grew older, she met a man whom she eventually married, and the carefree gaiety of youth came to an end. It was time to set up her own household and create a new life. Her husband was an army officer, reasonably well placed, and was able to afford the comforts of life, though not quite to the standards of her father. Cynthia remembered her wedding.

"It seemed very serious. Everyone was solemn. It was a very solemn occasion. I remember feeling my carefree days were over; no more games, no more childish ways. After the wedding I was to leave Normandy and my father's house and go to Paris to the home of my husband. I didn't see my father again after I left. It was very sad to leave him. My father was not royalty but he was very wealthy. He had many contacts with nobility. His grandfather had been someone of note in the French army. He received many gifts and many people worked for him."

"After the marriage, we travelled by coach to Paris and from then on I had to run my house. I had three servants: we were not poor. My children were born in the house and it was here that I lived for the rest of that life. I lived comfortably with my husband and children, but the atmosphere of Paris became worse and worse as the years passed."

"Food became scarce and the people were starving. The unrest spread and life became progressively dangerous. The wealthy lived in style and the poor starved. I remember toward the end of my life, when my children were about 15 and 16, I sent them to Normandy to live with my father. My son was called Edward and my daughter Marianne. Edward was dark like his father. Marianne was blonde, but her hair was curled, not like mine. I

would have liked to leave Paris myself. The king was a good man, but the people didn't like him and they hated his wife Marie Antoinette even more. Everyone hated her. Louis was weak. They loved his father, but they had no respect for Louis. It was rumoured that the queen spent the money on herself. The more people starved, the more she seemed to spend. My husband told me to stay indoors and not to listen to the rumours, so in the end, I didn't leave the house very much. When I did, I had to be very careful."

I regressed Cynthia to a time when she was passing through Paris and asked her to describe what she saw.

"Filthy people in rags... filthy...they stink... and the rats! There are even rats trying to bite the dogs! You wouldn't want to walk there. The streets are narrow... the streets are narrow and the houses are small and very close together. The streets have rough stones and there are lots of drinking houses, bakeries, fish cellars, rats! You see them everywhere, crawling in the gutters. The rats are there because of the dirt. They run amongst their feet. You have to be careful with the babies: they bite and kill them. It's getting so bad I won't walk the streets anymore. It's even dangerous to go visiting by coach. The crowds are abusive sometimes if they think you have food."

Cynthia recalled how life in Paris slowly became worse and worse until finally the peasants began to revolt and so began the revolution. She remembered being dragged from her home by the mob and put into a cell where she was left for a while before finally being put to death by the guillotine.

"The cell is dark and has one window with bars, but it doesn't look out onto a street, only into a passage way. I'm standing there alone by this grille and my face is to the wall. Two men and a woman come to the cell and push me down onto my knees. She's an old hag. The men hold my head while she cuts my hair with a knife, but only at the back. They cut it short so they know. I'm so frightened but I won't show them. I'm almost fainting. They drag me out. I'm pushed into a cart, pushed up to the front of it, and there are others pushed in behind me, but I don't look at them. I'm numb with fear. Everything's not real: it's all happening around me but I don't feel anything. I can hardly recognise myself. The cart is taken along the streets... bumps along the cobblestones. The crowd is shouting and abusing, spitting, swearing, and hissing. When the tumbrel reaches the guillotine we are led off... dragged off... to wait in a line."

"There is one official at the bottom of the steps who asks the name of each one. He has a pen and a scroll for recording and after they give the details they go up the steps to the guillotine where there are four men and a priest... and they are executed. They don't leave much time between each one. As soon as one is beheaded the mob cries for the next. Every time the blade comes down the mob goes wild, cheering and shouting, clapping and roaring. They're all around... so many people they crowd in on all sides. The guillotine is on a pedestal made of wood. There's a frame around where they've hung red, white, and blue drapes... the colours of France. The guillotine is very high. Underneath, at the front, is the basket for the heads. The other men on the platform are waiting to take the bodies. All around the square are buildings with people on the balconies and at the windows. Every available space to watch is full."

"There is one man who stands there inciting the people. He is very tall... he stands tall... he incites the people. They cry out and shout all the time. This goes on all day. When one tumbrel is emptied they bring the next. They are thirsty for more blood. Blood is in the streets: they are standing in blood. It's running in rivers. This goes on all day until dark and some of the heads have been placed on poles, and they're held up... carried around the streets. They talk about stoning a person with the heads!"

"I'm the only woman and there are about eight men. The men go first. I'm the last and have to wait and watch. I'm full of terror. With each head the crowd shouts and cheer, then it's my turn. They ask my name. I cannot speak so I'm told to go forward up the steps. I'm trembling, cold and trembling. I want to get it over... quickly. They push me from behind because I don't go quickly enough for the mob. They are shouting for my blood. At the top of the steps the executioner is there... waiting. I'm told to come forward... pushed forward. They've raised the blade... it's high. The steps are quite steep and I have to be pushed and pulled up to them. I'm not trying to get away... just numb with fright, fear, don't really know what's happening... just want this nightmare over."

"They push me toward the guillotine and I fall down. My hands are tied behind me so I fall down onto my knees, and my neck hits the wood and almost chokes me. I am at the guillotine. Blood is all over the place and covering everything... the whole platform, glistening with thick, red blood."

"The guillotine drops down. It seems an eternity to be staring at the basket, just staring. I hear the mob and the blade dropping and then suddenly... I'm not in my body. I see my head roll into the basket and the eyes are open. So much blood everywhere... filthy crowd. They're even at the windows and balconies to get a good view, waving their banners and flags. It's become a sport. The empty tumbrel is dragged away again. The bodies are dragged off and thrown into a cart at the back and the heads are grabbed by the crowd and stuck on spikes, carried around as trophies. The bodies are taken and thrown over a wall and left to rot."

"After a while I had a feeling as if I was floating into a white mist... so peaceful. I had the feeling of wanting to get away from that terrible crowd. I was so happy to be leaving them. They just faded away. It was so peaceful and there was someone there waiting for me... someone to meet me and I followed. She led me through this tunnel and there was beautiful music. She says that it's all over now... you're with us now."

So ended Cynthia's recalled life in France. It was a mixed life of happiness, gaiety, wealth, and horror. She played as a child, visited the court of Louis XVI as an adult and died violently amidst a scene of blood, violence and hate. Looking back, Cynthia saw it as a frivolous, happy life, but one that was a little shallow and lacking in depth and meaning. The death was memorable only because of the fear, the blood, and the hate of the crowd.

Today, Cynthia has a red mark across the back of her neck, like a birthmark.

The next life Cynthia recalled was in Egypt. She worked on a cargo boat as a master in charge of slaves, traveling up and down the length of the Nile River. The slaves worked huge oars that protruded from the sides of the boat, like great appendages. A sail caught the wind to help propel it along. This recalled life I found interesting, as it was a direct contrast to the life she led as a slave herself, some 3,000 years later in America.

Did she have a life as a slave in America as a retribution for her actions during her life as a slave master in Egypt? Cynthia was unable to remember inflicting any harm on the slaves she controlled.

Cynthia's life in Egypt was recalled as being peaceful and comfortable and reasonably free of problems. She recalled being a healthy male with a job for which she was well rewarded. Her house was made of a pale white clay. It had no door, but a canvas like material covered the entrance. It had a flat roof and slits for windows at the front, and one could climb onto the roof of the house. Neighbouring houses were the same.

Her sharpest memory was of the Nile River and the barges she worked on. I asked Cynthia to draw a picture of one for me. The river was wide and flowed slowly. It was home to many assorted vessels. The boat Cynthia recalled carried grain and delivered it to the storehouses in various communities that stretched along the river. She recalled the palaces, exquisite in pink and white marble, with steps down to the river in the delta area. From the boat one could see fields, with the desert and the pyramids beyond. Palm trees and beautiful gardens surrounded the palaces. The royal families, together with members of the royal court, would enjoy the river from their splendid barges. The only town that Cynthia recalled was Thebes, which she also called Amun Amun. This was at the top of the Nile, away from the delta.

As a male Cynthia remembered wearing the clothes of that ancient Egyptian period; a short skirt and sandals, with a cloth over the head, hanging loosely at the back. She also wore a cape made from some type of animal skin during the colder periods of the year. I asked her the name of the Pharaoh to ascertain the period in which she lived.

"Thutmose II and III. Thutmose II was very weak and lived only a short time, Thutmose III was great and in power when I died at age 26. He had been Pharaoh for about ten years and used to send great armies off, but I

don't remember myself having anything to do with them. I remember that black slaves were valuable, very valuable. They were kept for the Pharaohs and the palaces. Life for us was generally pleasant. There was entertainment, street entertainment and markets, jugglers, acrobats, and singers."

Checking the history books showed me that Thutmose II and III lived during the 18th dynasty. Thutmose II was weak and Thutmose III succeeded him. Thutmose III was a strong Pharaoh. The 18th dynasty was between 1567 and 1320 B.C.

According to Cynthia's recollection, she died in that life when her house collapsed. She didn't understand why it collapsed, just that it did while they were sleeping. The walls and the roof came down, killing her and entombing her at the same time. Cynthia later wondered if it could have been an earthquake, but she wasn't certain.

The life she lived before that was too far back to be of any use for gathering evidence. The Egyptian life was interesting as far as names, dates, and Pharaohs are concerned, but this itself is not proof as the knowledge could have been gained from books, albeit unwittingly. The Pharaohs Thutmose II and Thutmose III did follow one another, and I understand it is true that Pharaoh Thutmose III was much stronger, more intelligent and had a more powerful personality than Thutmose II.

I could have persevered for a longer period and gleaned much more detail about the life, but felt that this would be of little value as this life, while being of interest, would offer little proof in the long term. It was unlikely that much from that life would exist now, except for well-known temples or pyramids. The job as an overseer of slaves on the barges would not have been likely to have given any insight into secrets that could be revealed today. She remembered the Pharaohs clearly, recalling they were powerful and ruled Egypt with absolute supremacy during her time. She remembered the nobility, their clothes and their behaviour, but again, this did not aid our search for proof.

The life which was of most interest for research was her life in 18th century France, during the French Revolution. It was a period during which some records were kept and it was not improbable that some of the relics of the life may have survived into the 20th century. It therefore offered the possibility of good evidence. I asked Cynthia had she in this life, ever been to the area where the past life had been lived. She confirmed she had been to France on a holiday, but not to the part of France where the research would take us.

Under hypnosis Cynthia recalled her life in Paris and her young life, like two parts of the same picture. Her life in Flers held the fondest memories: Paris held the worst. There was much from that life that gave Cynthia a desire to revisit France and me a desire to pursue it. Cynthia wanted to see for herself if the places that she remembered had really existed.

Before leaving Australia, we asked Cynthia more about the life and where she lived.

"In a chateau."

"Where is the chateau?"

"Flers."

"What's your name?"

"Amelie."

While Cynthia remained under hypnosis, I checked a map of France and found the village of Flers in Normandy. Flers was where she had married and was about an hour coach ride from her father's chateau. Cynthia also told of another home of a friend where she used to go for holidays. It was by the sea near the

monastery of Mont St. Michel.

Finally, the day came for us to begin our tour of enquiry. We were to travel to France with a film crew and the others involved in the research. Cynthia was flown from Australia to London and was then driven to Somerset to meet up with the rest of our film crew. We met up with Cynthia where we had been filming and researching with Gwen. From Somerset we travelled south to Weymouth and from there, sailed to Cherbourg in France.

After completing immigration formalities, we hired three cars to carry the film crew plus their film equipment and personal luggage for the next stage of the journey. We took our first look at Cherbourg on what was a warm, humid day. It lacked the freshness of the sea breeze, but was pleasant nevertheless. We packed ourselves into the three cars; one red, one white and one blue, and so began our trek across France to the part of Normandy that we hoped would hold the long awaited answers.

From Cherbourg we set out southeast and encountered very picturesque countryside across France. The road stretched before us into the distance as the trees, the fields and the French buildings sped past us. France seemed to have an atmosphere all its own. As we drove, the trees sometimes formed mini-forests and even canopies that hung over the road between the clearings. Old country houses were tucked in among the trees while quaint villages dotted the highway every few kilometres.

Eventually we reached the little village of Flers in the heart of Normandy, the focal point for the beginning of our search. It was a wonderful old town with quaint buildings and a pleasant country atmosphere. It boasted a marketplace, a big old church, a variety of hotels and shops and a large, magnificent old chateau set in immaculately manicured grounds on the edge of the town's boundary. Toward the end of our journey to Flers Cynthia was blindfolded so she would not pick up any modern clues that might help her. She had to rely as much as possible on her memories of the past. As soon as we took the blindfold off, she knew instantly where she was. We could have taken her to a number of places, and as she had never been there before, she should have been quite confused, but she wasn't. She instantly recognised the marketplace and the position of the church, as well as certain smaller landmarks that made the place overwhelmingly familiar to her. It was as if her mind had jumped back some two hundred years. She had returned to her long lost life of the past and in the familiar environment of Flers memories began to seep out of the misty recesses of her unconscious mind, and emerge into conscious clarity. We remained in Flers for a few more days as the memories continued to percolate through Cynthia's mind and the next stage of the expedition was planned.

The next morning we woke as the light streamed in through the window, but it wasn't the light that first awakened me, it was the noise. I had been sleeping with the window open and the early morning sounds of traffic and people on their way to work filtered into my thoughts. Once aroused, I climbed out of bed and looked out over the marketplace. I could see cars and lots of people all mingling and doing. The light was soft and clear and marked the beginning of a perfect new day. The air was also warm and the scene below me colourful and inviting. I showered and dressed and joined the rest of the group in the breakfast room for breakfast. As I descended the stairs I could see a few locals in the hotel sitting around drinking coffee. Our table was amongst them. The air was buzzing with talk of the market including the stalls and the merchandise that was being put onto display. The crew couldn't wait to get out there. Nor could Cynthia.

After finishing our coffee and croissants and whatever else we had to eat that morning, we all ventured out into the marketplace and mingled with the locals who were talking to the street vendors and buying their wares. It was a good time for obtaining souvenirs but also a good time to see how Cynthia coped with the people of Flers who spoke in French and who approached us to sell their wares. It had been secretly arranged that one vendor would offer Cynthia something too good to refuse to see if she would react to the offer and possibly show some understanding of French. The offer was made enthusiastically but Cynthia looked on blankly, knowing she was being offered a dress, or something from the stall, because that was obvious, she could see that, but she was not understanding of the words to know how good the offer was, or what exactly she was being offered. Accordingly, she politely refused, still looking blank, not understanding. After a short while in the marketplace we turned to the important tasks at hand associated with our expedition.

Before we could go, we had to pack up the cars again. This was a morning ritual. Even though we were using the hotel as our base for a few days, we stowed the filming equipment in our rooms each night for security purposes. This meant that every morning we had to go through the process of carrying the cameras, tripod and sound equipment down to the cars for the day's filming. On this first morning we also met for the first time the witness who stayed with us for the duration of filming with Cynthia. Then, when we were ready, we continued on with the search for evidence. To begin, we drove to a nearby chateau where we arranged to film. There I hypnotised Cynthia to see if under hypnosis she could partake in a conversation in French with the witness. This was something different to the marketplace, because this time Cynthia would be under hypnosis, a changed state of mind that allowed forgotten memories to be accessed from her unconscious. We wished to see whether Cynthia was capable in this state, of the feat she was unable to do at a conscious level, and that was, speak in the language of the past time, the language that would've been familiar to her hundreds of years before. The witness's name was Antoine Le Breton, a likeable Frenchman. Being Catholic he was not readily predisposed to the idea of reincarnation, although he was prepared to maintain an open mind. The chateau was a reminder of times past and seemed an ideal place for what we were doing. It had an atmosphere of elegance and charm. The gardens were like one would see on a French picture postcard, a sea of colours dotted with green, with manicured lawns. The interior was well maintained also, with traditional French furniture, colourful drapes and soft furnishings, and traditional paintings adorning the walls.

For the hypnosis, Cynthia reclined on a sofa which looked as if it was from the time of Louis XVI. The film crew gathered around the room while cameras and sound equipment was set up. When all had settled I hypnotised Cynthia and took her back to the life in France in the 18th century and asked her to converse with Antoine in French (a language she did not consciously understand). I knew she had some knowledge of French when under hypnosis, but I wasn't sure how much. To the surprise of everyone in the room, she fully understood what Antoine said to her and answered him in fluent French. There ensued a long conversation in French. Sometimes Cynthia answered his questions in French and sometimes in English. Sometimes Antoine spoke in English and she answered him in French. It was apparent at all times that she was aware of what was being said and was able to answer. Antoine had gone off on a tangent asking her all sorts of questions and she correctly answered him. Her knowledge of French seemed to far exceed anything she might have been able to learn from her few classes at school when young, that she had forgotten.

Antoine was astonished. He said she spoke French well, as a Frenchwoman spoke it, devoid of any English accent. Furthermore, he said she spoke in a manner more in keeping with the 18th century, as some of her words were old-fashioned. Sometimes she hesitated, however, as if the words came easily one minute and only with difficulty the next. Yet, Cynthia displayed that she had enough of a command of the French language to understand all that was said to her. The startling occurrence was her French accent. Her strong English accent disappeared, and even the English she spoke while doing this sometimes had a French accent. She said that she had spoken both French and English during that life. Antoine was perplexed and said it was strange she could speak French at all. Earlier that day, when Cynthia's conscious ability to speak French was tested in the marketplace in Flers, and she was offered something at a ridiculously low price, she clearly could not understand the conversation, or what she was being offered.

Following this successful test of Cynthia's language abilities, we packed up the film gear and went for a walk across the gardens. Cynthia was a little surprised at herself. Awake, she still had no knowledge of the French language which was apparent when we went subsequently into shops.

The Second Day

The next morning I was again awakened by the sounds of noisy people and chatter but there was less traffic. Once again I dragged myself out of bed to the window and watched all the activity in progress. This time chickens, ducks, birds, and other animals contributed to the already noisy marketplace where sellers and consumers were mingling. The square was filled with tents, canopies, barrows and stalls. Different coloured barrows and umbrellas were everywhere and the atmosphere was alive and colourful. On sale were clothes, shoes, leather goods, kitchenware, food of all types, animals and just about everything one could think of. This day was to commence our search for Cynthia's childhood home near Flers. We had no idea what we would find

and no idea whether Cynthia's recall of the route from Flers to her old home would be clear enough to revisit the journey, especially as it was the route the old coach used to take and the countryside now had new roads, possible new subdivisions, new buildings and even possible changes to the scenery, that might all combine to throw Cynthia off the scent and confuse her recall. We also had no idea if such a chateau still existed. Armed with sticks of French bread, cheese, salad, pate, and grapes to have for a picnic lunch along the way, we set off in three little cars, one behind the other.

With the memories of the previous life now reasonably conscious to her, it was hoped that Cynthia's next task of leading us from the township of Flers (which she used to visit by coach) to her father's chateau, where she had spent so many memorable years, would be easier than we first thought. Her conscious memories of the life were becoming stronger. She remembered the journey as a one hour ride in the coach over picturesque terrain. Before we left, I asked her to reiterate the memories she had of the trip. She talked of the roads she ascended in the coach, the ride along the crest of a hill, a long valley, and a turn into a different road that wound through the trees and countryside to the wall that surrounded the chateau grounds. She told us of the chateau itself, with its towers and protruding steps and entrance, and of the lakes, paths, and walkways on its grounds. She described the windows and what she could recall of the interior. We wondered if it still existed and if we would find it, and if so, what condition it would be in after the many years. Before we left Flers, Cynthia was hypnotised and asked to recall the journey we were now to embark on. Her recall was made conscious. Under hypnosis in Flers, Cynthia spoke of the coach ride from the town back to her home.

"Oh, we went to the marketplace. We would go past the church for a while ... a short while ... and then we came to the road, a big road that goes between Rouen and St. Michel. Go right there for about an hour, and then over the top of a hill and then turn left, down, off the main road to the chateau."

"What sort of countryside does the road travel over?"

"Oh ... it's very rural. "

"Is it hilly or flat?"

"One main hill."

"Where is that?"

"On the main road, it starts to go up after you leave Flers, and then it comes down ... you go over the top of the hill, you can see down mainly on the left side."

"What's down on the left side?"

"The hill slopes down and then it's flat and there's wood, trees, and fields and the chateau is down there, but you don't see it from the road."

"Describe what the chateau looks like, the main points, the main features of the chateau."

"The most striking features are the doors and the porch, because that's the first thing you see when you come down the drive."

"Does it have any towers?"

"Two towers."

"Where are they?"

"At the back."

The conversation continued until she had stated most of the facts she could remember about the chateau and coach ride. Later on I was pleased that I had asked Cynthia to reiterate these details for it allowed a more accurate check to be made.

Antoinne, Cynthia, the camera crew and myself packed ourselves into the three small cars, and after setting off, our camera crew recorded exactly what Cynthia said, where she pointed, and where she directed us to on our journey. She had to choose the direction and the road. (When I think back to that day and to all the roads she could have taken, bearing in mind that the past life was some 200 years ago, I can only marvel at the incredible feat she achieved to just find her way out of Flers and head off along the correct road.)

Under Cynthia's instructions we headed out of Flers. As none of us had any knowledge of the country we were travelling over (except possibly for Antoinne, who was from a different province), and Cynthia had never in this life, travelled the roads we were travelling, we made up a strange entourage driving across France looking for a chateau. We were being led along roads we had never seen, by a woman who had never before (in this life) travelled the path we were driving. It seemed crazy! I wondered if we would end up hopelessly lost. However, we continued forward and once we had cleared the outside of town, Cynthia seemed to know where she was, leading us along roads until we came to the base of a long incline. This confirmed some of what she had told us previously in trance. We headed up the hill and stopped a few times to film. At the top we ran along a ridge and looked down to the left at the valley below us, exactly as she had told us we would. In the distance we could see farms, a few roads, beautiful trees, and green grass for miles. It was a lovely place and it was easy to see why Cynthia held such fond memories of the countryside. As we neared the edge of the ridge we travelled down in accordance with her earlier description of the ride.

At the bottom of the hill Cynthia indicated the turn she had mentioned. We were in a lovely wooded valley. The scene was so idyllic we drove our cars off the road and ate our picnic lunch. We stretched out a cloth under a large old tree, donned French berets and held up French bread for photographs, spread out the food, and spent one of the most enjoyable hours in the country that I can remember.

After eating, talking, and lazing about for an hour or so, we felt it was time to move on again under Cynthia's guidance. The road wound around through trees and between the fields until we came upon a new road and a new large subdivision. Here the roads had been altered to make way for the new estate. Cynthia was suddenly confused. She knew the direction she wanted to travel, but the road now led somewhere else. We had to get around the new estate to pickup the old road. By the time we had done this and reached somewhere on the other side of the estate, we had lost the original road. We were now all thoroughly confused and no one knew where we were. It was unanimously decided to ask someone in one of the houses how we could reunite with the original road. Antoinne asked for help from a man working in his front garden.

On track again, Cynthia soon recognised where she was and picked up the lead. We finally came to another road and Cynthia instructed us to turn right. At a turn in the road a short distance further on, Cynthia suddenly exclaimed "That looks like the wall of the chateau. I think that's the chateau in there." The chateau grounds now constituted a large parkland where you had to pay to get in. We drove to the entrance, stopped and paid the entrance fee. It reminded me of some of the estates in England that had been opened to the public.

We approached a road leading inside the walls. It was lined with leafy, overhanging trees with dead leaves covering parts of the grounds. The branches formed a canopy which allowed the sun to flicker through as you drove along. The road meandered through the property up a slight incline as Cynthia had previously described and Cynthia became visibly tense as we drove along, apprehensive about what she might find. She knew where she was and had recognised the drive.

"I can't look ... it's just around the corner ... oh God! I can't look". "Oh, God ... there it is!"

The chateau came into view through the trees and my mind flashed back to a statement she had made under hypnosis "The most striking features are the doors and the porch because that's the first thing you see when you

come down the drive."

There in front of us was the ruin of a large old chateau, a building that had once been very elegant and graceful in its time, and as Cynthia had stated, the most striking feature confronting us was the large front doorway and porch. She had described the porch as being a little to one side, but it was actually in the middle. However, her description was basically correct.

Our cars, one behind the other, drew up in front. As the car holding Cynthia pulled up a little to one side, past the building, she was confronted with the tower at the back of the chateau that she had told us of. The sight of the tower triggered a burst of emotion she didn't expect, and she began to sob. The reality of the life suddenly hit home. The expectations, the apprehension, the confrontation with the chateau, and finally, the striking familiarity of the tower was more than she could handle. Cynthia sat in the car sobbing. It was the reality of the situation that had leapt into Cynthia's mind, whereas before that it hadn't been quite real, possibly even a little surreal. If it had been a dream to Cynthia before, it was that no longer. The chateau she remembered now stood before her as a ruin, but the essentials of it remained. One could still see a tower, the porch, the entrance, the walls, the windows, and so on. For a short time Cynthia remained in a state of shock, then, forgetting her tears, she took us on a tour of the inside of what she remembered as her old home. As we walked inside Cynthia showed obvious familiarity and gave us a guided tour as she remembered it. One could clearly see that the old property had indeed once been grand.

After taking in the inside of the building we ignored the signs saying, "Do Not Enter" and climbed the tower and looked out over the magnificent view from the top. One could see for miles. The fields stretched out in every direction for as far as the eye could see. The tower was at the back as Cynthia had remembered, but there were two towers in her memory. Of course, much of the place was rubble, so one may have been destroyed during the war; the chateau had been bombed during World War II and was never restored.

Cynthia had talked of a lake on the property so we wandered down to find it. Under hypnosis in Sydney, Cynthia had recalled the lake as an important focus of the early part of her life. We were unsure about what we would find. It turned out to be just a short walk from the chateau, nestled among rows of beautiful pine trees and edged by manicured lawns. This was where Cynthia recalled some of the parties. There was a little row boat tied to a jetty on one side of the lake and it was so peaceful and picturesque it matched Cynthia's description perfectly. We then walked over the property as if we owned it, while Cynthia elaborated on the various aspects of that life, her memories, and the different parts of the property.

"I used to wear one of those big hats. My favourite dresses were deep purple. I hate deep purple now, but my favourite dresses then were deep purple. I had a deep purple dress with cream lace. There was a sort of collar that ruffled at the front. It was beautiful, it had wide sleeves with ruffles of lace around ... everything is coming back to me so clearly."

"I think I was in a state of shock when I first saw the place. Every time I walk somewhere different around here it all just comes flooding back."

"When we first started doing the regression and I learned about it I kept having doubts, thinking it might be my imagination, but of course now I know it wasn't and it's made me feel so relieved. There was always a fraction of doubt there."

"As we were coming up I seemed to know every bend. I knew the last bend ... I knew it was around the corner and I couldn't look. I just couldn't bring myself to look, and when I looked up I saw the tower."

"Amazing ... it really is!"

"I feel fantastic here. I feel as if I belong. It's incredible. I recognise everywhere. I don't feel sad or anything because of the state it's in because I realise that it's been here a long time. I'm relieved it's here at all, really."

"I might have had a terrible time trying to find something that had gone completely."

"At first, when I'd calmed down after the initial surprise and started walking around, I had all these images of the coaches and the clothes and the people, the servants and the parties and everything... the whole bit."

"I always had feelings for the French era. Now it's made me realise they were real people, not just something you read in books or see in films. They were no different from the way we are now. It's only just now that the impact has hit me, how real those people were, and this was my life! It's all so real to me."

"It's sort of like a big tunnel being opened up and my whole memory being brought back. It's as if I had amnesia for two hundred years... that's really what it's like."

Finally, we finished filming for the day. The sun was slowly receding beyond the horizon and the daylight was turning into dusk. We all felt a little tired from the day's experience so we returned to the cars for the drive back to the hotel, once again lost in our own thoughts, for the day had given us much to think about.

The Third Day

The next day was a little more complex. It began in the usual way with breakfast and the packing of cameras and equipment. It was the morning we were to make our way down to the coast to a place a few miles from the monastery of Mont St. Michel. Once again we set out with Cynthia in the role of navigator. We travelled about 95 kilometres or so, arriving there about midday. As we neared our destination we could see the famous monastery in the distance. It stood like a fairytale mountain rising out of the sea. We parked the cars in a huge car park, along with a lot of other visiting tourists, and made our way up a sandy path leading to the entrance of the monastery.

Once inside the old wall we walked up the cobble path, under arches, up steps, past the shops of the village to the stone lookout very high above the sea. Here we gazed in awe at the truly magnificent sight that lay before us. The monastery towered over the land and the ocean like a majestic, mountainous structure from the past, like a giant guardian sheltering the mainland beyond. While to the team it was a magnificent sight, to Cynthia, it was something different, something of her memories from a long time ago, and being there revived those memories.

At her first sight of Mont St. Michel, Cynthia recalled, "When I was a little girl I used to have dreams of that place, and I always thought it was a dream."

Mont St. Michel proved to be a place we all thoroughly enjoyed, and one that we will probably remember for a long time to come. The old stone walls, the vast, pounding ocean below, the monastery and the church above it was like a gigantic work of art sculptured from life. After we had seen it, completed filming, and bought souvenirs, we made our way back to the cars. We had found the second important piece in Cynthia's recall, and importantly, Cynthia's memory of Mont St. Michel was accurate. It even housed the little village she remembered visiting in her former life to buy lace. We were unable to visit restricted areas to explore a garden that she remembered, however, this would have been unlikely to produce anything specifically evidential, though I believe the experience would have been rewarding should we have managed to have achieved it.

Under hypnosis Cynthia had told us of her friend's country house where she spent many holidays, and from where she would visit Mont St. Michel and buy her lace. Her friend's house was situated only a few miles from the coast. Cynthia's memory of the coach trip from Flers to this large country house had returned strongly as a consequence of the hypnosis and our visit to Flers, with the landmarks also reminding her of her former life. Our trip became quite extraordinary, as Cynthia even remembered the locations of small streams and bends in the roads, telling us of them before we got there. The old country roads that had existed for many years had again become fresh in her memory. She described the U shaped country house as being on the right hand side of the road. She said it had a courtyard with a fountain in the middle and that the centre section had an archway through which the coaches used to pass. She also described a small chapel near the house, not only its position

but its external and internal appearance, down to such details as the colour of the glass in the windows and the shape and design of the tiles on the floor. Her previous description had been very clear.

After leaving the car park at Mont St. Michel we drove back onto the road leading around the coast. The three little cars made a strange procession as Cynthia led us to our goal, because only Cynthia knew where she was going, and that was from a two hundred year old memory. Eventually, she pointed to a road veering off to the right. On this trip she had directed us along a number of roads, sometimes stopping for a moment to think. She never took a wrong turn. She told us of a stream we would cross a short time before we crossed it and then informed us that the place was quite near. It was on the right, around a turn in the road. She was correct again. We drove through the gates and into the front courtyard of the property. It was occupied and had not been bombed during the war, so it was still intact, and it was exact in every detail to Cynthia's earlier description. It was U-shaped. It had a courtyard and an archway through which the coaches could have gone, and there was a chapel.

The fountain she had recalled was not there, but in its place was a well. Possibly she remembered incorrectly, easy to do over a 200 year span, or maybe it had been changed from a fountain, as both involve water. We walked around the courtyard admiring the old building, trying to ignore the frantic barking of a dog. Some children came out followed by adults. We tried to explain, but they didn't seem to mind. They could see we were filming. Antoine talked to them and through him, we asked about the house and the chapel.

The house and chapel were built hundreds of years ago and had existed at the time of Cynthia's remembered past life. Cynthia wandered off to look at the chapel as she was revisiting a place she had been fond of. It was mostly as she remembered and expected it to be. There was a small, initial shock, but not as great as she experienced at the first house. She walked around the property absorbed in the memories of those times long ago, trying to correlate them with the present. When we went to walk to the chapel, we started to walk around the property, but Cynthia remembered the short cut and led us a different way. We went up to the door of the chapel, but it was locked. We needed to find the priest to gain access. Once we had located him we had Cynthia describe the inside of the chapel to him on film, before we went inside. Antoine acted as interpreter and asked the priest if he could confirm her statements, which he did. After this, the priest opened the chapel.

Most of what Cynthia had told us in Sydney before we left was validated. The statue, the wooden pews, the hexagonal stone font on the left, the large cross, and the blue-gray diamond shaped tiles on the floor were all there. Some of the things she mentioned were to be expected, but not the stone hexagonal font on the left, not the dark wooden pews which were unusual for that type of French chapel, nor the diamond shaped blue-grey tiles on the floor. These were facts which would seem impossible for her to have known. It was, like the chateau, remarkable evidence for the life she recalled, and the memory. After walking around the old chapel and looking it over, we noticed many of the features that Cynthia had talked about. Yet it was humorous in a way, because I understand our interpreter had not told the priest the true reason why we wanted to look at the interior of the chapel, only that Cynthia had been there as a small child, and in a fit of nostalgia had wanted to take another look at the place. The priest couldn't have been more helpful and obliging, but we weren't sure how he would have taken the news had he known that we were trying to confirm Cynthia's reincarnation.

We were happy with the expedition so far because evidence for reincarnation had constantly been found and Cynthia's memories were accurate in so many ways. It had been another extraordinary day.

There was only the house in Paris left to explore. This was the house where she had lived with her husband. It was also the house from which she was taken by the mob during the revolution. While Cynthia also had memories of other places in Paris, it was felt that these would not be evidential because they were too well known. Once again, I hypnotised Cynthia to revive the memory of her house, and Paris, and awakened her with the suggestion that she would remember what she saw.

"Where did you live with your husband?"

"On the Rue St. George in Paris."

"In Paris?"

"Mmm."

"Now on film in Sydney you gave another name, I'm not quite sure what it was. It started with the letter V."

"Vernuil."

"Vernuil ... what's the story on that?"

"After we married in Flers, we drove by coach to Vernuil, where we spent the night before going on to Paris the next morning, to a house, with my husband."

"And so the house is actually in Paris?"

"Our home was in Paris."

"And what was the name of the street?"

"Rue St. George."

Cynthia was asked to draw a picture of the house. She obliged by giving us a fairly detailed drawing of how she remembered it.

"Can you explain its whereabouts from the centre of Paris? What sort of features would mark or indicate where it is in Paris? You said something about a river?"

"Yes, it was north of the river and roughly about the middle of Paris, north, and it took about ten minutes in by coach."

"You said it was north of something else before, what was that?"

"The Tuileries."

"And can you draw how the river goes, roughly where it is in relation to the river?"

"Well, the river has a big bend like that (drawing the bend in the river). It is north of that."

I asked Cynthia what the Tuileries were, and she described it as a former royal residence with beautiful gardens and grounds, and a place where many parties were held. This information was later confirmed. A map of the River Seine had been drawn so we knew where the Rue St George should be in relation to the river, because it was directly near what looked like a horseshoe.

Antoinne studied his road map as he wasn't from Paris, either. He found the point in the river drawn by Cynthia and found that the Rue St. George was located exactly in the position that she had stated.

The Fourth Day

It was time to travel on to Paris to see if we could find Cynthia's past life marital home. This would take the day. The drive to Paris was again pleasant, winding through picturesque countryside, fields and villages. It was quite late when we first entered Paris from the south, joining a circular road that took us around the periphery. In need of a place to stay for the night, we looked for a hotel near the airport. This was our last night in France.

The Fifth Day

The following morning after breakfast, we set out on what was to be the last leg of our expedition with Cynthia. Instead of having Cynthia lead us, we had to refer to street maps as there had been far too many changes for Cynthia to recognise where she was in Paris. We stopped a few hundred yards short of the Rue St. George and the cameras were made ready. Cynthia sensed where the Rue St. George was, although she had not been told and a great deal had changed. We continued on and turned into the street we were looking for.

As we travelled past the houses, Cynthia pointed to where her home had been. A modern building stood where she remembered her old home to be. Being back in Paris reminded her of the end of her life, of the angry mobs, the rats, the guillotine, and of the terror she experienced. The street did not bring back fond memories for her, but reminded her of a fearful period.

Paris was a contrast to Normandy. Life in Normandy had been very happy. The memories and relics of that period still remained. The part of her life which she had lived in Paris was more serious and had ended in horror. The relics of this part had been wiped away with the ravages of time. The streets were different and the house was gone, but the Rue St. George still remained in the same position relative to the river. We didn't include the guillotine or the Palace of Versailles in our research because they were well publicised.

Cynthia proved her ability to lead us over French country roads to pre-stated destinations. In some instances she knew what was coming along the way. We discovered that most of the buildings and relics of her former life memory truly did exist and were as she described. She knew what turns to take along the road. Hers was a feat beyond chance and the results of our expedition with Cynthia added a new chapter to reincarnation research. The chapel had been especially evidential, as there was no way Cynthia could have known about the blue-grey tiles, or the other features of the chapel she described in Sydney under hypnosis before we left for Europe.

Under hypnosis in Sydney, before we began, there was nothing to confirm to Cynthia that her memories were more than mere fantasy, because they were just visions and memories she experienced under deep hypnosis, which, when awake, were like recalled fragments of a dream. It wasn't until the memories were made fully conscious to her, and she reached France, and had explored, that she was sure the 'fragments', the 'hypnotic memories', the 'dream like images', were real places she had experienced before. Many emotions from that life, including the fondness of some memories, returned, once she had again become immersed in the countryside she had long since forgotten. Our expedition had been a success.

The next expedition I would like to mention is one that took us to Scotland with a lady who had never prior to that time, been to the UK.