

How healing her aura helped Cheryl ride again, by Lesley Gibson

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CHERYL MILNER, a former international showjumper for England, became so crippled by rheumatoid arthritis, that she could not walk, dress, or even feed herself. When doctors said they could do no more, she turned to alternative therapies. Finally, she found one that worked. Here Cheryl, 56, who now lives on the Costa Del Sol near Fuengirola, tells her remarkable story.

THIS morning, as I rode across the Spanish countryside with the wind in my hair and the sun on my face, I was so overwhelmed with joy and disbelief that I cried. I was once an international showjumper, competing for England all over Europe, but then I developed rheumatoid arthritis.

Just a few months ago, I was bedridden. I couldn't even feed myself and was convinced I'd never be able to walk again. Riding was beyond my wildest dreams.

I was so desperate to get well that I tried everything from conventional drugs to faith healing, but in vain. Then I discovered a little-known therapy called Bi-Aura which I believe saved my life.

I grew up in North London, and my family had nothing to do with horses — my father ran a flooring business. I had my first riding lesson for my 11th birthday and was hooked immediately. I spent weekends helping out at a riding school in Epping Forest, and discovered I had a gift for showjumping.

At 18, after completing A-levels, I left school and worked at various stables until I was 20. Then I set up a business buying and selling horses and spent all my spare time competing alongside riders such as Harvey Smith and David Broome. I also rubbed shoulders with Princess Anne.

At 31, at a horse show, I met Peter Milner, a trainer. We married and bought a beautiful 32-acre stud farm in St Albans, Hertfordshire. Life was glorious. I jumped at top contests, including Hickstead and the Horse of the Year Show, as well as representing England in European events.

My joints first began to ache ten years ago, when I was 46. My left wrist and lower back became quite painful and my knees felt creaky and stiff. I put it down to all the falls I'd had — when I was 20, I'd broken my left arm and had to have metal plates inserted in it. I've also jolted my back more times than I can remember.

Nine years ago, I came to the Costa Del Sol on holiday with my parents. By that time my marriage was breaking down — Peter and I had simply fallen out of love. During my stay near Fuengirola, I found the climate a real tonic for my joints.

I decided to come and live here. In 1995 I moved into a large detached villa, with a swimming pool, bringing ten horses with me. I continued to teach people to ride, bought and sold horses, and trained them.

I'd been here almost two years when, one morning, I woke up feeling ill. My left arm ached terribly.

WITHIN two weeks, the excruciating, spasmodic pain in my wrist had spread to all my joints except my hips: both knees, my wrists, hands, back and neck, were in agony. I was unable to drive and my wrists and knees were terribly swollen.

It took doctors a year to diagnose rheumatoid arthritis. Meanwhile, I was in despair. I spent much of the time too ill to get up and had to send my horses back to my ex-husband. My parents, who are 78, came out here to look after me.

My condition deteriorated to such an extent that, on one occasion, a doctor had to come out at 3am and inject me with morphine because I was screaming in agony.

Sometimes the condition would ease for a few weeks, but then it would worsen again. Doctors treated me with steroids. They did relieve the pain, but they made me bloated and depressed.

Then I tried gold injections, but had an allergic reaction to them. I also took various painkillers, most of which weren't strong enough.

Finally, four years ago, I was prescribed methotrexate — the strongest drug available for rheumatoid arthritis, which is actually a chemotherapy drug. It helped, but almost all my hair fell out, and I ended up in hospital because it

caused ulcers in my mouth, throat and intestines.

I had acupuncture, too, but my body was so swollen, that the needles left me in agony. In despair, I tried colonic irrigation, detoxing, faith healing, herbal medicine, and even ordered some snake venom from South America.

When you are as ill as I was, if someone tells you sitting in a fire will help, you'll do it. The snake venom never arrived, which is undoubtedly a blessing. But the doctors said they'd tried everything.

My condition progressively worsened until, in January last year, I was in too much pain to move. I couldn't even lift a spoon to my lips or drink a cup of tea — my mother had to feed me and I drank through a straw. There were times when I thought I'd rather be dead.

Then, in February, a friend from Ireland visited and told me about Bi-Aura therapy. His wife, who had

arms around me. I didn't see how it

could help. But as Sinead waved her arms, I could feel numbness and tingling in my fingers and legs. At one point I felt very emotional and cried, though I didn't know why. Sinead hardly touched me, except to put her hands on my head or shoulders.

The first improvement was on an emotional level. I felt as if a weight had been lifted from my shoulders.

There were no marked physical change at first, though I did feel slightly more mobile.

For my second treatment, Sinead and my father helped me out of bed and into a chair. By the fourth, I was able to stand for part of the treatment, though I was still too unwell to spend much time out of bed.

Later that day, as my mother fed me biscuits, one dropped onto the bed and, without thinking, I picked it up and fed myself. When I realised what I'd done, and that I hadn't found it painful, I was elated. By the

arthritis, had found it worked.

My friend is no fool, but even so, I doubted it would work.

However, I decided to give it a chance and phoned therapist Sinead Woods, who's based in Dublin, and agreed to pay her wages for a week and her expenses, which came to just over £1,000.

She agreed to give me four half-hour treatments, one a day, plus a fifth three days later. She said the therapy was so powerful that it should be enough to make a dramatic improvement.

A lovely, fresh-faced, athletic-looking girl, she came over to Spain last March. She did the first treatment as I lay in bed. She explained that with her sensitised hands, she would scan the energy field, or aura, around my body, for blockages in the energy flow.

She would then pull the blockages out, to activate my own healing process on all levels: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

She played some relaxing music, lit a candle, and started waving her

time Sinead left,

for the first time in

months I was able

to get out of bed

and hobble about for

a few minutes each day. And I felt so much happier, I was cracking jokes.

She gave me some chi kung exercises which are derived from an ancient Chinese philosophy using breathing and slow exercises to improve your health.

She said they would keep my energy system flowing. She also advised me to attempt to walk a little farther each day. She assured me the treatment would carry on working for weeks after she'd gone.

EVEN so, I arranged for her to return in six weeks for another week-long course of treatment. In total it cost more than £2,000, but it was well worth it. When she rang the doorbell and I went to open the door to her, I was so much healthier that she barely recognised me.

By now, I was able to stand for most of the sessions. Again, nothing dramatic happened, but the second course of treatment accelerated my recovery. I was able to cut down the drugs I was taking and, after about two months, stopped altogether.

At the end of May I found I could drive again and, finally, in July, I felt well enough to ride for the first time in six years. To mount a horse, having been convinced I'd never be able to again, felt absolutely wonderful. I was so elated I cried.

I was free from my condition at last; free to do the one thing I really loved — and that gave me a sense of joy and relief that money can't buy.

Since then, to my astonishment, I have been able to go back to work: I've bought a couple of horses that I plan to sell on, and I'm teaching people to ride.

For the first time in years, I am planning for the future. I intend to sell my villa and open a riding centre for disabled children.