

**Scientology and its strange ways**

# Cash needed to pay HQ rent

Curiosity about a leaflet handed out at The Cross cost a Chichester man more than £6,000.

Now Roger Phillips, aged 25, is warning people to stay away from the 'church' of Scientology.

And he is furious that credit card companies allow payments of thousands of pounds to the cult.

Mr Phillips, a computer programmer, nearly quit his well-paid job to earn £3,000 a year as a full-time Scientologist.

He revealed the cult had needed his final payment of £3,200 to pay the rent for the 'Dianetics Centre' close to the city's railway station.

The cult signed a six-year lease for the building with architects and surveyors firm

By **BRIAN WARREN**

Nash and Partners Ltd a year ago.

Mr Phillips, of Stockbridge Road, was handed one of the cult's 'free personality' questionnaires in the city centre in August, a month after he moved to Chichester.

He had never heard of Dianetics or Scientology, completed the form and was invited to the cult's offices, and he signed up for a course to improve his memory and concentration.

His boss, family and friends all tried to warn him about the cult, but he was not convinced until he spoke to former Scientologist and friend Martin Francis, who lives in Bristol, in

March.

In seven months he spent £6,000 on the cult's courses and nearly quit his job to become the public executive secretary, second only to Gill Longhurst, the cult's Chichester head.

He used his Access credit card to pay a great deal of the money, and is now astonished that credit card companies allow large payments to a cult.

Mr Phillips said nearly all the Chichester Scientologists were men, and the majority came from the Portsmouth area.

He only handed out the cult's leaflets and questionnaires on one day in Portsmouth, but about 1,000 people took them in three hours.

Cult bosses told him how to handle criticisms from his parents and his boss and put pres-

sure on him to take more expensive courses and join full-time.

He went part-time but they still wanted more. "They called me a wimp for not being able to make up my mind. I said my parents wouldn't like it if they knew. They said I was 25 and should be able to make up my own mind."

He wrote to his parents saying he was planning to quit his job and become a full-time Scientologist. His worried parents managed to contact former cult member Mr Francis who helped their son realise the truth about Scientology.

Mr Phillips said he was aware the cult was supposed to be a church and have 'religious ideals' but he never saw an act of worship or heard about a deity or anything to worship.

Now he is warning people to keep away from the cult. "It's a total waste of time and money. It's dangerous as well. It's like a trap that gradually gets harder to get out of."

"I'm able to think more clearly now and form my own opinions without thinking like a Scientologist."

## Money 'will be refunded'

The cult never lets anyone leave easily, and Scientologists have phoned Mr Phillips up to five times a day.

Now he is investigating ways to get his money back and said Roger Kaye, the cult's southern region chairman, had promised

he would get a refund.

"He said they wouldn't be able to pay immediately because cash is tight, which it is in Poole and Chichester.

"Chichester needed my £3,200 to pay the rent."



NARROW ESCAPE: Roger Phillips tearing up a cult leaflet. - Photo sales no. 8039-1.