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Reverend Lillian Catherine (Murphy) Bain (1916-2003) and Mr. Joseph Cecil Bain (1916-2009)

Lillian Catherine Murphy was born in Toronto on 4 May 1916. Her father was a marathon runner in the era of Tom Longboats, but lost a leg during World War One. He died when Lillian was seven years old from other wounds (shrapnel in the heart) received during the war.

Joseph Cecil (Joe) Bain, her future husband, was born in Toronto, at the home of his mother's sister at 242 Broadview Avenue, on 2 August 1916. Joe's mother passed on 18 August 1916 from peritonitis, resulting from childbirth. Joe's aunt, known as Aunt Maggie, was Mrs. Margaret (Horton) Robinson. Joe was raised by the Robinsons in Toronto, as a member of their Presbyterian family.

Lillian Murphy and Joe Bain met in late 1934 or early 1935 when they were each aged 18. They married on Saturday, 30 November 1935, at St. Barnabas Anglican Church (Chester), at Danforth and Hampton Avenues, Toronto. Joe was confirmed an Anglican after his service in the RCAF.

Joe and Lillian Bain had eight daughters and two sons, all raised in the Anglican Church of Canada. The last were twins, born in 1953, who called their mother "Spud" because she was "an Irish potato girl." While still in their teens, the twins moved to Vancouver.

Once Lillian felt she had an "empty nest", it was time for her to explore her own interests. Spiritualism became her second career or avocation. Joe said that when Lillian had the time to pursue her "natural calling," the change in her was remarkable.

Lillian Bain began her investigation during the mid-1960s at Toronto's Springdale Church under the guidance of Reverend William Charles (Bill) Partridge (1893-1984). Her main interest was in the healing aspects of Spiritualism.

Lillian Bain was always psychic. Her husband Joe said that "she could read your mind." Given their similar natural abilities, Lillian Bain and Annie Elizabeth Partridge (1889-1977) were close friends. They were both very intuitive.

Lillian's first lecture from a Spiritualist platform was in Springdale Church, 30 Merritt Road, East York, Toronto, on Sunday evening, 4 April 1971, at the invitation of Reverend W.C. Partridge, Pastor, and Mrs. Ruth A. Dyke, President.¹

¹A photocopy of Lillian Bain's first handwritten address is available in the Joe and Lillian Bain fonds (MSS 447) at the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections.

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In 1971, Lillian Bain held a licentiate certificate from the Vancouver-based International Spiritualist Alliance,² possibly through the ISA-affiliated Toronto Spiritualist Temple. She was also certified as a healer by the National Federation of Spiritual Healers (Canada), Inc.³

On 5 October 1974, Lillian Bain opened the Bethel Healing Sanctuary in her home at 91 Marilake Drive, Agincourt, on the instigation of British Spiritualists' National Union minister Mrs. Hilda Martin.⁴ Joe Bain had built the sanctuary in the Bains' unused basement. A letter dated 29 October 1974 from Mrs. Hilda Martin, Parson, Colchester, England, to Joe Bain mentions that she had taken part in the opening service of the Bethel sanctuary. Lillian Bain, Hilda Martin, and Mary Samson shared the platform at that opening service.

Services were held on weekday evenings, so as not to overlap with the services of Springdale Church. Bill Partridge attended one of Lillian's church services, but was not too pleased that Lillian had established her own platform. He later encouraged both Lillian and Joe in their Spiritualist journey. The first spiritual healing class was conducted on 21 October 1974, with seven members. Lillian Bain, Jack Pickett and his wife Hilda were regular attendees.

Lillian's subscription to *The Spiritual Healer* appears to have started in May 1971 based upon the copies donated to the Survival Research Institute of Canada. Also donated were miscellaneous copies of *Psychic News* dating back to 1961 and eleven copies of the *Toronto Spiritualist Temple Digest* dated between 1965 and 1967 when the Toronto Spiritualist Temple was likely affiliated with the International Spiritualist Alliance.

Lillian Bain first visited Camp Chesterfield in Indiana in 1968 when she made a bus trip with friends. It became her annual summer retreat until 1982. Lillian would motor to Chesterfield with Spiritualist friends; Joe accompanied her on several of those trips.

At the camp, Lillian met the psychic artist, Mr. Stan Metrunik. Over a number of visits, Lillian had sittings with him and received psychic portraits of several spirit guides, including one specific nurse, and spirit friends.

²The International Spiritualist Alliance is now based in New Westminster, BC.

³At the time of the research for this sketch, J.C. Bain had Lillian's NFSH certificates for 1971 and 1972, also personal member's cards for 1979-1980 indicating that she was a full healer.

⁴Between 1973 and 1977, Hilda Martin stayed with the Bains during her annual visits to Canada. Joe Bain indicated that Mrs. Martin "was very helpful in her stays with us each year."

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Lillian worked at Springdale Church until 1978 when Reverend Partridge appointed her Pastor / Minister of the Springdale Park Spiritual Association church at Bracebridge, Ontario. Lillian Bain was the last pastor of that church.

In 1976, Bill and Annie Partridge moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, to be closer to their son Jim and his family. Annie Partridge's health had been failing and she passed to spirit the following year. Bill Partridge continued to live with Jim and Ruby Partridge in North Vancouver and later Richmond.

Joe and Lillian Bain made several visits to Vancouver to visit Bill and Annie Partridge. During their first visit, to North Vancouver, Annie Partridge was still living. In September 1980, Reverend W.C. Partridge ordained Lillian and Joe Bain in Richmond, to enable them to carry on the work of the Springdale Park Spiritual Association together.⁵ At the time, both Joe and Lillian were already practicing healers. From 15 March 1980, Joe Bain also was certified as a healer with the National Federation of Spiritual Healers (Canada), Inc.⁶

About 1975, while Joe was President of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers (Canada), Inc., he and Lillian visited several groups in the Vancouver area. On one visit, a group of 12 or more individuals were asked to repeat the closing prayer by joining hands. That practice was subsequently used at the Muskoka Spiritualist Church that was opened on 1 September 2003 by John and June Larsen.

Despite being ordained as a Spiritualist minister, Joe Bain was an Anglican. He believed implicitly in the sincerity of his wife Lillian and that of Reverend W.C. Partridge and supported them both fully. Joe agreed to be ordained so as to have the authority necessary to manage the business and legal aspects of Springdale Park Spiritual Association.⁷ As a minister, Joe would also be able to conduct funeral services in the event that there was a need. Joe did conduct one service, that of Jim Oates who passed to spirit after Joe Bain's ordination.

⁵Date corrected through email correspondence with the Bains' daughter in August 2008.

⁶Gary Denniss, *The Story of Springdale Park* (Bracebridge, Ontario: Springdale Park Spiritual Association, 1998), p. 62.

⁷Springdale Park Spiritual Association ordination certificate for Joseph Cecil Bain, dated 10 July 1977.

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To help the Bain children understand their mother's second career, Joe Bain produced a compendium from Arthur Findlay's autobiography *Looking Back* (1955), to highlight the parts he felt were most significant to Lillian's belief in Spiritualism.⁸

When Lillian was able to visit the Arthur Findlay College at Stansted Hall, England, in May 1978, she met Bertha Harris (1900?-1981). Mrs. Harris autographed for Lillian a copy of *Battling Bertha*, acknowledging Lillian with a personal message.⁹

On 11 June 1980, Joe Bain became the fifth and final President of Springdale Park Spiritual Association. For a number of years after Lillian became Pastor of Springdale Park Church, the Bains continued to live in Toronto, in an apartment in Willowdale. During those years, they spent their summers in a home on a lot in Springdale park, on the North Muskoka River, next door to the summer cottage of founder W.C. Partridge.

Joe Bain retired for the last time in April or May 1987. He and Lillian moved up to Bracebridge permanently in June 1987. Lillian Bain conducted the last church services in Springdale Park Church during the mid-1980s. In the late 1980s, Lillian began suffering from Alzheimer's disease which was not diagnosed until 1991 when she was seriously ill. From 1996-2003, Lillian Bain was a resident at Fairvern Nursing Home in Huntsville.

On Tuesday, 1 July 2003, at 6:30 a.m., Lillian Bain passed into spirit. She was survived by her partner of 68 years, Joe Bain, by seven children, 25 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren. The service for Lillian was held on Saturday, 5 July. She was laid to rest in the Pine Hills Cemetery, Scarborough, Ontario.

Joe Bain passed peacefully on 29 April 2009, aged 92, at the South Muskoka Memorial Hospital in Bracebridge. He was survived by seven children, 25 grandchildren, 40 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held on 30 May at Pine Hills Cemetery, Scarborough.

⁸Letter from J.C. Bain to Walter Meyer zu Erpen, 23 May 2003.

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Sources:

Interview with Joseph C. Bain conducted by Walter Meyer zu Erpen,
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Telephone conversations with J.C. Bain, 1998 to 2003.

Drafts of this biographical sketch annotated by J.C. Bain, 2006,
including comments received from two daughters, 2006-2008.

SRIC correspondence file relating to Joseph and Lillian Bain; significant portions
transferred in July 2015 to the University of Manitoba Archives
& Special Collections (MSS 447).

SRIC correspondence file relating to Springdale Park Spiritual Association;
file transferred in July 2015 to the University of Manitoba Archives
& Special Collections (MSS 452).

Gary Denniss, *The Story of Springdale Park* (Bracebridge, Ontario:
Springdale Park Spiritual Association, 1998), pp. 62-64.

Springdale Park Spiritual Association archives; transferred by SRIC in May 2015 to
the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections (MSS 452).

Obituary: Joseph Cecil Bain, *Toronto Star* on-line, 1 May 2009.