



★ IN BIRMINGHAM, second city and industrial centre of Britain, a large section of the normally staid and unemotional populace, is convinced it is witnessing the second coming of Jesus Christ in the person of faith healer Danny Gallagher.

Strength is added to that conviction by the fact that Gallagher is curing the blind, the lame and people in pain by methods similar to those used by Christ when he restored the sight of the blind beggar as described in the Bible. (John, Chapter 9).

Gallagher, aged 28, and a one-time ice cream salesman from Maghera, County Derry, Ireland, has long been hailed as the greatest faith healer in Britain, but the adulation has never been higher than it has in Birmingham, the geographical centre of England with a population of one and a half million.

It was here that Gallagher's country-wide tour halted because the demands for his services became so great. The people were clamoring for him to stay among them.

It was here, among scenes of unprecedented emotion, amounting to hysteria, that Gallagher performed his greatest miracles so far.

★ The blind see again and the dying live... these are the amazing stories told by the thousands of pilgrims who queue to see a young Irish healer. Ex-ice cream salesman Danny Gallagher is said to produce miracles at conveyor belt speed

people of sound common sense — clutched at his coat tails pleading for his time and attention or fell at his feet in the street, weeping their appreciation for the miracle cures he has performed upon them.

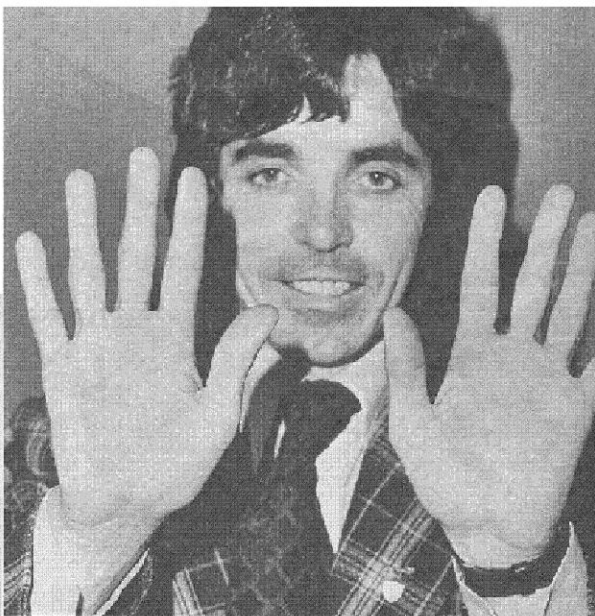
They daily queued in their thousands for his laying on of hands in

the north of the city. In large numbers the blind tapped their way there with the aid of white sticks and guide dogs.

The physically handicapped arrived in wheel chairs or on crutches. Others travelled many miles by car or public transport, finishing their painful journey in the arms of relatives who carried

Danny Gallagher was to have stayed at the Erdington Friendship Hall for one week only. His "patients" were advised that for the complete cure they should make a minimum of three visits to receive his blessing.

By the end of the first week his success rate — reported by his



★ RIGHT: The healing hands of Danny Gallagher, miracle man

acceded to the first appeal to stay on a little longer.

Sceptical newspapers, radio stations and television networks determined to expose him as a confidence trickster and a fake. They too stayed on, but with a different purpose in mind.

Instead of presenting expose accounts their stories about Danny's performance became as exuberant as those of the multitude who had lavished praise and thanks upon his head.

One woman who has been officially registered as totally blind for 22 years stated quite categorically that Danny had completely restored her sight. There was considerable medical evidence to back this claim and she became the star of one national TV documentary.

Another TV company immediately signed Danny up on an exclusive contract to present a series on his life's history.

I spent many hours at Erdington questioning and cross examining men, women and children, either in the middle of their course of unorthodox treatment, or at the end of it.

I retired from an experience that was both profoundly moving and utterly baffling.

Gallagher admits to some failures, but modestly points out that they are far outnumbered by his successes. And if there is occasional disappointment it was not evident during my time at Erdington.

On the contrary, the mood was one of joyous exhilaration in which people begged to be interviewed, competing with each other in their desire to present Danny as their own divine savior whose fame should be spread throughout the world.

Those who had been seemingly incurable repeatedly broke down

and sobbed their thanks. What could not be in doubt was the complete sincerity of both the healer and the healed.

When I record that Danny's daily performance began at 9 a.m. he will doubtless regard the choice of that word as being sacrilegious, but performance is the only word that can adequately describe the

already gone behind the curtain had partially undressed in order that Danny could touch that part of their bodies where their disability was located.

It is an astonishing, incredible spectacle to witness and hear.

And it prompted my question to Gallagher: "You must be aware that there are many who would call themselves realists, rather than cynics, who do not share this touching faith?"

"Those who would go so far as to say you are practising a great confidence trick?"

Gallagher does not take offence. He is obviously accustomed to this form of aggressive questioning.

But his young, attractive, sensitive face takes on a hurt look which appears to be neither bogus nor posed. He waves a hand around the multitude surrounding him and invites me to interrogate any one of them.

And then he adds, "Remember this. Christ too had his doubters."

And just to demonstrate that he is not attempting to influence any of the answers I may receive, his smart, sports-coated figure disappears back among his next batch

From DOUGLAS MURRAY in Birmingham

intense activity inside the Friendship Hall as the queue outside wound along the New Sutton Road and finally disappeared in side streets that are out of sight a mile away.

The turn would come to those in the distance, but it might have been as much as eight hours later before Danny could give them his blessing. For already inside the hall there was assembled a capacity crowd of 250 who had to wait for the great man to bless them, 30 at a time behind curtains.

This was necessary because those fortunate enough to have

of incurables behind thin, flecked curtains which could decorate any suburban bedroom.

The Gallagher method of miracle cure consists of a mixture of murky water and sheer blind faith.