

Members 'are all helped'

A Scientology spokesman said it was a "ridiculous exaggeration" to say Mr Phillips had been phoned up to five times a day. Peter Mansell was given full details of the interview with Mr Phillips and his reply was: "The point is for every Roger Phillips or Martin Francis there are literally thousands of people who are more than happy in Scientology."

"Scientology has been recognized as a religion by courts and religious scholars all over the world. Just last October the United States government's Internal Revenue Service (IRS) determined that the church of Scientology is a bona fide institution, organized wholly for charitable and religious purposes."

"The determination came after the IRS had scrutinized every aspect of the church's activities, its purposes and especially its financial affairs and records."

"Also the IRS investigated the essence of every allegation that anyone had ever uttered against the church, no matter how unfounded or how unreliable its source - and

under IRS scrutiny these claims were dismissed.

"In fact, the IRS review represented the most extensive and thorough examination of any exemption application in the history of the agency."

"In comparison, the disgruntled comments of a few ex-members is hardly authoritative. Ex-members of any organization can be counted upon to have some disagreements or they would probably not be ex-members."

"It would be easy to fill every page of the Observer with stories about people who feel their lives have been enormously improved as a result of their activity in the church."

"With all the problems that exist in the world today and all of the bad news that fills our newspapers, surely it is worth featuring a few people who can tell of helping others get off drugs, improving their ability to study, improving family relations and increasing their understanding of the spiritual side of life and their relationship with the Supreme Being."

"There are hundreds of such people in the church of Scientology."



The founder: L Ron Hubbard.

Humans are 'thetans'

Scientologists have been active in Chichester for at least 10 years and their English base is in East Grinstead.

They stepped up their role in the city after their Portsmouth offices closed a few years ago.

The cult was founded in 1950 by American science fiction writer L Ron Hubbard, who had been involved in black magic.

Its main beliefs is that humans are 'thetans', clusters of spirits who were banished to Earth

75 million years ago by Xenu, a galactic tyrant.

They suffer physical, emotional or mental problems called 'engrams' caused by traumas, including ancient alien wars and implants by hostile thetans.

Scientology auditing at £100 an hour promises to help recruits free themselves from their engrams to become 'clear'. Their methods involve trance states using techniques similar to hypnosis and can induce euphoric feelings.

The bizarre training courses include counting people on the street, using phrases from

Alice in Wonderland, and repeating questions while another person tries to distract them.

Every aspect of their personal life is recorded. The cult went to Chichester solicitor Beverley Ryall's office recently because it believed a member who had left had taken her file which contained full details of her private life.

The cults' members insist Scientology is a proper religion based on Hubbard's beliefs that helps people.

But they are much less open about their policies of attacking anyone seen as a critic

and telling "an acceptable truth" - lies or half truths to thwart questions.

And they will not tell you that Hubbard proclaimed Jesus Christ was a fantasy implanted in our minds millions of years ago and said many anti-Christian things.

Apart from expensive training courses, recruits face the daunting prospect of the huge amount of books they will need for their studies.

They range from lengthy tomes about the cult's beliefs to books aimed at children.