 When the project was launched in 1994, the British Waterways authority were keen to create a dramatic twenty-first- century landmark which would not only be a fitting commemoration of the Millennium, but also a lasting symbol of the economic regeneration of the region.

 The unique shape of the structure is claimed to have been inspired by various sources, both manmade and natural, most notably a Celtic double- headed axe, but also the vast turning propeller of a ship, the ribcage of a whale or the spine of a fish.

Since the 1970s, parapsychologists at leading universities and research institutes around the world have risked the derision of sceptical colleagues by putting the various claims for telepathy to the test in dozens of rigorous scientific studies.

The ganzfeld experiment tries to recreate these conditions with participants sitting in soft reclining chairs in a sealed room, listening to relaxing sounds while their eyes are covered with special filters letting in only soft pink light.

 If, as current results suggest, telepathy produces hit-rates only marginally above the 25 per cent expected by chance, it’s unlikely to be detected by a typical ganzfeld study involving around 40 people: the group is just not big enough.