

Power of hypnosis helps victim convict abuser

A THUG beat his girlfriend so badly that she needed hypnosis to help her to recall the detail of the violence.

Zoe Dronfield was left with horrific injuries after the assault in which Jason Smith, 31, stamped on her head and stabbed her in the neck. As well as her physical injuries, the mental trauma meant she lost her memory.

It was only after a month of sessions with a therapist – during which she was hypnotised – that she was able to stand up in court. The therapy helped restore both her memory and her confidence, says the hypnotherapist.

Ms Dronfield, 38, said: 'I was able to give evidence in court all thanks to the hypnotherapy. I

want to show other women they can do the same – we do not have to let the abusers win.'

The mother of two had been in a relationship with Smith for a year, during which he showered her with gifts and meals at expensive restaurants.

But when he became increasingly controlling, she decided on a trial separation.

Later, he persuaded Ms Dronfield to meet him at her home in Coventry to talk things over. After she went to bed, he attacked her while she slept.

Smith, from Coventry, was found guilty of grievous bodily harm with intent.

He is to be sentenced at the city's crown court next month.

Watch out for this year's extra second

THIS year will be a second longer to compensate for the gradual slowing of the rotation of the Earth, the world's time experts have ruled.

The extra second is needed because the Earth's rotation is slowing by around two thousandths of a second per day and needs to catch up with atomic time.

The adjustment will be made at the International Earth Rotation Service in Paris. The last time a leap second was added, in 2012, websites crashed, but the problem is now said to have been resolved.

The first leap second was in 1972, and this year will be the 26th time it has been added to clocks.

June 30 this year will have 86,401 seconds instead of 86,400 seconds.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

January does not have to be gloomy... it's a time of rebirth

THEY call them the 'January blues'. After all the merriment, the lights and the laughter, we are now condemned to a month of misery. Yuletide cheer has been replaced by darkness and despair.

For me, returning to normal after Christmas has always been difficult. It is as if the warmth has suddenly departed the world. Bad-news stories rush in to fill the aching vacuum.

Winter, it seems, has lost all its wonder. And yet, it does not have to be this way. January does not have to be spent in the doldrums.

Already, the darkness is on the run. The evenings are stretching out before us, even if the mornings remain somewhat murky. Soon, however, they too shall begin to shine with a new sun.

January is when spring begins its glorious symphony, when fresh buds begin to bloom. Even now, you can see the snowdrops or the 'January flower'. Robed in spectacular white, they signal that, below ground, life is ready to resume.

To live by the seasons is to embrace all the joy and love of Christmas. However, it is also to glide through January on the bright side. It is to see it as our ancestors did, as an opening onto new things.

January derives from the Latin 'ianua' which means 'door'. Hence, January is perceived as the door of the year. What is on the other side depends on how you open it.

Mood alters everything. If we open the door in a spirit of despair, January will be a drag. With glazed eyes and glum face, we shall miss the small yet promising signs of what is to come.

If, however, we open that door with a smile and in a spirit of hope, this month will take a very different turn. It is then that we shall notice the lingering light at dusk, the morning sun as it begins its majestic ascent and, in a week or two, the return of some feathered friends. It is then that the swallows and cuckoos will serenade us into spring.

We can choose to ignore this precious month by taking refuge behind our curtains and our screens. We can plug in and switch off to the natural wonders which surround us. We can simply shut the door and close our eyes to what awaits us on the far side.

To do so, however, is to squander something beautiful and inspiring. January is our time to emerge from hibernation, our time to walk from the shadows into a season of new light. And in that light we can witness the marvellous manifestation of rebirth. As it happens, my wife and I

were January babies. We both came into the world just after Christmas and just in time for spring. That helps explain why, for us, this month is a little less ordinary.

Still, even if it were not a time of celebration, I would consider it a magical month. As I write, the low winter sun is pouring into my room. It is cold and crisp, yet you can still see the morning mist as it slowly drifts away.

The trees are bare and weather-beaten, but the buds are now clearly visible.

The soil is sodden and unfit for purpose. Look closely, however, and you will see brand new leaves on the rose bushes.

The world is once again teeming with life. We have opened the door to a new year of opportunity. Let us march through with a smile, taking note of the natural riches with which we have been supplied.

That is why I think there should be no more talk of those so-called 'January blues'. Let us talk instead of 'January yellows'. In the words of that famous prayer, mistakenly attributed to St Francis: 'Where there is darkness, let us see light; and where there is sadness, joy.'

TO think of January in terms of the colour yellow is not only a good mental exercise. It is to see the first month of the year for what it truly is. It is to banish the blues and to behold those small miracles that so often go unnoticed.

As I say, mood alters everything. So much of life is conditioned by what we see and how we see it. It only takes a slight change in perception and all things can be made to seem new.

January: a time of new things. A time of fresh hopes, a time when the earth casts off its winter coat and begins to dress for spring. A time when we are invited to look around in awe as creation reveals its seasonal splendour.

The door is ajar. A crimson beam of sunlight streams through the opening. The path ahead is lined with snowdrops and some tender daffodils.

You hear the first sounds of spring, the blue tits as they sing and soar with the swallows.

You can't quite put your finger on it, but you realise that things are different now. A new cycle has begun and you notice fresh shoots of green, white and yellow.

You push the door open, smile and saunter through.

The door gently closes. Out of the blue, you understand why they rightly say the grass is always greener on the other side.

—mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie—

She's my miracle baby...



Precious: Allison Noyce and daughter Sophie, now 16 months

AFTER going through the menopause at 20, Allison Noyce was told she could never have children naturally. So when she went to the doctor with stomach pains 15 years later, she was shocked to learn she was pregnant – and due within days.

The 36-year-old was afraid she had cancer when she felt pain and found a lump in her stomach. Instead, doctors told her she was eight months' pregnant, and 12 days later she gave birth to daughter Sophie, who weighed 6lb 4oz.

Mrs Noyce, from Southampton in the south of

England, said: 'Sophie is truly a miracle. We simply couldn't believe it when doctors said I was not only pregnant but so close to delivery.'

She said she and her husband Richard were ecstatic when they heard the news.

Most women experience the menopause, a natural change in the body's sex hormones, between 45 and 55. But in rare cases, women experience menopause before they reach 40, often for no known cause. This affects about one in 100 women before 40, and five in 100 by 45.

'Islamisation of Europe' protest anger

THE rise of a hardline movement in Germany calling for an end to the 'Islamisation of Europe' has been condemned.

Ex-chancellor Helmut Schmidt was among 80 politicians and celebrities who backed a petition against the group known as Pegida. Some 18,000 people attended an anti-immigration rally on Monday in Dresden – at which protesters carried a cross, seen as a reference to the Ku Klux Klan.

Counter-protests have also sprung up, with thousands marching across the country.

Mother stole almost £20k from daughter

A MOTHER stole her daughter's £20,000 inheritance and treated herself to holidays and shopping.

Trudy Collins had persuaded 23-year-old daughter Denvar Bathie to hand over her bank card and PIN, claiming she was helping her to avoid temptation.

Over a year, Collins accessed Ms Bathie's account 173 times, spending almost £20,000.

She was caught out during a trip to Egypt in June last year when her daughter's bank became suspicious, Preston Crown Court in England heard.

Ms Bathie told the court how she 'collapsed in tears' when she realised the extent of her moth-

er's betrayal. She said: 'I trusted my mother more than anyone else and I believed her every word. But the trust disappeared there and then. I was betrayed and heart-broken.'

'She went behind my back spending my savings, which was my future.' Ms Bathie had put aside £20,000, inherited from her late father, for her wedding day and a deposit on her first home.

Collins, of Barrow-in-Furness, northwest England, admitted theft and was given a suspended 12-month jail term.

Rosalind Emsley-Smith, defending, said Collins 'lost the plot' when her home was repossessed after the breakdown of her marriage and her ex-husband's death.