

No-one knows what the future holds - so guesswork as usual

Without the benefit of a crystal ball, **DICK LUMSDEN** finds it hard to believe in predicting the future

If it was possible to accurately predict the future, then nothing would work.

Everyone would be able to predict the numbers in Euromillions, but no-one would buy a ticket because all of us would know that everyone would predict the same numbers, so no-one would win.

Commerce would collapse because shops and business could predict which customers would come along... but the same customers would be able to predict where the best value was to be had, and negotiate better deals, which the shops would have predicted and the resultant price war would drive everyone out of business.

Sports teams would cancel out each other's tactics so every match would be a 0-0 draw...and no-one would be watching because they would all know the outcome and not have bothered buying a ticket.

In theory I suppose it would mean the end to war, and even terrorism, if each side could accurately predict the other's moves, then acts of aggression would be preventable.

But, of course, it isn't possible to predict the future in any way shape or form. So why, then, do millions of people every day, consult horoscopes?

Is it because they refuse to believe that predicting the future is impossible? Or is it because they genuinely believe that it is possible...but only for them?

Like many of you, I suspect, I started 2015 with a few of the usual resolutions - get fit, lose weight, cut down on the booze, decorate the spare room, yaddah, yaddah, yaddah. Good intentions, which may or may not come to pass.

While musing about how long I could last on the 5-2 diet, or how long I could get away with postponing the decorating, I started to notice the proliferation of 2015 Horoscopes appearing in the press. Bingo, I thought - I'll have a read and see how my year is going to pan out.

Having just had a birthday last week, predictions for the Capricorn year ahead were all



■ Capricorn Dick Lumsden looks to Russell Grant (seen here star-gazing) and others for some astrological direction.

Photo: ANDY ABBOTT

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would be able to avoid getting out of bed on specific days when bad things were going to happen (that would be pretty much every day as a commuter with Abellio Greater Anglia then).

With a great deal of scepticism, I admit, I turned first to Russell Grant. Surely, the first real TV astrologer, the kind of character that daytime TV was invented for, Russell would point me in the right direction once I could get my head round his bewilderingly complex website.

So...among others, I could have a personal horoscope, a gay horoscope, a planet guide, a birth chart, a look at my year ahead, or chat to a live psychic. I failed to predict how

“psychic” (presumably not Russell himself) for £1.35 a minute. I decided not to bother.

Aha, here's a section called “UK Lotto/Euromillions”. Maybe I was wrong, maybe you can predict the numbers. No, wait, it's just a picture of Russell with his fingers crossed for luck, suggesting I join a syndicate. Disappointing.

But hooked now, I did find quite a few free horoscopes for the Capricorn year ahead on other internet sites (obviously they would not be as good as the ones I could have bought from Russell....but still...)

I can safely say that the only place I will find a bigger load of deliberately misleading, falsely optimistic, smoke and mirrors this year will be in the election manifestos pushed out by the political parties in advance of May 7. Apparently a “Mars-Uranus sextile” just before Christmas has meant that

I can try my best and “invent” anything I need this year. Great, I'll start with something to make the trains run on time

“Jupiter retrograde” is apparently going to make my home life “pleasant but not

expenditure may get out of control (too much Prosecco.) But on the plus side, I am apparently going to be lucky with “taxes and assessments”.

On the health side...it seems I should avoid “fatty and spicy” food, and I may feel sluggish and lethargic. Weirdly, one of the few specific predictions I came across was that I am likely to suffer from health problems related to “ear, stomach, skin-rashes and itching”, but that was from a Chinese site, so I can probably ignore that.

At the end of some hours of pretty fruitless research, my suspicions were confirmed...you can't predict the future. Otherwise, I would have chosen something else to write about and saved myself the time.

So it looks like 2015 will be pretty much the same as the other 59 years I've already had. Go with the flow and just make sure I get to the end of it as painlessly as possible.

Happy New Year!

■ Dick Lumsden is managing director of Owl Marketing Solutions, a specialist in marketing and advertising to older consumers. If you have any

