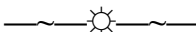




Volume 5, No. 1: February 2018

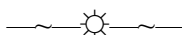
Contents list:



The Pioneer (bi-monthly) is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.

This history journal is presented using original researched material wherever possible. Articles and quotes are taken from original sources as they were published at the time and reproduced by optical character recognition (OCR), the conversion of scanned images of handwritten, typewritten or printed text into machine-encoded text. This means that grammar, old English, spelling mistakes, etc. are not usually changed. However, long paragraphs are sometimes split for easier reading; any errors or explanations needed are noted in footnotes.

Special thanks to Leslie Price and Charles Coulston for their work in sub-editing this issue



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New Year Greetings from our President

January 1928 – SNU President Robert Owen’s New Year’s Message:¹

Another Christmas has passed away with its merriment, feasting and other outward signs of the desire to keep alive “the Spirit of Christmas.” But we retain sweet memories of the happy re-union with loved ones in the physical and with those who have preceded us to the larger life beyond. Again we hear the peal of bells and those familiar sounds, more or less musical, which accompany the Dawn of a New Year. The exchange of greetings and wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year find ready expression free from the usual barriers of conventionality.

Unfortunately, there are many whose interpretation of Happiness and Prosperity is based upon the amount of money they can amass and spend extravagantly, and in seeking and participating in sensual pleasures. Whilst such perverted views persist there is ever a useful mission awaiting all earnest Spiritualists, whose close acquaintance with the Philosophy of Spiritualism, as given from the Spirit Side of life, should imbue them with zeal to shed the light of spiritual truth upon the dark paths of selfishness and ignorance.



Shall we then make this one of the resolutions which it is customary to make at this period of the year, and one that we shall ardently strive to carry into effect. Too often New Year Resolutions are spasmodic and superficial in their conception, and the logical sequence is an early interment with an absence of public ceremony. And if we each resolve to cultivate the habit of “Introspection” not only at this season, but as a daily exercise, its permanent value and utility will be self-evident. Reflection will make us realise that our errors and omissions can be wisely used as stepping stones to success.

Just as the individual reaps a benefit from Introspection, so should most movements and systems of thought whether local, national or international. Let us for a moment turn our thoughts towards the human tragedy of poverty and distress about us, which is so re-acting in many different ways upon the majority of people. We are mindful of the fact that many members of our Spiritualist Churches in congested mining and other industrial centres have particularly suffered, which calls for practical sympathy on the part of those of us who are not so directly affected.

¹ Published in the “National Spiritualist”, the official journal of the Spiritualists’ National Union Ltd.; please see the first volume of Pioneer for information on the “National Spiritualist” journal.

Meanwhile many sufferers may glean a ray of hope and comfort from the following verses culled from a Unitarian Hymn Book:—

“Workman of God, O lose not heart,
But learn what God is like,
And in the darkest battle field
Thou shalt know where to strike.
For Right is Right and God is God,
And Right some day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin.

The recent controversy in the Established Church, the consideration of psychic matters by the British Association, and the interesting International Congress of Psychical Research, are indications of an advance in thought which Spiritualists have long foreseen and now welcome. It is, however, imperative that we should bestir ourselves in every field of activity that our movement offers, if we wish to maintain our position as a progressive body.

If I can induce *you* fellow spiritualists to follow the example of the stalwarts of Spiritualism, then go to your “Home Circle,” the “Holy of Holies,” for your conviction and inspiration; co-operate with kindred souls in your Churches, for divine worship, the promotion of good fellowship, the intelligent cultivation of mediumship, and the careful study of and promulgation of our principles and teachings, and you will find that our beloved cause has taken a renewed lease of life.

The world-wide interest in Spiritualism will be found clearly demonstrated in the forthcoming Congress of the International Spiritualists’ Federation, to be held in London next September. Its success will depend largely upon the help and financial support of the Spiritualists and friends in this country.

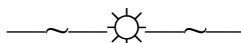
Here again is an excellent opportunity for everyone to participate and make this year one of outstanding importance.

The universal appreciation of Spiritualism in the practical affairs of life must lead to the removal of hatred and warfare and bring Peace, Happiness and Prosperity to the people of all nations.

Let us then invite the close co-operation of that host of Spirit Workers to enable us to achieve such a noble objective.

With fraternal greetings to all at home and abroad.

ROBERT A. OWEN,
President, S.N.U.



It can be noted in Pioneer that it was during Robert Owen's Presidency (1925-1928) that the first official President's badge was presented to the Union in 1927. For many years a farthing coin² was the symbol of office carried by the President of the Spiritualists' National Union; the badge was misplaced for some years but, thankfully, was found and worn by SNU President David Bruton at the 2017 AGM.

See Vol.4, No.4, August 2017 for the full story.



² A former monetary unit and coin of the UK, withdrawn in 1961, equal to a quarter of an old penny.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is today one of our Hon. Presidents-in-Spirit—I believe Sir Arthur was the Union’s first appointed Hon. President in the body, who was elected just prior to his death on Monday July 7th 1930 and, again I believe, the first to continue as Hon. President in the spirit.

Below is taken from the front page of the “Two Worlds”, June 15th 1934:

WHEN SPIRITUALISTS REFUSED THE B.B.C.

How Conan Doyle Declined to Broadcast

By ERNEST W. OATEN

DID you ever hear the story of how Sir Arthur Conan Doyle refused to broadcast?

He was due at Manchester some years ago to address one of our Manchester propaganda meetings, and a week or two previously I called at the Manchester office of the British Broadcasting Corporation and suggested that here was an opportunity of placing Manchester on the broadcasting map. Conan Doyle had promised me that if I could make arrangements for a broadcast he would be prepared to come to Manchester a day or two earlier, and that the B.B.C. should be at no expense.

Suggestion Turned Down

The Station Director told me that he would put the matter before his committee. Three days later I received a reply that they were very sorry, but it could not be arranged. Subsequently, however, the Manchester house appeared to regret its decision.

Sir Arthur travelled from London on a Sunday, but some days before he arrived the committee clearly saw that the Ardwick Picture Theatre, with at capacity for 2,600 people, could not possibly hold the crowd. The committee, therefore, decided to make the meeting admissible by ticket only, the tickets to be given free to all who applied.

In Manchester the authorities are very proper, and it is not permissible to sell a ticket for a reserved seat on a Sunday! Such would be a breach of Sabbatarian decorum. The Manchester authorities have a fear that people might enjoy themselves on the Sabbath.

However, the committee decided to take another hall with a capacity of another 2,500 and run two meetings. Sir Arthur travelled all day, and spoke for an hour at the Ardwick Picture Theatre. He then crossed the street and spoke for 45 minutes at the Coliseum. I had chaired his first meeting, and at its close went to the Coliseum to rescue



Sir Arthur from the crowd which always thronged around him at the conclusion of his meetings.

A gentleman (whom I subsequently discovered to be the Programme Director of the Manchester Broadcasting House) told me that Sir Arthur was going straightway to Broadcasting House to speak on the microphone.

“He is doing nothing of the kind,” said I.

I was, of course, asked what I had to do with it, and in return I asked who had made the arrangements.

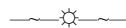
“Oh. I Was just going to invite Sir Arthur to broadcast.”

I said: “Very well, we will see him.”

Sir Arthur Refuses

We went into another room. I pointed out to Sir Arthur that he had had a five hours railway journey, he had been speaking for nearly two hours, he was nearly 70 years of age, he had no time for preparation, and it was not fair either to himself, to Spiritualism or to the public, to place a tired man before the microphone with a serious message to deliver. His nimble mind grasped the situation at once. “You’re right” he said. And so Sir Arthur refused to broadcast.

I don’t think the Manchester officials have ever forgiven me for my interference, but I am satisfied that I did the right thing. And yet I sometimes feel sorry that such a fine propagandist as Doyle was not the first to broadcast our message in England. However, I am satisfied that he assisted me to do so.



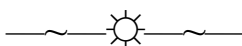
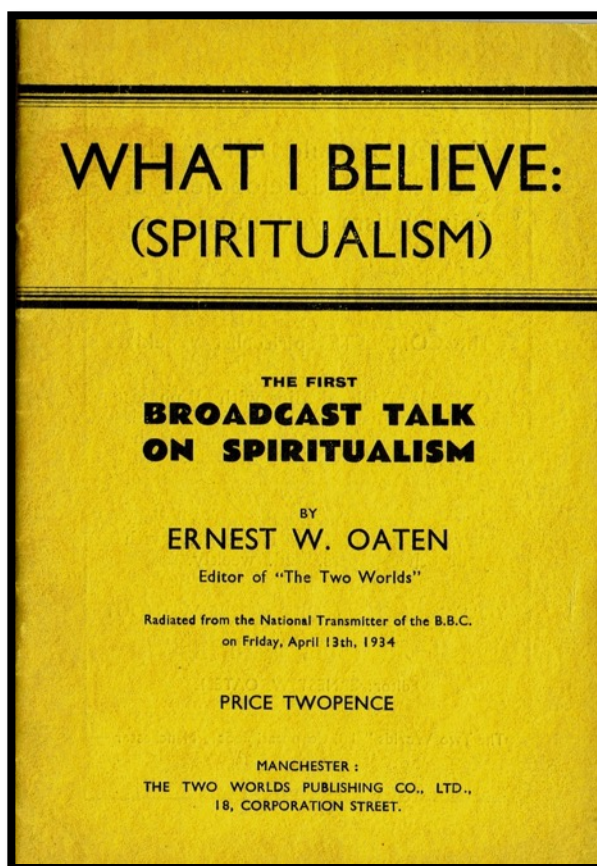
Sir Arthur’s refusal was circa 1929; the honour fell upon Ernest Oaten, who made the first historic broadcast on Spiritualism on Friday April 13th 1934. “What I Believe” is published in *Psypioneer*, Vol.2, No.3, March 2006; below is the Foreword from the booklet as shown:

For a considerable period, the Spiritualists of this country have been agitating to secure recognition by the British Broadcasting Corporation. As one of the important religious denominations of this country, they have asked to be included in the list of denominations broadcasting Sunday services, but the privilege has been denied them. As an alternative, they pressed their claim to recognition in respect of the secular programmes; and the result was that on Friday, April 13th, 1934, the first broadcast talk on Spiritualism was transmitted from London. Mr. E.W. Oaten was unanimously chosen as the representative of the Spiritualist Movement.

The broadcasting of the message of Spiritualism represents an historic achievement, for it meant that the Movement was recognised by the Broadcasting authorities in this country - themselves responsible to Parliament - and incidentally the introduction of our case to hundreds of thousands of people who had never heard a Spiritualist address or read a book on the subject.

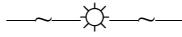
As a result, Mr. Oaten’s post-bag was filled with hundreds of letters from persons whose interest had been provoked by his able exposition of the Spiritualist outlook, and who asked for further information. Undoubtedly the talk aroused widespread enthusiasm. It should be pointed out that Mr. Oaten’s remarks were entirely uncensored and he was allowed every facility in making clear his opinions.

The production of this booklet is the result of numerous requests which have reached us, and we hereby express our appreciation of the favours of the Broadcasting Corporation and Mr. E. W. Oaten, in granting permission for the publication of the verbatim report of the talk and discussion.



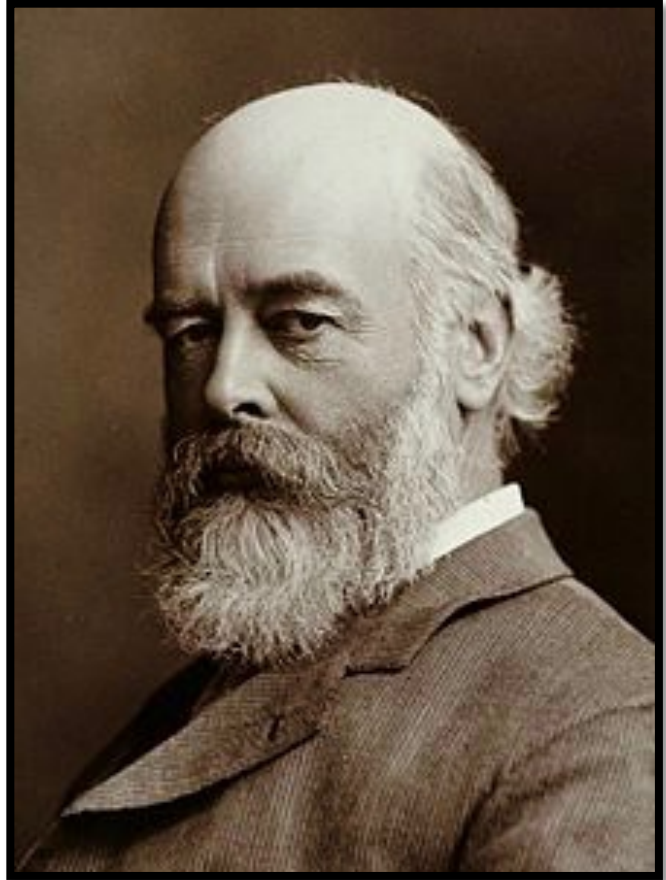
SIR OLIVER LODGE

B.B.C. BROADCAST



Oaten's broadcast is well-known in Spiritualist history; what is not so well-known is that just over a month earlier, on Friday March 9th 1934, Oliver Lodge was part of a B.B.C. broadcast, "Inquiry into the Unknown". He spoke from a B.B.C. studio at Bournemouth. His talk was transmitted by all the national stations and was relayed throughout America. Lodge was quite clear about life in the spirit world:

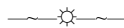
For it is our character that we take with us. We are not different the moment we pass over. Those on the other side tell us there is scope for talent and enterprise over there. Our friends come to welcome us when we cross the border. Friendship is as important there as here.



It is noted in Pioneer³ that Sir Oliver Lodge through his investigations in psychical research was President of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), 1901-3, and again (with Mrs Sidgwick) as President of Honour in 1932. Lodge was not a member of any Spiritualist society, etc. and was quite clear he was not a Spiritualist, as often assumed. In an interview he gave to *The Strand Magazine*, Vol. LVI, July-Dec 1918, we read:

"WELL, Sir Oliver," began the interviewer, "I have been instructed to ask you how Spiritualism stands to-day?"

*"I can't answer for Spiritualism," Sir Oliver replied. "I don't much like the word myself, except as a term in Philosophy. In so far as Spiritualists constitute a sect, and hold religious services, I don't belong to it and have no sort of connection with it; though doubtless it attracts many good people."*⁴



³ Vol.4, No.1, February 2017: A Symposium – Why I Became a Spiritualist: Sir Oliver Lodge

⁴ The full interview can be found in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 4, No. 8, August 2008.

Below is the report of the broadcast transmitted on Friday March 9th 1934, published in the "Two Worlds", March 16th 1934, pages 171-2:



SIR OLIVER LODGE'S MESSAGE TO HUMANITY

His Plea for Amplified Investigation of Mediumship

"The veil between the two worlds is wearing thin. It is possible, given the right conditions, to communicate with the dead. This evidence, so full and unmistakable, has brought me to a conception that the Spiritual World is a great reality, and has led me back to the truth of the saying recorded of the founder of Christianity."

Through the miracle of wireless, countless people in all parts of the world heard these words spoken into the microphone on Friday evening last when Sir Oliver Lodge broadcast his contribution to the B.B.C.'s "Inquiry into the Unknown."

So, after a comprehensive survey of the methods conducting modern psychical inquiry, the question "Do we survive?" was at last carefully considered. Sir Oliver's answer to this profound problem formed a message of hope and reassurance to humanity.

Sir Oliver, who has not yet fully recovered from his recent operation, spoke from a B.B.C. studio at Bournemouth, but his talk was transmitted by all the National stations, and was relayed throughout America. He said:—

"The main object of this series of talks has been to emphasise the importance of psychical research, and to maintain the actual occurrence of facts for which we have no scientific theory, and which are therefore liable to be deplored or denied by present-day scientists, whereas the testimony is that they undoubtedly occur under scientific conditions.

"No scientific man has a right to deny them, or to penalise those who want to make a study of them. The science which attempts to prescribe the exclusion of a whole system of facts cannot be put into the position of any idealistic philosophy. A comprehensive science would take in everything.

"The aim of the talks so far has been to emphasise the importance of psychical investigation. Lord Charles Hope put forward in detail one comparatively small

phenomenon. Mr. Gerald Heard cited a whole set of phenomena which are said to have occurred, but are denied by orthodox science.⁵

“Sir Ernest Bennett told you of certain facts which he thinks are facts, and which are difficult to get away from.

“No scientific man who ignores these facts has the right to philosophise on existence, or to argue against the fundamental tenets of religion. What in my view these phenomena prove is that we are denizens of a spiritual world, and that our activities are not limited to the physical organisms. That is my personal conviction, based on half a century of investigation.

“It seems to me quite certain that man is not limited to the physical body or to a brief life here, but that he has a larger—a more permanent—existence, which we do not wholly understand. That is what the ultimate deduction will be.

“This conclusion is of such great importance that many people look upon it as the main object of psychical research. It is not that. But it is of such vital importance to humanity that it is regarded in some quarters as the solo topic to which the efforts of psychical researchers should be directed.

“Let it be clearly understood that it is possible to admit some or most of the facts and to remain sceptical about survival. In France, for instance, most of the phenomena are accepted, and yet this conclusion is denied.

“I myself was convinced initially from Mrs. Piper’s trance utterances in the year 1889. I then had communications from deceased members of my own family which unmistakably showed that they were just as living and active as ever. But the best and most crucial evidence has been given since the death of F. W. H. Myers in 1901, for he knew all the alternative hypotheses which are still brought forward by those who pride themselves in not departing from orthodox science.

“After his death Myers took pains to show that these conceptions were not sufficient to account for all the phenomena. He showed this by an elaborate system of cross-correspondences, which have been studied by Mr. Piddington. He also showed the insufficiency of any hypothesis, short of survival, by scholarly communications far above the capacity of the medium.”

Sir Oliver added that all the evidence could not be summarised, but he cited two short instances—one case of cross-correspondence in which Myers was the communicator, and one “scholarly communication” characteristic of the late Professor Verrall. He referred his readers to the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, and the remarkable work, *The Ear of Dionysius*. These were only two out of a multitude of testimonies which had been ignored by those who drew negative conclusions, but which had their effect upon scientists who had studied them, “especially upon the group of the S.P.R. leaders who live at Fishers Hill.”

⁵ The Society for Psychical Research 1882-1982: A History, by Renee Haynes, pages 48-49. Various members, among them Gerald Heard, Lord Charles Hope, Dame Edith Lyttelton and Sir Oliver Lodge, took part in a series of broadcasts on psychical research in January 1934. It was called *Inquiry into the Unknown*, and the cautious but open-minded Professor Broad, the Cambridge philosopher, [SPR President 1958-60] contributed a final summary. What was said demonstrated the findings, the ideas and the different currents of thought at work in the Society and brought in some fascinating cases from listeners.

This brought him to the case of Mrs. Sidgwick,⁶ who was generally regarded as ultra-sceptical, and Sir Oliver recalled that in spite of her scepticism Lord Balfour, at a recent meeting of the S.P.R., ended the reading of a paper written by her, in the following words:—

“Some of you may have felt that a note of caution and reserve has possibly been over-emphasised in Mrs. Sidgwick’s paper. If so, they may be glad to hear what I am about to say. Conclusive proof of survival is notoriously difficult to obtain, but the evidence may be such as to promote belief even though it falls short of conclusive proof. I have Mrs. Sidgwick’s assurance that upon the evidence before her, she herself is a firm believer both in survival and in the reality of communication between the living and the dead.”

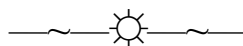
Continuing, Sir Oliver said: “And now let me take advantage of this unique opportunity provided by the B.B.C. and speak to those who find life hard, who get depressed sometimes, and who wonder whether all the struggle and effort is worthwhile. Let me convey to them some assurance, and state the certainty which has gradually grown up in my mind as a result of the evidence obtained over a period of nearly fifty years. All this evidence, so full and unmistakable, has brought me to a conception that the spiritual world is a great reality, and has led me back to the truth of the sayings recorded of the founder of Christianity: ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.’ So were His assertions of a quiet confidence about a future life.

“Indeed, I don’t see how a professing Christian can have any doubt about it. If we look upon this life as only the beginning of our pilgrimage, and think of it as a preparation for a larger and fuller existence, then we might learn to welcome the rebuffs as opportunities for service and development of character. For it is our character that we take with us. We are not different the moment we pass over. Those on the other side tell us there is scope for talent and enterprise over there. Our friends come to welcome us when we cross the border. Friendship is as important there as here.

“Some there are who are spared most of the discipline of this life—who have been removed, so we think, prematurely. Many parents mourn the loss of children. I can only tell them that all is well with their loved ones, and the children are taken care of by good people.”

Those who had passed over lived in a spiritual world, and inhabited “the etheric body which they possessed all the time. They assure us that all is well with them, and that love bridges the chasm.”

Sir Oliver concluded by again appealing to official science to investigate the happenings of the seance room. He did not think it right that science should limit itself to investigating material phenomena only—a pursuit fashionable among most scientific men since the days of Sir Isaac Newton.



⁶ Eleanor (nee Balfour) Sidgwick: in 1882 the S.P.R. was founded, with her husband Henry Sidgwick as its first President. For more information on the work of Mrs Sidgwick please see *Psypioneer*, Vol. 4, No. 11, November 2008: “The Work of Mrs Henry Sidgwick: A Pioneer of the S.P.R.”

LEONORA E. PIPER



Medium Leonora E. Piper's (1857-1950) importance to psychical research may be assessed by the fact that she is still cited today by those writing about evidential phenomena supporting the concept of survival of bodily death. Please see *Psypioneer*, Vol.5, No. 3, March 2009: "Leonora E. Piper online – Carlos S. Alvarado".

Below is taken from the front page of the "Two Worlds", March 23rd 1934:

MEDIUM WHO CONVINCED SIR OLIVER LODGE

Mrs. Piper's Martyrdom for Psychic Science

By Dr. NANDOR FODOR

"I myself was convinced by the evidence derived from Mrs. Piper's trance utterances in the year 1889."

Behind this statement, made by Sir Oliver Lodge during his recent broadcast talk, is a remarkable story. Through Mrs. Piper, Sir Oliver had communication from deceased members of his own family, but he did not find conviction until after much investigation.

Writing in the "Bristol Evening World," Dr Nandor Fodor unfolds some of the story. We print excerpts below.

SOME day a monument will be erected to Leonore E. Piper.⁷ She is still with us. A woman of sterling character and courage on whom Professor William James⁸ one of the greatest of modern philosophers was willing to leave his reputation for wisdom or folly to stand or fall."

She converted Dr. Richard Hodgson, the greatest fraud-hunter in the history of psychical research to a belief in human survival.

She convinced Professor J. H. Hyslop, of Columbia University that "there is a future life and persistence of personal identity"—a declaration which cost him his professorial chair.

She bewildered the world's most eminent psychologists, and for a period of more than forty years, she endured all the vivisection which scientific ingenuity could devise, in its attempt to disprove the reality of an invisible world.

And this remarkable woman, Mrs. Leonore E. Piper, brought Sir Oliver Lodge to the conviction of survival.

⁷ Also spelt Leonore.

⁸ SPR President, 1894-5.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that this great scientist testified to the stupendous reality of survival long before he suffered an acute personal bereavement. His views on demonstrated survival were announced as early as 1909.

But those who attempt to explain away the great scientist's conviction of the truth of Spiritualism conveniently forget that.

Mrs. Piper was a trance medium. So-called spirit controls succeeded in spite of inconceivable difficulties, in efficiently handling an alien organism for earthly manifestations.

This is how "Pelham," one of Mrs. Piper's otherworld supervisors explained the position.

"In order to reveal themselves to you the spirits put themselves in an environment that discommodates them a good deal.

"They are like persons who have received a blow on the head and are in a state of semi-delirium. They must be calmed, encouraged, assured that their idea will immediately be of great importance. . . .

"In order to speak with you it is necessary for me to re-enter the body and there dream. Hence you must pardon my errors and the lacunae in my speech and memory."

The marvel of Mrs. Piper's case was that her body responded to the invaders exceedingly well. She could obtain three simultaneous communications: writing with both hands and speaking at the same time.

The dramatic activity of the hand was a remarkable phenomenon. It was full of intelligence and could be described more as a person than a hand.

Dr. Hodgson reported that a sitting where a woman was engaged in a profoundly personal conversation with the control concerning her relations "the hand was seized very quietly and as it were surreptitiously, and wrote a very personal communication to myself purporting to come from a deceased friend of mine and having no relation whatsoever to the sitters; precisely as if a caller should enter a room where two strangers to him were conversing but a friend of his is also present, and whispers a special message into the ear of the friend without disturbing the conversation."

The first point on which the average inquirer wishes to be satisfied is the integrity of the medium. We have the testimony of Mrs. Piper's discoverer, Professor William James.

For the first eighteen months he kept her under personal supervision. He hypnotised her and found the condition of her trance and hypnotic sleep radically different.

He found no signs of thought-transference either in the hypnotic condition or immediately after it.

It was the result of Professor James's representations to the Society for Psychical Research in London that Dr. Richard Hodgson was sent over to America, and initiated there the most famous period of mediumistic investigations.

He started by engaging detectives to watch Mrs. Piper, and see if she made any attempt to obtain information normally.

On days of sittings he forbade her to read the morning papers. He introduced all sitters under the pseudonym “Smith.”

He improvised sitting for the benefit of chance callers of whose very existence Mrs. Piper could not have been aware.

For fifteen years he was ready to pounce upon the least suspicious circumstance. But in his second report to the Society of Psychical Research. Dr. Hodgson stated:

“At the present time I cannot profess to have any doubt that the chief communicators to whom I have referred in the foregoing pages are veritably the personages that they claim to be, that they have survived the change we call death, and that they have directly communicated with us whom we call living, through Mrs. Piper’s entranced organism.”

The terror of fraudulent mediums. the hardest sceptic who ever entered the arena of psychical research, the man who exposed Mme. Blavatsky in India, became a Spiritualist.

His outlook upon life underwent a complete change. He refused remunerative offers from Universities and colleges, and lived happily on an inadequate salary in one room in Boston for the rest of his life.

Mrs. Piper paid her first visit to England in 1889. She was isolated more completely from the world than if she had been taken to a fever hospital.

Sir Oliver Lodge was her host at his house in Liverpool. His wife engaged an entirely new staff of servants. All her correspondence passed through the hands of her host, and she could not even go to a shopping expedition alone.

Yet this woman revealed the most extraordinary familiarity with the lives of all the strange people who were brought to her. Her control, the rascally “Phinuit,” showed an astonishing familiarity with the boyhood days of two of Sir Oliver Lodge’s uncles.

Sir Oliver Lodge thereupon sent a professional inquiry agent to Barking, where they lived, to see how much he could find out on the scene. The agent wrote:

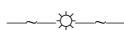
“Mrs. Piper has certainly beaten me. My inquiries in modern Barking yield less information than she gave. Yet the most skilful agent could have done no more than secure the assistance of the local record keepers and the oldest inhabitants living.”

Sir Oliver Lodge’s first report, issued in 1890, was cautiously restricted to the conclusions:—

1. That Mrs. Piper’s attitude is not one of deception.
2. No conceivable deception on the part of Mrs. Piper can explain the facts.

But nineteen years later in his *Survival of Man*, Sir Oliver admitted:

“The hypothesis of surviving intelligence and personality—not only surviving but anxious and able with difficulty to communicate—is the simplest and most straightforward and the only one that fits all the facts.”



So runs in brief the story of Mrs. Piper's mediumship, and we congratulate the *Bristol Evening World* on publishing the long article, from which the above extracts are taken. Who can tell how much the testimony of such men as Lodge and Hodgson has contributed to the changed attitude of the press?

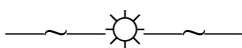
A full record of Mrs. Piper's work is given in *The Life and Work of Mrs. Piper* by Alta L. Piper (Kegan Paul. 7s. 6d.). Few mediums have withstood more meticulous and untiring investigation, and few have provided such crucial evidence in the face of the most stringent tests. Mrs. Piper is still alive, but the last important investigations took place in America in 1926-7.



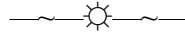
Leonora E. Piper

Supplement to "Light," September 2nd 1899

From a photo by Cunningham, Boston, U.S.A.



UNCERTAINTY ON THE FOUNDATION OF OUR SEVEN PRINCIPLES IS FAR FROM RECENT



Published in the "National Spiritualist", May 1928; for details please see footnote 1:

Question: and Answers

THE EDITOR,
Dear Sir,

I have recently come across an old 1d. Propaganda Hymn Book. It is undated, but was published when "The Two Worlds" was edited by Will Phillips, and the S.N.U. had Mr. W. Harrison as secretary.

The interesting feature is the unusual form of our Principles, which read as follows:—

"I believe in the Infinite Spirit Intelligence called God.

I believe in the Brotherhood of Man, the immortal and progressive life for all.

Personal responsibility; compensation and retribution hereafter for good or evil motives and deeds here.

The innate divinity and perfectibility of every spirit, and a path of progress open to Every spirit that wills to know and do the right."

I am curious to know when and by whom this set of Principles was changed to our present form as included in the Lyceum Manual G.C.R. 136, which claims to have been given by the Spirits through Mrs. E. H. Britten.

The older (?) form certainly omits the factor of spirit communion, but, otherwise, has its good points.

Can you assist me, please?

Yours fraternally,

MARGARET E. LAWTON.

The query raised by Miss Lawton is an interesting one, especially regarding the value to be placed on the assertion that these Principles of our Spiritualism "were given by the Spirits through Mrs. E. H. Britten."

So far I have not been able to trace the occasion or the address when the Principles were first given to Spiritualism. Perhaps readers will help to find this important date.

Some light is, however, thrown on the matter by the following quotation from the introduction to "The Unseen Universe," produced by Mrs. Britten after her severance from "The Two Worlds," in the year 1892:—

"It is by way of making a fitting contribution to this Bible of the Future—in the humble hope of adding a few stones to the Temple of the Divine Humanity in which all the nations of the earth shall yet worship, that I have undertaken, as far as means and

personal effort will allow, to gather up some of the crumbs of truth that have sustained me in my long and toil some earthly pilgrimage, and which I desire to bequeath to posterity in the present work, hoping thereby to strengthen the faith of humanity, now and hereafter, in the following plain and simple, yet well proved,

CREED OF THE SPIRITS:—

I believe in the Fatherhood of God.

The Brotherhood of Man.

The immortality of the soul.

Personal Responsibility.

Compensation and retribution hereafter for all the good and evil deeds done here.

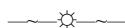
And a path of eternal progress open to every human soul that wills to tread it by the path of Eternal Good.

Unless it can be shown that Mrs. Britten gave a Statement of the Principles she had received from the Spirit people, earlier than this, and more authoritative, we shall have to revise our ideas regarding the expression “Given through the Spirits.” If the above “Creed of the Spirits” is the earliest form, it is surprising to find omitted the one outstanding feature of modern Spiritualism, viz., “the proven facts of spirit communion between departed human spirits and mortals.”

Mr. W. Phillips became Editor of “The Two Worlds” about 1899,⁹ and Mr. Will Harrison was Secretary of the old Federation in 1894-5, and again from 1898 until succeeded by Mr. Hanson G. Hey in 1903.¹⁰ From the version quoted by Miss Lawton from the Small Hymn Book, it would appear that the change from “The Fatherhood of God” to “The Infinite Spirit Intelligence called God,” expressed the personal view of Mr. Phillips, and was intended to mark his dissent from belief in a Personal God.

In a version appearing in the “Lyceum Manual,” 5th Edition, 1897, S.C.R.¹¹ No. 136, we have the following addition to the phrase, “the immortality of the soul,” “and its personal characteristics,” and also the addition retained more or less in identical terms since then:—“The proven facts of communion between departed human spirits and mortals.” The Words “I believe” are also dropped, no doubt out of regard for the known dislike of anything which suggested a creed. The S.N.U. have abbreviated the wording still further, and one can only conclude that no more can be imported into the declaration—“given through the Spirits”—than that the Principles accepted by Modern Spiritualism represent the oft-repeated teachings given by the Spirit people, not alone through Mrs. Britten, but through all mediums before and since her day.

G. F. BERRY,
Editor, NATIONAL SPIRITUALIST.



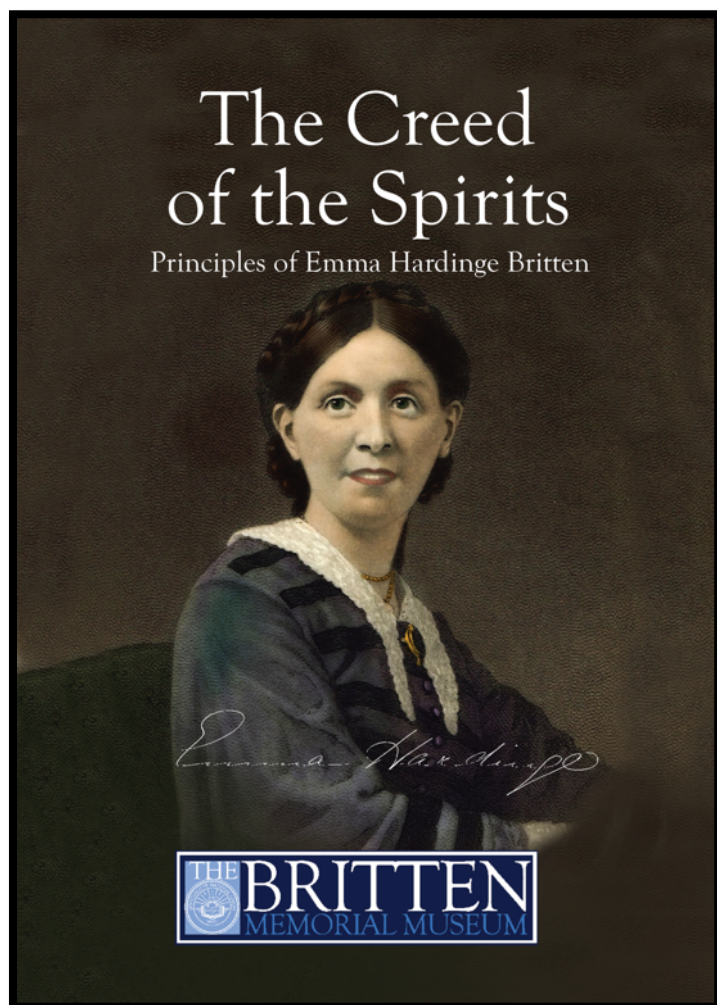
⁹ Will Phillips, editor of the “Two Worlds”, 1899-1906.

¹⁰ See “Pioneer”, Vol.1, No.5: “General Secretaries of the SNU”.

¹¹ S.C.R. I believe this should be G.C.R. (“Golden Chain Recitations”).

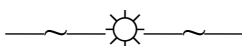
Many of these questions posed above over recent years have now been addressed; however, there would be more questions some twenty years later in the 1940s, when the SNU education courses inadvertently introduced Robert Owen as the sole author of the Seven Principles. Although there is still some confusion as to the formation of the history of the Principles, Emma's claim that they were given by the spirits over two decades is now generally clear. This is now reflected in the SNU education course notes, which have been updated and corrected to a large extent. Further reading can be found in Pioneer, "How many Principles made up Emma's "Creed of the Spirits"?"¹² and "Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?"¹³ Another useful reference is "National Federation to National Union", when the Seven Principles were adopted in 1901.

Further reading, including the full address given by Emma Hardinge Britten in Cleveland Hall, London on April 30th 1871, when Emma gave her four Principles, is available in the online shop.¹⁴



Any reader requiring more detailed information, please contact the editor:

pioneer@snu.org.uk



¹² Volume1, No.4, July 2014.

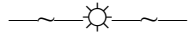
¹³ Volume2, No.2, March 2015.

¹⁴ <https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/the-creed-of-the-spirits>

ERNEST WALTER OATEN

1875-1952

Telepathic Experiments



Our SNU President Ernest W. Oaten has previously featured in “Pioneer”¹⁵ on two occasions; for many years he was editor of the “Two Worlds”, he was one of our most experienced pioneers giving almost sixty years’ service much of this within the SNU.

Psychic ability was indeed a very prominent part in the earlier part of our history, today its importance is sometimes neglected although the early part of our foundations was built on “Psychic Force” a term used in the early 1870’s by William Crookes or the word “Psychic” as used by Stainton Moses.



Oaten wrote a number of weekly articles of his early memories of his investigations etc in the “Two Worlds” which at that time he was editor, they were so successful in 1938 they were put into a book “That Reminds Me”, he notes in his Foreword:

Experienced investigators know that the best results are not produced by occasional and isolated sittings. The soundest convictions are established by regular circles, or seances in which the same sitters with the same medium meet over a period of years. That is the strength of the “home circle.” To watch mediumship grow from its early beginnings to the fullness of its power, is to know its weakness and its strength, and is an education in itself. ...

He concludes with the words of William Crookes:

“I did not say they were possible, I only said they happened.”

Below Ernest Oaten talks of some of his psychic experiences taken from his book pages 105-109:

SHE MET THE TRAIN

TELEPATHIC experiments are always fascinating, and though they sometimes produce results very different from those intended, yet they can afford evidence of the action of mind upon mind.

Over a period of nearly twenty years I systematically experimented with a large number of people until I found three with whom the experiments seemed to show a high standard of successes. It is not surprising that the most responsive of these is my wife,

¹⁵ Vol. 1, No.2, January 2014: “Ernest Walter Oaten (1875-1952) – His contribution to Spiritualism was long and notable, giving almost 60 years’ service” – “The History of The Two Worlds” – “Twenty-One Years – Oaten tells us how through spirit guidance his position as Editor was orchestrated by the spirit of Emma Hardinge Britten.”

and on hundreds of occasions I have been able to send messages at unexpected times and with a large measure of success.

In the course of my speaking engagements I had spent four weeks on the South Coast, journeying from town to town, and my tour was to finish on a Friday evening at Paignton, allowing me to journey home to Yorkshire on the Saturday. On the Thursday evening, however, someone remembered that there was a local fête, or special gathering on the Friday, which it was thought would militate against a good attendance at the Masonic Hall, and accordingly, at the close of Thursday's meeting, an announcement was made that there would be no meeting on Friday.

Mr. Rabbitch, who was then the president, suggested that if I liked I could get away home on Friday morning. It was then 9-30 p.m. The telegraph offices were closed. I lived in a remote hamlet on the Yorkshire moors. There was no chance of getting an ordinary message home. Living in such a remote place it was seldom my wife came to town, and the thought struck me that if I could induce her to meet me on the Friday afternoon we might have tea in town, do a theatre, and have a pleasant evening. How to get in touch with her? that was the question.

I waited until 11 o'clock, when I expected she would be in a quiet and restful mood. I retired to my room, and having looked up the time-table, sent through a telepathic message asking her to meet a certain train at the Sheffield station I was speedily satisfied that I was getting a response, and that the message had been received. Accordingly, I caught an early morning train, arriving in Sheffield in the middle of the afternoon to find my wife waiting for me at the station barrier. She had travelled seven miles to meet the train I had specified, and met me with a sarcastic smile. "You're a beauty," she said, "to tell me the time of the train, and not tell me which station you were arriving at." It had not struck me that there were two stations in Sheffield. However, she had gone to each and inquired whether a connection from Torquay would arrive at the time specified and thus had met me. It enabled us to have a pleasant evening together, and gave me a little rest and relaxation after the strain of a month's tour.

Often in emergencies I have used telepathic powers to get such messages across. Occasionally it is a "two-way line," and I am able to receive messages, but, generally speaking, it is far easier for me to send a message than to receive one.

PROJECTING THE ASTRAL BODY

I HAVE related several incidents of the use of telepathic powers, but the following has always puzzled me:—

I had been to Blackburn on National Council business, and on the Monday had been privileged to have a sitting with Tom Tyrrell.¹⁶ Tom was a remarkable medium, and quite as good a physical medium as he was a clairvoyant. I have often thought that my close association with him that day had something to do with the success of the following experiment.

The Wrong Tram.

I was living at the time on the Yorkshire moors, and on Monday evening started my return journey. It had been raining heavily all day. I had no coat or umbrella. I had to cross the city at Manchester from station to station, and was very wet. I caught the Sheffield train at London Road, and while on the journey suddenly bethought myself that if I could get a slow train from Penistone, which would stop at the local station, it

¹⁶ See Pioneer Vol.2 No.2 March 2015 "Mr Tom Tyrrell."

would save me a seven miles' walk at the other end, for my train was not due till late. It was during the war years, and on alighting at Penistone I asked the old porter—a superannuated railway servant who had been brought back in consequence of the shortage of men—from which platform the Sheffield slow train started. Presently the train drew in and I took my seat. Off we went. The first stop was Silkstone, an isolated station standing on high ground. The wind was blowing a hurricane, and the rain coming down in torrents. I knew I was in the wrong train. I consulted the station "staff" as to whether I should travel to Barnsley or go back to Penistone. He advised the latter. This would give me the midnight train to Sheffield, with a seven miles' walk.

I had half an hour to wait. I was already wet through, and very cold; there was no waiting-room, no fire, no chance of getting a hot drink, and I began to fear for my health. I was sure to catch a cold.

The Experiment.

As I sat on a box of luggage in the shelter of the booking-office, the thought came to me that if I could be sure of a hot supper and a hot bath the moment I got home, I might escape a serious illness I put my whole energy into my experiment. Mentally, I journeyed down the line to the local station, climbed the hill, crossed the quarry, went up the drive, put my finger on the latch and entered the hall. Advancing to the door of the room, I stretched out my hand and went through the motion of turning the handle of the door. Entering the room, I stood poised, and opened up my psychic perceptions. My wife was sitting in a long low deck-chair—a chair not usually kept in that room. It was usually on the lawn. She was reading a book. I passed behind her, looked over her shoulder, and saw the title on the top of each page. It was *Before Adam*. That book was not in the house when I left on the Friday. It had been borrowed on the Sunday. I noticed my wife's mother sitting in her usual chair. I advanced and faced my wife.

Putting all my energy into my effort, I said: "I have lost my train. Shall arrive at 3 a.m. Go to bed, leave me a hot supper, hot bath, and towels." I felt that I had succeeded, and in came my train.

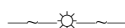
My luck was in that night. I got back to Penistone to find a goods train going through, and by means of a little persuasion and a very impressive handshake with the guard, he allowed me to ride in the guard's van, and even stopped the train at my local station! I arrived home at half-past one to find a note awaiting me from my wife, who had gone to bed. "Towels on the rail. Plenty of hot water. Supper in the oven." I am satisfied that that experiment saved me a severe illness.

A Puzzle.

And now for the other side. The following morning my wife was able to tell me that she was sitting reading when both she and her mother heard the handle of the door turn and *the door swing open*. At that time we had a Persian cat which was a match for any dog in the district. He occupied my chair in my absence, and when I returned home he always advanced to me and showed fight, since I was turning him out of his pet corner. When the door swung open, both witnesses testify that Tim rose from the chair, went to the door, and stood on his hind legs in his usual fighting attitude. Opening up her clairvoyant power, my wife saw me, got my message and all went well.

The question that has always puzzled me is:

"Can a man's astral body open a material door at a distance of fourteen miles?"



The term “astral body” has different meanings for different authors and researchers; an interesting book on what is generally called astral projection, which highlights the terminology and addresses similar problems of Oaten’s open question, “Can a man’s astral body open a material door at a distance of fourteen miles?” is “The Supreme Adventure: Analyses of Psychic Communications”, by Robert Crookall, first published in 1961.

Another fine contribution is by Sylvan J. Muldoon & Hereward Carrington, “The Projection of the Astral Body”, first published in February 1929; the image shown is from the third edition, March 1939.

I will make one more quote from the book, pages 71-72. I was interested to see the name Caroline Groom, a forgotten pioneer, who in her day was highly regarded and ranked among the top exponents in the growing movement.



THE DEPARTURE OF THE ASTRAL BODY AT DEATH
According to clairvoyant vision of Andrew Jackson Davis.

One rewarding aspect of the Research – Study Weeks is the interest from university students and on occasion their professors, who are taking the opportunity of using our resources in their studies. Many students have covered Spiritualism in their dissertations; the subjects are varied, for example Spiritualism in WWI, and Early Psychic Art, highlighting the pioneer medium David Duguid. Recently there was Sophie Allen, a first-year history PhD student at Newman University, who for her thesis is looking at the developments of Spiritualism and its connection to science and scientific theory in 19th-century Britain – particularly the West Midlands and, more specifically, Birmingham. Her thesis has a specific focus on women, in terms of what was popular about Spiritualism that engaged with so many women during the 19th century. Sophie found the ideal medium with Birmingham connections in Mrs Caroline Groom; it is good to know that our history via our Britten Museum and Library is being used by the various universities.

Oaten recounts his experience with Mrs Groom:

TRANSFIGURATION is a remarkable phenomenon when seen at its best. Sometimes only the face of the medium is changed: at others the whole body seems to alter. Transfiguration is sometimes merely the manipulation of the medium’s features, at other times an ectoplasmic mask seems to overlay the face.

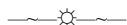
One of the most remarkable mediums of the old times was Mrs. Caroline Groom, known as the “Birmingham Witch”—a title which always brought an amused smile to her face. She was fulfilling an engagement at the local church, and I was one of the select company who adjourned to Mrs. Johnson’s house after the Sunday night meeting. After supper we sat round the fire chatting. We were sitting in full lamp-light. Mrs. Groom was a woman well past middle-age, and her features were well lined. She was a small woman of about five feet, and fairly broad. She had been telling us some of her experiences when suddenly she became quiet, and dropped off apparently into a swoon. I watched her face. Slowly the lines faded. The face became that of a young woman. The features altered. The nose became very prominent almost Wellingtonian in outline. Mrs. Groom vanished and I was gazing on a handsome, rather masculine woman in the first flush of womanhood.

Slowly she rose from her seat and stood behind the armchair in which she had been sitting. Her breathing was deep and heavy. To my amazement she slowly began to grow taller, until the waistline was almost visible above the back of the chair. I was curious. I always am. I want to know what has happened. So I said, “may I come round and see if her heels are on the floor?”

Permission was granted provided I did not touch her. I stood behind her. I not only saw, but felt, that her heels were on the floor. Her height was greater than mine. I went to the corner and took my walking-stick and measured from the floor to the waist the full length of the stick, and then from the waist upwards. Taking out my penknife I made a notch in my stick, so that I might subsequently check the measurements. My stick is still notched to-day. Mrs. Groom was five feet ten inches high.

For nearly half an hour she addressed us on the laws of intercommunion between men and spirits. It was a strong masculine voice, entirely at variance with Mrs. Groom’s natural voice. It had a slightly foreign accent. The English was good and well chosen. She claimed to be Joan of Arc. I had no means of testing the identity, and I have to let it go at that; but the features were certainly those of someone in her early twenties, while Mrs. Groom was the wrong side of fifty.

It was one of the most outstanding cases of transfiguration I have ever seen, the more so because it was unexpected both by the medium and ourselves, and it left an impression on me which will never be removed.



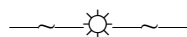
Last year, with the discovery of James J. Morse’s projector and the glass lantern slides, I was delighted to find an image of Caroline Groom; I was aware that James Burns had published an image in 1888 in his “Medium and Daybreak” but to find a glass positive of a different image was rewarding, as shown.

She was one of the first to give clairvoyant descriptions in an open public assembly, where she has often encountered rough and hostile treatment, but, with the unconquerable resolution that has always characterised her pioneer labours, coupled with her own powerful and keenly developed psychical powers, she has mastered the most adverse and stubborn conditions, and extracted from her would-be opponents admissions of the truth of her clairvoyant descriptions.



Below is an article which appeared in the "Two Worlds", October 4th 1895, under the editorship of Edward Walter Wallis, 1893-1899:

MRS. GROOM



FOR A QUARTER of a century Mrs. Groom has been intimately associated with much private benevolent work, as well as identified with the public movement of Spiritualism in Birmingham and Midlands, and in latter years extending her visits to almost every town in which a Spiritualist Society exists.

It is not merely in the public advocacy of Spiritualism as a trance and clairvoyant medium that her sterling merit is displayed, but also in the private life of a true; generous, and self-sacrificing woman, ever exercising her "diversity of Spiritual gifts" for the good of all with whom she comes in contact, whether high or low in the moral and social scale, who from all parts of the country have sought her counsel and advice, and not infrequently her personal and material help. Under all circumstances maintaining a pure and creditable position and standard for herself and the cause she represented, endowed with an indomitable energy, that spurns the habits of indolent and luxurious ease, intense sympathy for those in trouble, and distress, always ready to respond to the call of the spirit-world to nurse the sick and soothe their passing over to "the other side" of life, to give words of comfort and knowledge of spiritual facts to the bereaved, she has in her private life, ever been a willing instrument of messages of love and consolation, by impression, trance, and clairaudience, for hundreds of spirit people to their grief-stricken, sorrow-laden friends, who mourned them as being dead!

To Mrs. Groom has fallen the lot to lift the ominous, and awful pall of death's terrors, and give in its place certain knowledge; joyous, and rational hope of immortal life. The blighting pangs of bitter anguish and despair, that fastened with relentless grip upon, the heart of one whose life's idol had been cruelly snatched into an unknown world, may-be of torture, have, in thousands of cases, been assuaged by this faithful servant of the spirits; lives have been made happier, unrequited wrongs have been righted, families united in harmony have thus learnt the gospel of Spiritualism, and have in their turn become its standard bearers. Like most other pioneer mediums, nothing, daunts her efforts; she has travelled in storm and tempest, frost and snow, in fulfilment of her duties, without puff or praise, or "the sounding of the loud timbrel," and often to receive ridicule and false accusation for her pains. The true life-history of mediums can never be recorded outside their own consciousness.

Voltaire said "history was a grand lie," being a distorted reflection of life, a dry bundle of facts built up into a decrepid form. Who can depict the torturous experience of a fine-grained, delicately-strung sensitive, amenable to the most subtle waves of thought and emotion, rudely subjected to the most callous and brutal calumny and slander, to fierce and vicious attacks from the hydra-headed foe—the vindictive bigots,—who, more than once, have endeavoured to entrap Mrs. Groom within the clutches of the law by the bait of a fee? Y.M.C.A. men have dogged her footsteps at seances and public meetings, caused uproarious proceedings, frantically yelling "witch! Witch!" while they jostled and threatened. But moral courage and tenacious fidelity triumphed. For the spirits of those heroes of liberty, whom their forefathers in Christianity murdered, stand now to protect and control these mediums, who are further outworking their glorious mission.

Let us trace the narrow path through which the subject of our sketch passed ere she entered the broader field of public work. Born at Wishaw, Warwickshire, in 1842, she was the youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walker, for many years extensive farmers, and whose ancestry hid a long and honourable pedigree. Reared in this secluded and beautiful spot, where the perpetual din, the maddening rush, and the polluted atmosphere of man-made cities did not obtrude, and being somewhat delicate in health she was kept from school, and allowed the fullest possible freedom to roam through lanes and meadows, to climb hill and dale, at her own sweet pleasure.

At the age of eight her psychical powers became manifest, and at first to her amazement she saw strange sights, which proved to be spirit people. So clear and palpable did a number of spirit children become that she made friends with them, and they joined in her childish play, but to mention these things incurred the severe displeasure of her parents. [...]

From that period onward she occasionally saw apparitions, and on one occasion identified the form of a very near and intimate friend who just at that moment had passed away. After her marriage to Mr. Richard Groom they resided for many years in Birmingham, where her husband carried on his business as locksmith, at premises he built in St. Vincent-street. Both were members of Mr. George Dawson's Church, and ardent admirers of his advanced teachings.

In 1870 a friend of Mr. Groom's induced him to attend a seance, at which a Miss Baker was the medium. Mrs. Groom was ultimately persuaded to attend also, but not without protestation, as such proceedings did not accord with her sense of propriety.

On entering the seance room, however, she saw and described a spirit form that was identified as a guide of one of the sitters, and it was soon discovered that Mrs. Groom was a powerful physical medium.

Dr. Aquila Baldwin thus testified in the *Medium* in 1888: "Like all good mediums, her mediumship has been a progressive and unfolding experience. From table-tipping, through the ascending degrees of physical mediumship, she has gradually, through successive stages of development, reached the teaching and clairvoyant plane which she occupies now, a form of mediumship which she has unselfishly devoted to the Cause, with so much credit to herself and benefit to the thousands of earnest investigators who have sought her ministrations, up and down the country. There are also living witnesses, who may testify to slate-writing and other kinds of phenomena (not covered by this report), which frequently occurred in her presence at that time. I have witnessed very many remarkable tests of identity from the platform, through her wonderful clairvoyant powers, in recent times. I hope she may live long in health and strength to serve the spirits and the Cause with her spiritual gifts, and to enjoy the respect and gratitude of all honest Spiritualists."

We now enter upon a more recent stage in Mrs. Groom's career, viz., the public advocacy of Spiritualism as a trance speaker and seer, which is too well-known to require lengthy notice. She was one of the first to give clairvoyant descriptions in an open public assembly, where she has often encountered rough and hostile treatment, but, with the unconquerable resolution that has always characterised her pioneer labours, coupled with her own powerful and keenly developed psychical powers, she has mastered the most adverse and stubborn conditions, and extracted from her would-be opponents admissions of the truth of her clairvoyant descriptions. Like all other mediums she has her own odd ways; and, as there is but one "John Slater," so

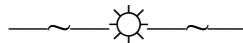
there is but one “Mrs. Groom,” and to expect them to fall into commonplace conventional ways is consummate folly.

Now, let us form a rough estimate of the value of the evidence given at large to the public for, say, only a period of 15 years. A constant stream of people have visited her privately, and she has given two or three public meetings weekly, and to fix the number of descriptions at 30 per week is vastly below the mark, and 75 per cent. of those to be fully identified is also an under-estimate. This, however, brings out the total of 19,243.

Let our idle critic, who sits on the fence, “go and do likewise.” The quality and literary merit of Mrs. Groom’s trance addresses varies, but they are always acceptable and sometimes brilliant. If everyone was gauged by their opportunities, then Mrs. Groom would stand pre-eminent.

Her work in Birmingham is simply invaluable. She has worked with societies, as well as single-handed, amid good and ill repute, she still goes on with her mission. She has passed through jealousies, bickering, and strife that for a time seemed to overshadow her work; but as one who knew her in those early days of partial development, of trial, and trouble, in the days of small beginnings and back rooms; from that time all through the many years of constant, assiduous labour, under circumstances of adversity as well as prosperity, I can bear testimony, as others can to-day, that Mrs. Groom has never lowered the flag—the white, unsullied fag of Spiritual Truth, but ever maintained its lofty standard with a courage and fidelity that is incomparable.

There is no society that has valued and rightly applied her work in a practical way more than the Birmingham Spiritualist Union, who have relieved her from all the business worry and financial responsibility of meetings, and supplied proper rooms and suitable regulations for the various public and semi-public meetings.





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Meals and accommodation available if required

Lunch £10, Dinner £12.50

The following prices include all meals and accommodation.

1 or 2 nights £90.00 bed and breakfast

3 nights £235.00

4 nights £285.00

5 nights £300.00

6 nights £335.00

7 nights £360.00





Pioneer starts its fifth volume

Pioneer was launched at the Torquay A.G.M. 2013, replacing the SNU hardback magazine of the same title; a special edited edition of the first issue was published for the delegates.

The front page noted:

The foundations of the Spiritualists' National Union were laid over a long period of time, and its growth ensured by dedicated pioneers, many of whom have been forgotten. Most readers will be unacquainted with their names and the roles they so valiantly played in the building of the SNU, an organisation that today stands firm due to their bold efforts.

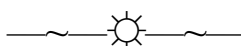
This journal is dedicated to those Pioneers.

Over the four years or so Pioneer has covered many areas of our history, for example the formation of the Spiritualists' National Union, the reconstitution of the Spiritualists' National Federation as the Union, all our General Secretaries, our early education, the formation of the "Fund of Benevolence" (FOB), Healing within the Union, the early formation of our Seven Principles, our past Presidents, etc, etc.

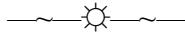
Also covered are many of our old pioneering workers throughout the movement, for example David Duguid, Helen Hughes, Tom Tyrrell, Eileen Garrett, Estelle Roberts, Joseph Benjamin, Helen Duncan, Robert James Lees, etc, etc. Much has been published on the various forms of mediumship from physical and mental, with series such as "Spiritualist Healers of The Past", "The Effect of the Vagrancy & Witchcraft Act – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union", information on James Arthur Findlay, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Maurice Barbanell, features on the Arthur Findlay College, the College of Psychic Studies, various SNU churches, etc.

With this issue a full contents list is attached. Pioneer started in July 2013 as a quarterly electronic journal; from January 2015 it went bi-monthly and continues as such today. To date it has published around 800 pages of researched materials; it is read in various societies, such as the Society for Psychical Research. It is recommended reading for the SNU education courses; it is also used by universities and has attracted numerous students and on occasion their professors to attend the Britten Museum and Library Research – Study, as noted elsewhere in this issue.

At present it has around 800 individual subscribers and additionally SNUi members; extended thanks are due to David Hopkins, who sub-edited the early issues of the journal. The present sub-editors are Leslie Price and former SNU General Secretary Charles Coulston.



SPIRITUALIST HEALERS OF THE PAST



There have been many family partnerships with psychic and spiritual healers in the past, mostly husband and wife teams, as in the case of William (Billy) and Peggy Parish,¹⁷ father and son, as in the case of George and Michael Chapman. These partnerships were well-known but the name of the spiritual healer Winifred Victoria Durrant is little known today, though her brother, Harry Edwards, is still today a household name.

Below is a profile of Edwards' sister, Winifred Durrant, by Philip Paul, published in the "Two Worlds", October 8th 1955:



VIVIAN MAUREEN inherited her mother's love of the countryside. Two years ago she was working on a Kentish farm. Her happiness was complete.

But in a few sudden, dark moments, all was changed. When they lifted her gently from beneath the tractor that had struck her down she was all but dead. Her ribs, collar bones and shoulder blades were smashed, her lungs were pierced and her heart bruised. Her eyes were wells of clotted blood.

She was admitted to Orpington Hospital and preparations were made for the end. Her mother was rushed to her bedside with a police escort to force a way through the traffic.

Life had not been particularly kind to Mrs. Winifred Victoria Durrant. She was on familiar terms with tribulation, but this was trouble of a new, stark kind. Choking back her tears, she slid her hands beneath the bedclothes. Tremulously, her fingers sought her child's crumpled body . . .

Surprise for Doctors

Vivian Maureen did not die. Daily, she grew better. Daily the loving hands caressed her bandaged wounds. When doctors prepared to set her broken bones they recoiled in astonishment. Their work was already done!

Five weeks after the accident, the patient walked out of hospital. A year later, she was back working on the farm. And there is a happily ever after to the story. Now she is the wife of farmer Cyril Skinner.

A miracle? Yes, in a way. But the sort of miracle Winifred Durrant works many times a week.

¹⁷ Pioneer, Vol.1, No.5, October 2014.

Born in Wood Green, North London, she, is the third of a family of nine. Her eldest brother is named Harry Edwards . . .

The family moved to Clapham. In due course, Winifred left school. She took up dressmaking. Then, yearning for clean air and green leaves, she joined the Land Army.

In Dorset, she met the man who became her husband. They returned to London, where she bore him three daughters.

Struggling to make financial ends meet during a period of great hardship, she fell ill from malnutrition. Doctors held out little hope for her recovery.

Dedicated life

Then her husband met a healer, who said he could help. At first, the patient treated the idea as a joke, but, slowly and surely, she made a complete recovery. It was then she decided to dedicate her life to the work.

That was 25 years ago. She began by praying that she might aid those who asked for help. Always, during these petitions, she was conscious of “a great surge of power.” Gradually, her work grew. People began to seek her contact diagnosis and treatment. Her achievements became known to a wider public. With the spreading of her reputation, demands for her services grew.

Now, in her spacious Streatham home, she deals with an average of 300 absent healing letters a week, answering each personally, and attends to between 60 and 80 patients at each of her seven weekly healing sessions. The high percentage of instantaneous cures she achieves is indicated by the fact that more than half of those attending her clinics are new patients.

She is at pains to stress that her sanctuary is run on entirely unorganised lines. “That’s for hospitals and doctors,” she says, in reference to the fact that no records are kept.

Forty healers work under her aegis, achieving commendable results. Only a week or two ago, one of her assistants succeeded in restoring hearing to twin boys who had been deaf from birth. The effect upon their mother was such that Winifred had to be hastily summoned to give her treatment for shock!

A diminutive, feminine likeness of her famous brother—she has his mannerisms in conversation, his plump, capable hands and even his slight lisp in pronouncing r’s—she is a silver-haired symbol of hope to thousands. Her pale, grey-blue eyes are penetrating but friendly. She smokes many cigarettes while she ponders the problem which constantly occupies the forefront of her mind.

This is her search for a life-ray which will be the complete answer to the scourge of cancer. “Christ had it,” she says, “otherwise he would not have been able to revive the dead. Now we must not rest until we discover the secret.”

Queue for healing

She believes the answer may lie in the bringing together of two elements in spiritual healing. “You must have positive and negative. All life and energy stem from the meeting of positive and negative.”

Nearly a year ago, her work was featured in a national Sunday newspaper. Immediately after publication of the article, three rooms in her home were jammed with waiting patients. A tragic queue wound its way through her front garden and down the street.

“Thousands were cured just by reading that article,” she affirms. “Those who wrote letters received benefit even before their words reached me, for they had linked up by their thoughts.”

While claiming that 90 per cent of those who seek her ministrations receive some degree of benefit, she readily admits that there are cases which do not respond to the extent of recovery. She remembers a seance conversation with a patient who had passed. What do you think about your sufferings now? she inquired: “It was a magnificent experience,” he replied.

She describes as “ridiculous” the suggestion made in some quarters that the mechanics of spirit healing depend on the patient “tuning in” to the healer. “It is the other way round,” she says— and proves it by adapting her methods to the needs of each individual. “I talk to them in their own language.”

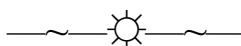
Her great ambition

Accompanied by her fawn Pekingese—she also has a blue Persian cat—she peered through the muslin-curtained glass doors that separate her interviewing - cum -waiting room from the healing sanctuary itself. Against the background of a colourful mural depicting Jesus healing the sick—it was painted by a grateful art-student patient—her white—coated helpers were busy.

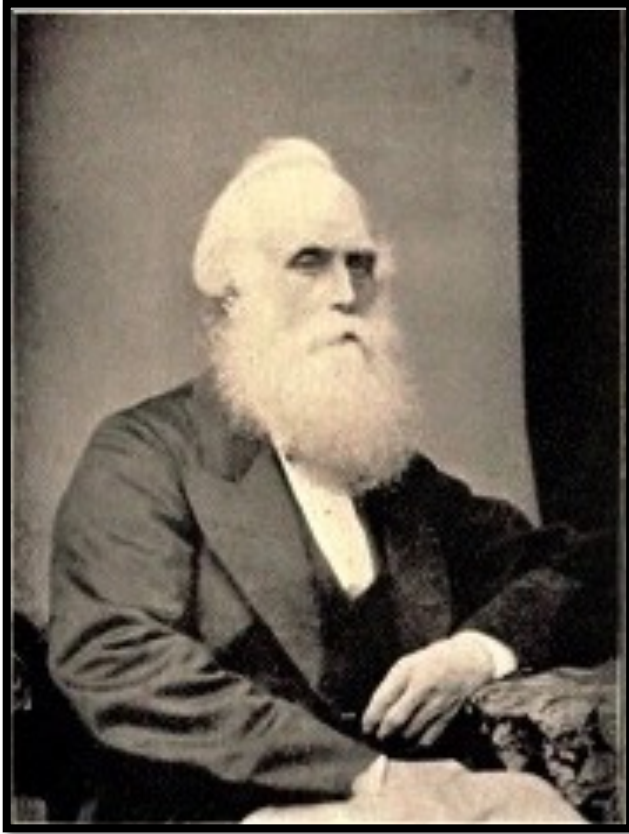
As each patient sat for treatment there was a whispered summary from Winifred of the ailment concerned, its cause—and its cure. She shrugs away any reference to her reputation for sensational effects in the treatment of spinal and bone troubles. These, to her, are elementary works compared to the great battle she yearns to win—the fight against cancer.

Her first success, achieved 25years ago, concerned a girl afflicted with Parkinson’s disease. Her recovery was complete and persists to this day. A more recent member of her grateful army is a small boy, pronounced medically incurable with leukemia, and now restored to full health.

Winifred Durrant inspires as well as heals. Even her five-year-old grandson Keith, visiting her with his mother from Canada, has turned from his toys to put his tiny hands to the service of those who suffer.



Remarkable Pioneers:



The First Public Developing Circles

ROBERT COGMAN

1810-1876

Robert Cogman, a trance speaker, was the first, I believe, in London to establish a successful training school for mediumship. Edward Wallis would later credit Cogman and his “School of the Prophets”, as he called it. He was affectionately known by many of the early mediums as their “Spiritual Father”.

Below is taken from the “Two Worlds”, April 12th 1895:

MR. R. COGMAN

THIRTY YEARS AGO there lived in a comfortable home in the New Road, Whitechapel, London, a man who, in many ways, was quite remarkable. Slightly above the medium height, spare in form, marked in features, with locks “scant and grey,” keen, pale blue eyes, and a head in appearance such as one invariably associates with ascetics, seers and prophets. His voice had the pleasant Norfolk burr in it, his manner was frank and open, he was sturdy in opinion, and not afraid to say his word when called upon to do so. Such, briefly, was the man whose name heads this article when the writer first met him, in the autumn of 1868. Such, too, he continued until when in his 67th year of mortal life he passed through the gates of gold in the year 1876, beloved and respected by all who knew him.

Born at Caistor, near Norwich, in 1810, none ever dreamed that Robert Cogman was destined to perform no unimportant part in the evolution of modern Spiritualism. Yet so it was to be. The inevitable “ups and downs” of life duly brought him to London. His naturally progressive mind was attracted to the study of mesmerism and phrenology, so small wonder that ultimately he came into contact with Spiritualism. At first, indeed for seven long years, he bitterly opposed the subject, and offered all sorts of explanations. He was well acquainted with Mr. William Wallace, the pioneer medium, and obtained much aid and information from that now patriarchal worker. Finally, his daughter Deborah developed as a medium, exhibiting clairvoyance, trance speaking and obtaining table movements as well. Another member of the family, Mrs. Gender, also became a medium, and with her, medical clairvoyance, impressions, trance speaking and several other phases were unfolded, and as nearly all the time Mr. Cogman was sitting and investigating, the “power” was operating upon himself, he finally admitted spirit control as the true explanation of all he had observed and experienced, henceforth giving way to the operations of the spirit friends. His great forte, if one may use such an expression in

this connection, was his marvellous usefulness as a developer of mediums. He literally seemed to be a very centre of developing power.

For nearly eight years in all Mr. Cogman held a circle at his house every Sunday evening and every Wednesday evening. It was at one of the Sunday evening circles that Mr. J. J. Morse obtained his first experience of Spiritualism and spirit control. Mr. Frank Herne,¹⁸ Miss Keeves (now Mrs. Keeves-Record), the late Mr. Towns, Mr. Woolnough, and other mediums of that time, including Miss Eagar (now Mrs. Wallis), and Mr. Wallis himself, were among those who frequently attended the circles at the house referred to, and at Mr. Cogman's last residence, in St. Peter's-road, at Mile End.

These circles were always conducted in a most orderly fashion. Mr. Cogman usually read some appropriate chapter from the Bible, offered a prayer, and gave an admirable inspirational discourse, frequently in a remarkable foreign tongue. He gave his talents free to the work, as he did the use of his room, rendering in those early days in his district services to our cause that have never received their full record nor just recompense.

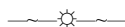
His work, as above stated, was carried on up to the time of his decease in the form of an East End Spiritual Institution, which was of great service to our cause. Finally, this effort was taken over by Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Wallis, who continued it for some time, until, in fact, the unseen directors of the chosen workers in our ranks called them forth into a larger sphere of action.

Mr. Cogman lived among us at the time when the private circle was more valued and more numerous than it is today. Pleasant times, too, when mediumship was cherished as a good and holy thing, and mediums were cared for and comforted, and considered as servants of the angels. Would that our home circles were as numerous now as then, for it is in the privacy of domestic life that one finds the sweetest blessings of our faith and facts! Mr. Cogman's house in Whitechapel, Mrs. Main's in Bethnal Green, Mr. Marsh's at Stepney, and Mr. Steele's in Clerkenwell, were veritable homes of the spirit in the days in question. The good done there was incalculable, and its results contributed not a little to the making of Spiritualism in London what it is today.

The interviewer deputed by the Editor of the TWO WORLDS to gather the information for this brief sketch was directed to call upon Mrs. Cogman and learn from her such particulars as might be needful. This he did, but in so doing he was pained to find the widow of the man who certainly did a good work for us in our days of small things in a state very slightly beyond the very edge of poverty. Living in one little meanly-furnished back-room, in an indifferent road in Holloway, and eking out an existence on something less than a shilling per day, part of which is actually received from the parish, but the far larger part given by one lady, whose name was at one time well known as that of one of our most active, charitable and true-souled workers in the Metropolis.

Surely an income of 10 ½d. a day for this poor old lady, in her eighty-first year, and utterly past work, is a too small livelihood for one who is the widow of one of our pioneer workers? Can nothing be done? Is our O.P.S. Benevolent Fund able to send a trifle now and then? Should aught prevent the generous lady referred to above continuing her aid, there is nothing but "the House" and a pauper's grave for this now failing lady. A trifle would lighten her load and help to mark our appreciation of her husband's services to us while he was here in the flesh.

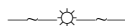
FRATER.



¹⁸ See the series in *Psypioneer*: "The Beginnings of Full-Form Materialisations", starting in Vol.6, No.11, November 2010 - Frank Herne, Charles Williams, Florence Cook, etc.

Edward Wallis adds:

MY TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF ROBERT COGMAN.



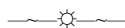
I have long felt that but scant justice has been done to Mr. Cogman, whose work for Spiritualism was most important. He sat in circles for seven years without suspecting he was a medium. When his daughter married and could not “sit” any more, he felt solitary and alone, as if the door of intercourse had been closed in his face, when to his great joy he found that those seven years of patient sitting had not been in vain, his strong personality had been slowly but surely saturated with spirit influence, the work of development and fitness had been proceeding unsuspected by him, and he became an inspired man. He was sent for by Mr. Burns whenever he had a case of obsession or disorderly mediumship,¹⁹ and the spirits through Mr. Cogman were always successful in establishing harmony and relieving the fear of friends and restoring the sufferer. He was controlled to deliver thoughtful and eloquent addresses of quite an original character, the treatment was really unique, but his greatest work was that of developing young mediums. “Frater” has referred to the fact that quite a number of workers graduated in his “school of the prophets.”

Miss E. Young, a private medium, a remarkable clairvoyant, another lady, a clairvoyant who became Mrs. Gray, and several others, whose names escape us, could be added to the roll. When death called him he had become so etherialised that he was little more than a spirit, but his departure left the friends in the East End of London without a home for spiritual services.

One of the most palpable clairvoyant experiences that I have had, occurred shortly after the decease of friend Cogman. He came before me and urged me to carry on his work. I saw and heard him distinctly, but did not feel capable of performing the task. A number of his old friends, notably Mr. W. Jennison, this side, requested me to try to fill the gap, and promised their aid. Eventually, having gained the lady’s consent, a marriage occurred in 1876 between E. W. Wallis and Miss Eagar, and the “East End Spiritual Institution” at St. Peter’s Road, Mile End, London, was continued under our direction. But for friend Cogman’s demise who knows what may have happened. We should not have been married that year, and may never have become public workers in the cause. Brother Cogman was a strongly marked personality, wise and level-headed. He never encouraged promiscuous sitting, and always advised young mediums to exercise their own judgment, and neither be carried away by excitement nor become the unquestioning tool for any or all spirits who might wish to use them. “Try the spirits” was his motto as you try men and women, prove them ‘true and trustworthy, and do not blindly follow any spirit, either in or out of the body.

I sincerely hope something will be done to help Mrs. Cogman in her old age and poverty. Both she and her husband sacrificed and suffered much for Spiritualism twenty years ago, and now she is crippled with rheumatism, and old and poor, surely the cause can provide her with five or six shillings a week for the rest of her days? The O.P.S. Sick and Pension Funds have not been started a day too soon, and I join in the appeal alike to generous and wealthy Spiritualists, and to the kind hearted who are not wealthy save in sympathy and love, to contribute to assist the veterans in their declining years, and brighten their path to the summer-land.

E. W. WALLIS.



¹⁹ James Burns, founder editor of the “Medium and Daybreak”, 1870-1895; see *Psypioneer*, Vol.7, No.1, January 2011: “The Passing Away of the Editor”.

We can note references to different well-known pioneers, for example “Mr. J. J. Morse obtained his first experience of Spiritualism and spirit control”; this took place in the autumn of 1868 and is detailed in his autobiography, “Leaves from My Life”, published by James Burns in 1877. A short quote below from pages 8-10:



The following Sunday being my “Sunday out,” I found my way to Mr. Cogman’s, presented myself to that gentleman’s notice, and in due course behold me for the first time at a spiritual seance! Mr. Cogman was an elderly gentleman, sufficiently venerable to be my grandfather at least. His flowing gray hair, piercing eyes, and general mien, all contributed to strike the beholder with respect.

The chamber in which the seance was held was an ordinary room, on a level with the street; it communicated with a back-parlour by means of folding doors, which were open.

A settee, side-board, chairs, and a long table comprised the furniture, and all seemed neat and tidy. The seance commenced. I expected that tables and chairs would be moved, and that the raps would occur, and was totally unprepared for the subsequent proceedings. The mediums present were all of the psychical order, consequently we had no physical phenomena. The first medium to “go off” was a gentleman now in the United States, Mr. Woolnough, who was entranced, as he said, by the spirit of Dr. Young. However, I could not *see* it, in a double sense! Afterwards a lady was influenced; she lectured for some time, and culminated in a tremendous outburst of either noise or eloquence. The effect was to disgust my mind with the whole proceedings. I had almost imagined that I had got into a ranters’ meeting.

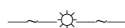
While these somewhat ungenerous thoughts were passing through my mind, I was conscious of a very peculiar experience, before relating which I must mention, that at the time I am writing of I was a disbeliever in mesmerism, so I was wondering whether these trance mediums, as I heard them called, were rogues or fools.

However, to return, my sensations were of a peculiar and indescribable character. I felt as if a large hand had suddenly struck me a heavy blow with extended palm upon the top of the head. I instantly turned round to see who had taken this liberty with my crown, the room being lighted with an ordinary paraffin lamp in full light. Observing everyone in their seats, and no one behind me, I was considerably astonished. My strange sensations continued until my brain felt as if split in two halves, and into the cavity thus created a shovelful of burning sand seemed to be poured, which trickled through me from my split head right down to the tips of my fingers and to the tips of my toes. These sensations were succeeded by an intense desire to give a tremendous shout.

The muscles of my throat, lungs, and mouth all seemed intent upon giving out this uncontrollable ejaculation. While this internal struggle was going on, I tried to rise up and shake the feeling off, but, to my horror, I was a fixture. My eyes had closed and were proof against my most powerful efforts to open them. The internal desire to shout at last prevailed, and a goodly “whoop” was the result. I then seemed endowed with another personality, which for a period of three-quarters of an hour raised the most un-Sunday-like din that ever afflicted mortal ears. I shouted, I rolled round the room, I swore, and, as if to render my position more uncomfortable, I was perfectly conscious of

all my gentlemanly actions! The more I tried not to do these things, the more perfectly were they accomplished! At the end of three-quarters of an hour the fit, or whatever it might be called, passed off, and I sank exhausted upon a settee.

Upon regaining possession of myself, I, with the most profuse apologies, tendered my excuses to the proprietor of the house, vowing that I could not help doing what I had done, for I had in the course of the proceedings spoken to the old gentleman in a most unceremonious manner, and used the most opprobrious epithets. Mr. Cogman very good-naturedly replied that it did not matter; he was not offended, and implied that he was rather used to that kind of thing, and concluded by suggesting my coming again on the following Sunday evening.



A sketch on James Morse is published in *Psypioneer*, “James Johnson Morse, October 1st 1848 – February 19th 1919”²⁰ and many references are to be found in *Pioneer*; below is taken from the article:

MRS. MARY MAIN



Mary Main was a well-known London medium, born at Bethnal Green on April 28th 1803. She became involved in Spiritualism around 1853 obtaining physical manifestations through her daughter Eliza (Mrs Fielder). In 1861 Mary Main commenced her public work; Morse would continue his development in her circle, as would Frank Herne starting his development just aged 17, together with other well-known mediums. It was in this circle Morse’s lecturing control Tien Sien Tie first announced his presence. Another control/guide the “Actor” or the “Strolling Player,” first controlled Morse here, and they would become Morse’s principal controls/guides working in unison.

Mrs Main never accepted a penny in remuneration. On December 15th, 1873, her daughter Eliza Fielder died; Mary Main died January 11th 1876. In the *Medium and Daybreak* July 13th 1888 a tribute was written by her family. James Burns published this on the front page, continued on pages 434-435 accompanied with a portrait, from where some of the above information and photograph has been taken:

“Mrs Mary Main: A Pioneer London Spiritualist”

Morse concluded the article with this tribute:—**MRS. MAIN'S MEDIUMSHIP.** My dear Mr. Main,—Your letter of 21st arrived, as above, this morning, and as I am a regular reader of Mr. Burns’s paper, I was aware of the proposed publication of a portrait of my dear and beloved mother in Spiritualism, Mrs. Main. I have never ceased to remember her goodness of heart, her nobleness of mind, her earnestness of soul. Of all the workers in our early days, whom I met, I know of none that I owe more to, or who deserves a higher place in the regard of English Spiritualists. My development, for active work, was completed under her hospitable roof. My hands were steadied by her goodness, and many were the pleasant hours passed in her company.

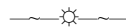
Twice a week, for many months on Sundays and Tuesdays, with many others, some now scattered far and wide, among whom were Mr. Woolnough, Mr. Davis, Mr. Overton, Mr. Emms, Mr. Goss, Miss. Keeves, Mrs. Fielder, Miss. Lewis—now my

²⁰ Vol.8, No.10, October 2012.

wife,—I have drunk in the waters of life dispensed to us from the “other side”; truly soul-inspiring hours were those. I have never seen their equal since. Free from all cant and servility, looking only for Truth, independent in spirit, and suffering in pocket as a consequence—but respected by even these who disliked her cause,—she was a woman among women. For the poor she had ever money, clothes, food or help of some sort. For the Cause she had open house, free of all cost, for many years. I am too far away to write much in detail, as time will not permit, but were I in London I would turn to my memoranda, and do something better fit than this poor letter to do justice to one whose name, work and life I ever cherish with the deepest love and most profound respect.

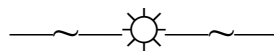
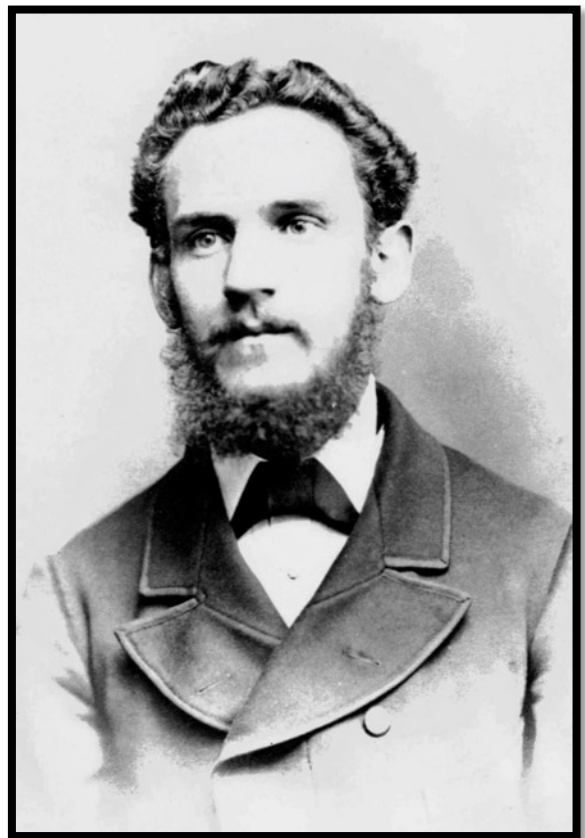
You are at liberty to make what use you please of this, and believe me as ever most sincerely yours in the bonds of truth and human progress, J. J. Morse.

P.S.—I send you a Canadian bank note for one dollar (4s.) as a mite towards the cost of the picture. 331 Turk Street, San Francisco, June 11, 1888.



Noted in the article is “The O.P.S. Sick and Pension Funds”. This fund was founded by Mrs Minnie Wallis and worked alongside the Spiritualists’ National Federation; at the tenth Conference in 1899 the fund came under the control of the Federation and was administered under the title of ‘The Spiritualists’ National Federation Fund of Benevolence’. ²¹ The Federation was reconstituted as the Union and today this fund continues as the “Fund of Benevolence” (FOB). Generally the fund is wrongly attributed to Minnie’s husband, Edward Wallis.

Edward Walter Wallis (1855-1914), born in Teddington, will be featured in the next issue of Pioneer. He was one of the founder members who established the SNU. He was President in 1898 and co-founder of the “Two Worlds” with Emma Hardinge Britten in 1887.



²¹ O.P.S. “The Order of Progressive Spiritualists” — Mrs Minnie Harriet Wallis, 1854-1939, who was very active in the National Federation and one of the original sixteen (1890) *pro tem* committee members who were co-opted as the first Executive. She married Edward Wallis in 1876. She continued her work until 1924, when she completed fifty years of public work and fifty-two years of mediumship. Her control for public speaking was called Morambo, a black slave who had been transported to South America, where he died.

See Pioneer, Vol.1, No.3, April 2014 for the history of the Fund of Benevolence: “Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists’ National Union”.