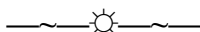




Volume 6, No. 6: December 2019

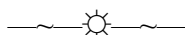
Contents list:



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.

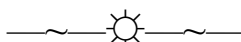
Special thanks to Leslie Price and Charles Coulston for their work in sub-editing this issue



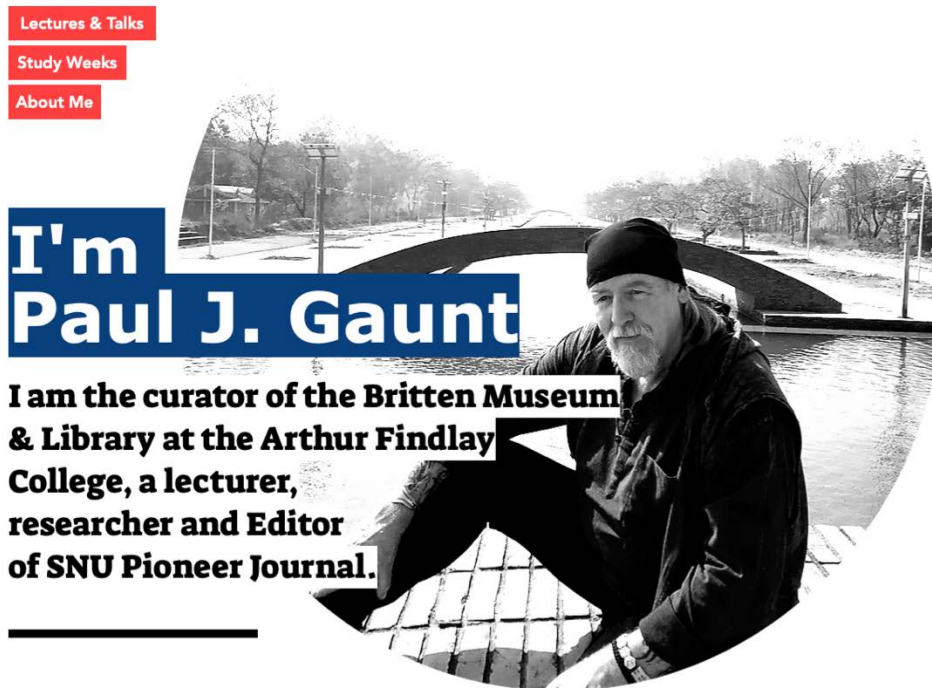
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pioneer@snu.org.uk

All references to Psypioneer in this issue are archived at <http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/>



New One-stop Website:



www.pauljgaunt.com

The home page gives a direct link to all the back copies of "Pioneer"; subscribe free, etc.

The home page links to:

Lectures on the History of the Spiritualist Movement with some specialist subjects.

Study Weeks at the Arthur Findlay College as advertised elsewhere in this journal, with a link to book and further information

This page also has some free downloads of the factual information on

"Hydesville"

"SNU Seven Principles"

Primarily advisable for the SNU educational courses

Also, a link to all "Pyspioneer" issues often referenced in Pioneer



Feedback facility is available on all pages

“Ask the Spirits”

Mr David Gow occupied the position of Editor of LIGHT from January 1914 until Mr George Henderson Lethem was appointed Editor on April 20th, 1931; Gow agreed to remain as Advisory Editor. He continued for 18 months before retiring due to poor health. He died on Thursday November 2nd, 1939, aged 73.¹

“Ask the Spirits”: A symposium edited by David Gow, published in 1934. The book publishes replies to questions asked of the Spirit—through the various channels from the early days of the Spiritualist movement up until the publication date. These quotes include “Letters from Julia” (William Stead), “Thirty Years among the Dead” (Carl Wickland),² “Raymond” (Sir Oliver Lodge), “Hafed, Prince of Persia” (David Duguid), “The Life Elysian” (Robert James Lees)³ and “Northcliffe’s Return” (Hannen Swaffer), etc.



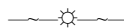
Below are some of the spirit answers to the questions:

Q. Have you ever met a spirit who had a remembrance of passing through more than one existence on Earth?

A. No, no. If such were the case, I could not say I was myself. I believe I never was on the Earth til I was sent direct from the Great and Mighty Source of all Spirit. Some men in the Spirit World go back to Earth, and teach the old doctrines they held in mortal life, and which they still tenaciously hold. Let such men but come to stand on the same platform that I and others occupy, become frequenters of the Great Temple, and they will soon learn to think otherwise.

Many of us, indeed, return to Earth on errands of love and truth, but not in the body. I, for my part, have no such desire, unless it were permitted me to do so, and then it would be to revolutionize the world—to bring on the glorious “golden age”, so long desired by all the good and true in past ages. But here, and as I am, I have work to do—and a glorious work it is: the rescue of the benighted ones who, in multitudes, wander amid the shadows of the Spirit World.

(Hafed Prince of Persia.)



¹ For further information please see: Pypioneer, Vol. 19, No. 9: “Light” During the War – And After – David Gow, David Gow – Poet and Journalist, Editorial Notes – Stanley De Brath, and David Gow – John B. McIndoe.

² See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: Waking Up and Saving the Lost Souls of the Dead – Story of Dr and Mrs Carl A. Wickland; Spiritualism in the Land of Films – A Sitting with Dr Carl Wickland, Who Cures ‘Obsession’ – by Hannen Swaffer; Mrs Carl Wickland Passes On - She Cured Hundreds of Victims of Obsession

³ See Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 5: Robert James Lees – Did he really sit for Queen Victoria as a young boy?; Lees’ involvement with the 1888 Jack the Ripper case?

Q. What is the weakness all spirits complain of shortly after they pass over? Those I have asked do not seem to understand it themselves, but say that during the time it exists they have not the same capabilities of communicating. Is it a change of magnetic currents?

A. The mere facts of departure from one state of existence to another, the relinquishment of the relations of an organization that you have lived in for a considerable period, and the taking on of new conditions and fresh circumstances, are in themselves quite sufficient to account not only for weakness but for a certain amount of awkwardness in regard to one's new conditions and relationships. The mental reaction produces a certain effect, with the consequence that the normal vigour of the psychical forces and the will is diminished, and the individual feels all the lassitude that would be experienced after a physical illness in this world. This condition of weakness remains until such time as the vital currents flow through their proper channels again and the adjustment is completed between the consciousness and its independent spiritual organization, and the spirit has become related normally to its new state. Then strength and vigour reassert themselves, the difficulties disappear, and a perfect state of balance is thereby established. This, in effect, will explain the circumstances referred to in the question.

(Mediumship of J. J. Morse.)



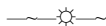
Q. What shape or form do spirits take in the spirit world?

A. Some people have imagined that they are balls of light. Some have added wings to these balls of light, and spoken of the winged souls that people the spaces; some have given them a fanciful human form, and added wings thereto, the inference being apparently that man is so gross a creature that he could never become angelic or spiritual. When one thinks of the inconvenience of being a ball of light, even with wings attached to it, one might not unreasonably ask if there is not some more familiar shape that one could assume after death, so that one could resume one's acquaintance with oneself, because the majority of you would hardly know yourselves under such circumstances.

Personality and consciousness are so closely associated that it is difficult to dissociate them from each other. Individuality is also bound up with personality and consciousness to such an extent that to deprive you of these three elements of your being would be virtually to deprive you of your existence altogether. Hence, then, it would follow that if you are to know yourselves after death, you must retain the consciousness of your existence; memory must exist with you. If you retain consciousness and memory, it is not hard to suppose that individuality will be associated therewith; and if so, one must necessarily reckon with personality as well. If you are to know that you continue to exist you must be able to recognize yourselves by possessing those elements of being that were previously yours while you were here; that is to say, consciousness, memory, intelligence, individuality and personality.

Therefore, man after death has the human form, is possessed of the personality pertaining to his human nature—purified, exalted, spiritualized, if you will, and possessing certain faculties, powers and adaptations that have been unfolded in his new body, and were not expressed while he was here on earth. By the consciousness, intelligence, personality and will expressed through his human form, man, as a spirit, recognizes his past experience in his then present consciousness. Therefore the individual and personal consciousness of man after death is the answer to the question.

(Mediumship of J. J. Morse.)



Q. How can one cultivate psychic power?

A. Some gifts are very difficult to develop, but what is needed is great patience, regularity, and harmony. For instance, clairvoyance is the easiest, but trance, voice, physical phenomena, materialization, etc., take five to six years. Spirit-photography, like other psychic gifts, needs cultivating. Unfortunately a great deal of controversy surrounds this gift; and in fact every psychic gift, or means of showing there is a life in the Great Beyond, is hindered by contention.

Now a question recently discussed on earth: Why not all sittings with a faint light? Well, dear friends, it is impossible to develop or perform *every* phenomena in no matter how subdued a light. Automatic and inspired writing, clairvoyance, trance, may be so performed; but voice and materialization can never be developed or satisfactorily performed in anything but darkness, the reason being that our eyes and our faculties are so highly developed and sensitive and magnetized.

I mean that for voice and materialization we come in person to earth; and gross, earthly light is disturbing and destructive to us; whereas for those other phenomena we merely project ourselves, or part of ourselves into the medium's body, which, as you all know, occurs in trance, and on these occasions perhaps a faint light may be allowed. But since the sitters have a grave responsibility towards any medium under trance, the *sudden* flashing on of lights should never be allowed.

(Difficulties experienced by Spirit Controls.)

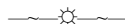


Q. Does God seem any nearer to you?

A. People think that when they die they will see God, but how few realize what God means. God is the Life of all things. How little people think of this earth-plane and what it really is. It is only an infinitesimal part of the Universe. Once I thought of reincarnation. I was at one time a Theosophist. Theosophy is all right so far as it goes; the thoughts and teachings are beautiful, but why should we reincarnate on this little planet? I would not care to come back to the earth-plane except to tell you of the higher and real life which lies before you. I would not like to come back to this earth-plane again to be a little baby and I do not see why I should, for what would I learn?

Could souls like us come back into children again and feel satisfied? After you have learned the higher things of life, you do not care to come back to matter another time. You want to learn while here and gain sufficient knowledge so that when you pass on you will not want to come back and learn it over again. You can learn much about the other side of life while here, and when you pass over there you will learn more and more of things which you could not learn while here because you could not understand them.

(Thirty Years among the Dead.)

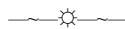


Q. How do controls influence matter as in automatic writing?

A. With regard to this writing, it is merely a guiding of the surroundings that causes the hand to move. And the thoughts and teachings that are written down are guided by intelligences beyond you. A certain form does not stand beside you and move the pencil with physical force, but the “machinery” which moves the pencil is flesh and blood. Take a typewriter as an illustration. You do not put your finger on the part that is impressed on the paper; you touch another part that communicates with a spring which forces the type down on to the paper. So it is with the “Guides.” The writer is merely the instrument, not the source of energy.

Some methods of communicating are more material than others, but they are necessary to convince where others fail. For instance, the materialist is not convinced by writing, either direct or automatic. But when he comes to tangible objects moving, a voice as real as his own, and all such phenomena, then what can he say, but that sight and hearing cannot both deceive him? And he will acknowledge an hereafter from the moment his bodily senses are convinced.

(More Guidance from Beyond.)

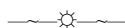


Automatic Writing

Automatic writing, over time, has demonstrated various methods from the early days of physical phenomena and direct/independent writing, for example slate writing. It is referred to by some as “psychography” or “abnormal writing”, a word used by M.A. (Oxon), an early pseudonym for William Stainton Moses. Attention to Stainton Moses’ writings is drawn in Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: “Visit to the College of Psychic Studies.” It was Stainton Moses who founded the London Spiritualist Alliance in 1883, later changed to the College of Psychic Studies (CPS) in 1970.

Stainton Moses’ numerous notebooks, which contain the material later edited and published in ‘Spirit Teachings’, 1883, are today held at the CPS. These were received,

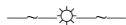
“... by the process known as Automatic or Passive Writing. This is to be distinguished from Psychography. In the former case, the Psychic holds the pen or pencil, or places his hand upon the Planchette, and the message is written without the conscious intervention of his mind. In the latter case, the writing is direct, or is obtained without the use of the hand of the psychic, and sometimes without the aid of pen or pencil.”



Other accounts of automatic writing can come from:

“‘living communicators’, i.e. from the mind of a *living person*, as was often the case with William T. Stead, who wrote messages from friends, with distance being no object; afterwards he verified the accuracy by referring to the transmitters. He noted in his “Borderland” (Vol. I, page 50) that he knew at least ten other automatic writers who received messages from living friends through “automatic telepathy”.

One name that is still well-known today in automatic writing is Geraldine Dorothy Cummins, who made a close study of the art of automatism in the production of her scripts. Her well-known “Scripts of Cleophas” was the first major work she produced by these means.⁴



GRACE ROSHER

Once a well-known automatic writer, I guess she is better known today in the art world for her miniature portraits of royal families, theatre personalities, etc., which were exhibited in the Royal Academy in London. These paintings can be found on-line and are mostly under copyright.

Rosher wrote two books on her automatic scripts: “Beyond the Horizon” in 1961 and “The Travellers’ Return” in 1968. Below is quoted from the preface of “Beyond the Horizon”, which gives a nice insight into Grace Rosher:

PREFACE



In introducing the following communications from what is referred to by my Communicator as “The other side of life,” I wish to make it clear that neither of us had any knowledge of, or interest in, Spiritualism. In fact I was quite definitely prejudiced against anything of that kind, and had no wish to investigate the subject. But this does not mean that I had no belief in a future life.

While still a young girl I had had a very vivid dream experience of a dearly loved relative who had passed on, in which I had been able to hold a brief conversation with her which concluded with these words. “If only people knew, if only people understood, no one would ever be afraid of death.” This experience which I recounted to my friend Gordon Burdick, not only assuaged my sense of grief at that time, but left such a deep impression on my mind that I was completely satisfied that life continued after death, and that it was perhaps possible

when partly released from the physical body during sleep to meet with those we loved who had left the earth world.

⁴ These accounts and more can be found in Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 2: Automatic Writing: William T. Stead – Living Communicators; Geraldine Dorothy Cummins; An Unexpected Message – In the Whimsical Style of G.R.S. Mead; Passing of Miss E. Gibbes.

When I received the news of my friend's sudden passing shortly before he was due to sail for England, my only hope was that I might perhaps have a similar dream experience with him, in which he would speak to me.

We had first met in our youth and the happy and affectionate friendship which sprang up between us continued unbroken through the years. His sudden passing, for he was coming to me, was a severe blow. My first reaction, after I had recovered from the immediate shock was, "At least we can still 'think' to each other". He had believed that telepathic communication was possible between people who cared for each other, and had told me so in a letter and that in this way our thought communication could bridge the distance between us; and from time to time it was abundantly proved to me that our thoughts did reach each other across the four thousand miles that more often than not separated us.

I was also glad to recall at this time an occasion when we were together, when, without any reference to the subject of our conversation, he suddenly tapped himself on the arm, saying very seriously, "You know, Grace, *this isn't* really me." Very surprised at this apparently irrelevant remark, but realising what he meant, viz. that his physical body was not his real self; I hastened to agree adding, "I suppose if we come to think of it we have never really seen each other."

I tried to be thankful for the long years of perfect friendship that had so sweetened life and for the fact that his passing had been so gentle (I had been told that he had passed in his sleep). That I had only lovely memories to recall, and I felt sure that wherever he was, he was not beyond the reach of my love, or of my thoughts and prayers. And with this I tried to content myself, I remembered also how he had faced up to his own griefs, and I knew so well what he would expect of me.

I felt no desire whatever to try to get in touch with him through a medium of any kind, and assuming that memory and consciousness persist, he would know quite well that I would be unlikely to attempt to do so: anything of that nature would have been repugnant to me and I would have been very hard to convince. Of automatic writing I had no knowledge, beyond the fact that I had heard there was such a thing, but just what it was I had no idea, nor had I any wish to find out. These things had no appeal for me.

It was because of this attitude of mine therefore, that the initiative had to come from the other side, and that what subsequently happened was the greatest surprise to me. My feelings were a mixture of bewilderment, joy, and incredulity, for I was almost afraid to believe that anything so wonderful could really happen. Could it be true that it was really he, himself? Was such a thing possible? I had never heard of such a thing ever happening to anyone else. Might it be something to do with that mysterious thing called the subconscious mind? I argued with myself that he was not even in my thoughts on the day it happened, that I had never expected anything of the kind; therefore, it could not be attributed to wishful thinking.

I tried to reassure myself that I was, or thought I was, an unemotional and matter-of-fact person, not easily impressed or gullible where psychic matters were concerned. Yet in spite of this, and a great deal that was seemingly very evidential in what I was being told, I passed at times through quite agonising periods of doubt, fearing lest I might be the victim of some strange hallucination, or of unconscious self-deception. I wanted desperately to believe, but dare I, that this wonderful thing was true?



Now, nearly four years since those first stumblingly written messages with their sense of urgency, excitement, and deep affection appeared, I have had so many proofs of the authenticity of the communications and of the close companionship of the Communicator himself, that doubt is no longer possible. In the actual communications themselves I have refrained from editing; for example the word “through” is invariably written “thru” a thing I as an English woman would never do. Gordon Burdick⁵ was a Canadian by birth and this might account for this little bit of Americanism, or possibly the shortened word was less trouble to write.

Among the earlier communications was much that was very personal and these have naturally been omitted.

It is my sincere hope and prayer that the message contained in the following pages will bring to those who read them some measure of the comfort and reassurance that has been given to me, to the members of my family and to many of my friends, and with it a new realisation of the wonderful love and kindly justice of the One we call “Our Father”.

G.R.

Grace Rosher was born circa 1889 and died in 1980. It can be noted from the photograph which heads this article that Rosher’s method is different from that of Stainton Moses, Geraldine Cummings and William Stead, as referenced above. The pen was clearly only balanced on the medium's hands rather than held, which suggests that the actual writing did not come through the medium's hand as such, i.e. automatic or passive writing, more possibly on the side of psychography and independent/direct control.



Her psychic potential, as noted in her own words, came to the forefront with the death of her fiancé, Gordon E. Burdick, who in 1956 was serving in the Canadian Navy at Vancouver; a week before he was due to sail to London he died.

Rosher notes on page 1 of “Beyond the Horizon”:

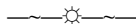
It was half past three on a September afternoon in 1957. I was sitting at my table engaged in writing letters. I had just finished one and had addressed the envelope and was debating in my mind whether there would be time to begin another before a visitor I was expecting to tea was due to arrive.

My hand still holding my pen was resting on the writing pad whilst I was trying to decide this question, when I heard the words “Leave your hand there and see what happens,” as distinctly as though spoken. I conclude now that I must have heard them clairaudiently. My instant mental reaction was ‘Why nothing is likely to happen,’ but to

⁵ Photograph of Gordon Burdick as a younger man.

my utter astonishment the pen started to move without any effort on my part. As I watched fascinated I concluded that some sort of electric force in myself must be causing the pen to move; but out of the erratic line creeping across the page words began to form, and the message “With love from Gordon,” slowly appeared.

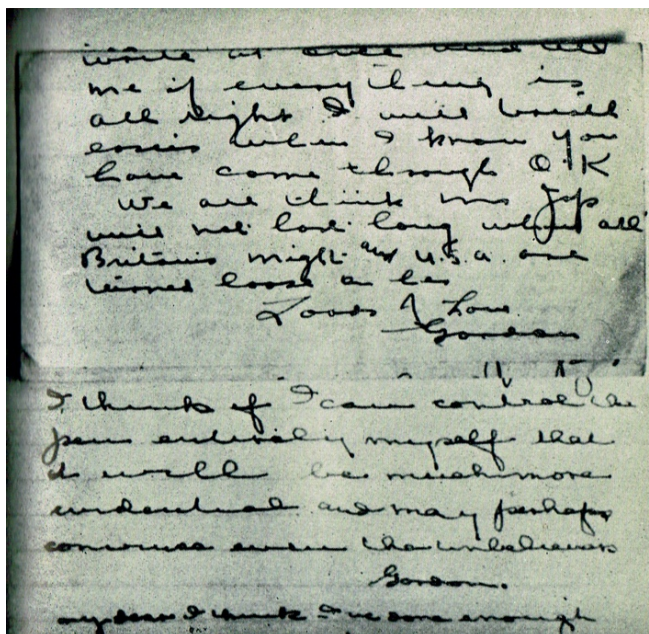
The sentence was repeated, then my name and a term of endearment, followed by the words “write often.” The words were all joined together, and the writing which was very small, was shaky and uncertain. Very puzzled, I mentally said “Who is doing this, is it you or me?” Immediately the pen moved and wrote “I am, it is me, Gordon, Gordon.” The name repeated as though anxious to convince me. Then followed a very personal and precious message.



The top part is Gordon Burdick’s handwriting during his lifetime—below received after his death by the mediumship of Grace Rosher

Grace Rosher sought guidance from the Reverend G. Maurice Elliot, the first honorary secretary of “The Churches’ Fellowship for Psychical Study” (CFPS).⁶ Rev. Elliot enlisted the aid of handwriting expert F.T. Hilliger, who studied the automatic scripts and compared them to the handwriting of Burdick when alive.

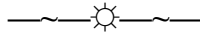
Although initially skeptical, F.T. Hilliger published his detailed report in “Beyond the Horizon”, concluding “... the writing reproduced by Grace Rosher was, if it were humanly possible, genuinely inspired by the personality of Gordon E. Burdick” (signed by Hilliger on 28th January 1957).



⁶ For further information on the Reverend G. Maurice Elliot and the CFPS please see *Psypioneer*; a contents sheet is available on request. The CFPS is still going today:

The Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies exists to promote the study and the integration of psychical and spiritual experience within a Christian context. Founded in 1953, it continues to serve churches and individuals with many and varied backgrounds, experiences and needs.

EUSAPIA PALLADINO

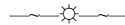


Eusapia Palladino (1854-1918) was an Italian physical medium, who it was claimed levitated tables, along with other related Spiritualistic phenomena. She communicated with the dead via the historic spirit control/guide “John King”.⁷

Leading researchers investigated Eusapia Palladino’s phenomena, e.g. Frederic Myers and Oliver Lodge. Polish researcher Julian Ochorowicz held experiments with Palladino during 1893-1894 and concluded that the phenomena were due to “fluidic action”. French researcher Charles Richet, who brought in the term “ectoplasm”, at the time he investigated Palladino in 1894 considered her genuine at times. These names are but a few who investigated her phenomena in various countries during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

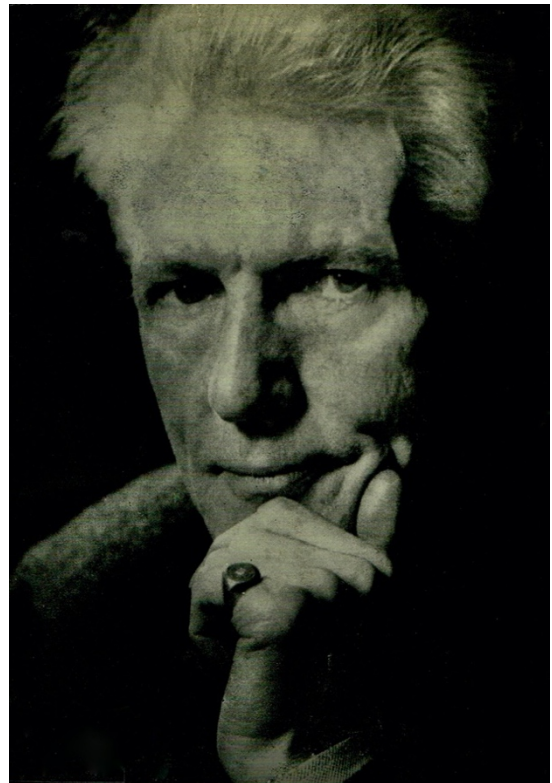
Below are the conclusions of the British-born American psychical researcher Hereward Carrington (1880-1958), who like other researchers detected her cheating at sittings but also claimed, like the names above, that she had genuine mediumistic ability.

Below is taken from Carrington’s book, “The World of Psychical Research”, originally published in 1946, second edition 1973. The photographs shown are from “Eusapia Palladino and her Phenomena”, Carrington, 1909, and so do not necessarily directly relate to this article:



OUTSTANDING AS AMONG the most vivid and extraordinary experiences of my life, I must count my séances with the remarkable Neapolitan medium, Eusapia Palladino. Illiterate, hardly able to sign her own name, she nevertheless possessed powers of a unique character, powers which for many years baffled the scientific men of Europe.

Attention had first been drawn to her about 1890, when Professor Lombroso obtained a series of sittings with her. For many years thereafter, she gave séances for scientific groups in Paris, London, St. Petersburg, Turin, Genoa, Milan, and many other cities in Europe. A committee of eminent men sat with her for four years in Paris, and it was here also that Professor Flammarion studied her at length. An enormous literature had sprung up about



⁷ For more information on John King see Pioneer, Vol .5, No. 6: Spiritualistic phenomena of the past – Luminous Phenomena.

her, and scores of books and articles had appeared dealing with her phenomenal mediumship.

In 1908 a committee was appointed by the British Society for Psychical Research to go to Naples and obtain a series of séances on its behalf. This committee consisted of the Hon. Everard Feilding, Mr. W. W. Baggally and myself. All of us were well known as critics and skeptics of physical phenomena generally. During the course of our many years' investigations, we had never yet encountered any manifestations (obtained under fraud-proof conditions) which seemed to us conclusive. We were all amateur magicians and had exposed many fake mediums in the past. The Society felt, therefore, that if we brought in a positive report, it would be good evidence indeed that Eusapia possessed genuine powers of no mean order.



Mme. Eusapia Palladino seated at our Seance table, in Italy. Behind her are seen the black curtains of the cabinet; to her right, the locked door leading to Mr. Baggally's room. Directly in front of her is the Seance table, and beneath it is the small stool, referred to on several occasions.

We visited Naples, stayed there several weeks, and had a long series of sittings with this medium, during the course of which we became firmly convinced of the supernormal nature of her manifestations. The following year (1909) I brought Eusapia to America, and a further series was held in New York.

Eusapia Palladino was primarily a physical medium—that is, but few mental phenomena were noted. Objects moved about in her presence without anyone touching them; raps of tremendous power were heard; lights appeared; musical instruments were played upon—no visible fingers touching the strings. Finally, so-called materializations took place, in which “bits of bodies” were formed, and again disintegrated, while we were watching them, leaving no trace behind. All these things happened while the medium was sitting securely held, hand and foot, and usually with light enough to enable us to perceive everything in the room fairly clearly.

Eusapia would give her séances anywhere—in a private house, in the laboratory of a university—wherever she was requested to sit. Often she would be carefully searched before the sitting, but nothing of a suspicious nature was ever found upon her. Then she would take her place at the séance table, which was merely an ordinary wooden table rather lighter than most, while several other sitters would seat themselves about it also. The person seated to her right would hold her right hand, foot and knee, while the person seated to her left would similarly control her limbs on that side. The séances all began in brilliant white light.

Behind her was erected a small cabinet, which consisted of an enclosed space, made by hanging two black curtains across one corner of the room. In this cabinet a small table was usually placed, and on this rested various small musical instruments—the property of the sitters. It should be emphasized, however, that Eusapia never sat *in* the cabinet, but always in front of it, in the circle itself. The back of her chair was usually about a foot from the cabinet curtains.

Now, in bright light, with her hands, feet and knees securely held, the table would begin to move, tilt and oscillate. Many people have obtained table tippings, and if these had been all, no particular attention would have been paid them. But, after several such

tiltings, the séance table would then rise completely off the floor—that is, all four legs off the ground, and remain thus suspended in space for a number of seconds.



A TABLE LEVITATION.

This photograph shows the exact position of the hands and feet of the medium during one of our levitations. It will be observed how far they are removed from the table. [From a photograph specially taken to illustrate this manifestation.]

I have seen scores and hundreds of such levitations, and I am as assured of their reality as I am of any other facts in life. Many times, while the table was in the air, we would pass a string or a fine wire up and down, between her body and the table, showing no physical connection of any kind. These levitations have been obtained when a sitter has been underneath the table, holding both the medium's feet in his hands, while *her* hands were completely removed from it, and everyone could see perfectly clearly that she was not touching it at any point. There

seemed to be a curious elastic resistance while the table was in the air, as though it were suspended on rubbers; then this would suddenly be released, and the table would fall with a crash to the floor.

I have seen the table rise three feet and more from the floor during her séances, and have had it levitate while I myself have been kneeling upon it—the medium sitting motionless in her chair, hands and feet securely held.

After these table-liftings, rappings would be heard, in the cabinet and on the séance table itself. Often these were of a remarkable character. For instance, Eusapia would knock four times on the top of the table with her own knuckles, and then hold her hand above it, at a distance of about six inches. About three seconds later, faint raps, exactly imitating those made by her, would be heard in the wood, as though they were a sort of echo—only delayed in their reply!

About this time, five knocks would be heard, which was a signal for less light. The bright light would then be turned off, and a dimmer one substituted.⁸ Even in this, however, everything could be clearly seen, including the medium. Now, the instruments in the cabinet would be heard moving about, and finally one or more of them would float out into the séance room, continually playing. If it were the mandolin, the strings

⁸ Objection has often been made to darkness, as a prerequisite for spiritualistic phenomena. I cannot discuss this question at the length it deserves in a brief footnote, beyond pointing out the fact that many delicate physical and biological energies can only manifest themselves in darkness, and are destroyed by light; and that many historic phenomena (such as the so-called “miracles” in the New Testament) were similarly reported to have taken place in darkness and semi-darkness. I drew attention to this fact in my book, *Loaves and Fishes*, and the Rev. Edward M. Duff and Dr. Thomas G. Allen have also done so, in their book *Psychical Research and the Gospel Miracles*. Thus: Lazarus was raised in the darkness of the cave or tomb; Jairus' daughter was raised by dim lamp-light; the feeding of the multitude was “in the evening”; Jesus walked on the water in the dark of the night; the demoniac was cured in dim light; the stilling of the tempest was under similar conditions; when the multitude fell down, at Gethsemane, this was during the dark of the night, and so on. Many analogous cases could be quoted, in which similar conditions were deemed necessary for the production of certain supernormal physical phenomena.

would be strummed while it was floating in the air; if the bell, this would be rung violently before being thrown to the floor.

The latter part of the sitting would usually be devoted to obtaining materialization phenomena, and here hands, heads and “bits of bodies” would form in space—hands firm and solid enough to push and pull the sitters out of their chairs, or grasp them with a firm touch. The fingers and thumbs of such hands could often be clearly distinguished, and they remained visible while performing their actions. And bear in mind that, during all this time, the medium remained securely held, hand and foot, and visible in the red light which was permitted at such times.

These hands were very curious. Sometimes they would be large, sometimes small. Sometimes they would be white, sometimes black, and sometimes invisible altogether. Yet they were solid and substantial, and had every appearance of being true physiological structures for the time being. The skin, hair and nails could be clearly felt during the brief period of their existence, and on more than one occasion I myself have held a hand such as this in my grasp, and had it slowly dissolve as I was holding it. It was *not* pulled away, but melted within my hand, and was gone. This is not, of course, a unique experience, as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, and many other psychic investigators have reported precisely the same thing.

Mind you, both before and since that time I have seen innumerable so-called materialization séances, which were complete frauds, and I had no difficulty whatever in detecting them. As previously stated, I have been an amateur magician all my life, and know the tricks of the trade pretty well. One book of mine, in fact, *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, is devoted almost entirely to an exposé of the trick methods employed by fraudulent mediums. But, despite all this, I remain quite convinced that we saw in the presence of Eusapia Palladino genuine materializations of “bits of bodies” and other equally remarkable phenomena of an undoubtedly supernormal nature.

It is true that Eusapia resorted to trickery at times, and in this she was caught, both by ourselves and others. Her method of trickery consisted in the substitution of one hand for two, and the production of phenomena with the free hand. Nearly every group of scientific investigators had detected and described this method of trickery. Yet every one of them had emerged convinced of her genuine powers! Why, it may be asked, should she ever resort to trickery if she could produce genuine manifestations such as I have described? Is it not possible that all her phenomena might have been due to trickery, only undetected?

It is difficult to reply to this objection in a few words. But I can best answer it, perhaps, by citing a typical instance which throws light upon her peculiar psychology—and if a medium felt and thought like other people she wouldn’t be a medium!

One day I took the famous magician Howard Thurston to see Eusapia. On the way there I had said to him:

“Now, Thurston, it is quite possible that Eusapia will try to trick you at first—just to see if she can. But don’t make a fuss about it immediately; just let her see by your manner that you are not satisfied. She will soon settle down, and show you something really remarkable.”

Sure enough, when we had taken our places at the table, Eusapia tilted it, inserted one toe under it and up went the table! Thurston glanced at me, but I merely smiled, shook my head, and said:

“Not good, Eusapia.”

She thereupon smiled also, settled down in her chair, went into a light trance, and soon produced a series of perfectly magnificent genuine levitations, which so convinced Thurston that he came out in the papers the next day with a thousand-dollar challenge to any magician who could produce table levitations under the same conditions as he had seen them in her presence. The challenge was never accepted.

So here we have an instance of the fraudulent and genuine combined. The mischievous, impish self of the medium trying to “pull something,” just for fun, and when she saw that she could not get away with it with impunity, she then produced the genuine article. I have seen more or less the same thing happen over and over again, and know that, while she occasionally tricked, she was also capable of producing amazing genuine phenomena which have never been explained.

Let me narrate two or three incidents that occurred at her séances, which deeply impressed me at the time, and which could not possibly have been fraudulently produced by the medium, even supposing that she had both hands and both feet free. The materialized hand which melted in mine was one of these incidents, but I shall mention a few more.

Eusapia had a deep affection for Professor Lombroso, whom she regarded as a sort of father, and whenever his name was mentioned she would invariably dissolve into tears. But, at one of our sittings, Eusapia said, quite spontaneously:

“Now, if you are all very good tonight, Lombroso may materialize!”

As a matter of fact, Lombroso did *not materialize*, nor did anyone else, but a most curious and striking phenomenon occurred, which is almost unique in psychic annals. As the séance progressed, there formed over the center of the séance table what I can only describe as a sort of psychic water-spout—a whirlpool of invisible energy, felt by everyone at the table, and affecting them so much that several of the sitters had to leave the table and go to the window to get some fresh air. As one receded from the table, this power became less and less noticeable, and as one approached it, the force became stronger and stronger, until it was well-nigh overwhelming. Nothing could be seen, nothing heard, but over the center of that table a power was operative, sensed by everyone present, which was most impressive and indicative of the reality of the invisible.

On another occasion, Eusapia asked me to go into the cabinet behind her, to replace the small table which had been thrown out onto the floor. I picked up the small table and entered the curtained recess, which was quite dark, of course, but still light enough to enable me to see the other side of the table I was holding, and to see quite clearly that no physical person was in the cabinet with me. Yet the moment I placed the table on the floor, it rose up under my hands and pressed against me. I again replaced it, and again it rose. Finally, this developed into a sort of tug-of-war between myself and the invisible influence manipulating the table on the other side. The force—whatever it was—was eventually strong enough to throw both the table and myself out of the cabinet altogether, so that we landed on the floor of the room outside! All this time, it must be remembered, the medium was seated outside the cabinet, held hand and foot by two skeptical controllers, and visible in the dim light which illumined the room.

On still another occasion, one of the gentlemen present suddenly exclaimed that the cigar case, in his inner coat pocket, had been removed by invisible fingers, and a moment later we all saw it reposing upon the top of the séance table. Then, as we were

looking at it, it seemed suddenly to become doubled; it looked as though there were *two* cigar cases where there had formerly been only one! But this was an illusion. What had actually happened was that the leather case had been pulled apart, the top sliding off the lower portion, so that the two halves were now lying side by side. Then, a moment later, this sitter cried out that a cigar had been placed in his mouth by those same invisible fingers. He held it between his teeth for a few seconds, then replaced it in the cigar case.

Bear in mind that the tabletop was of light pine wood, and that any dark and opaque object held over the table could be *seen* immediately, dim as the light was at the time. If, therefore, the medium had removed one of her hands from the control and handled the cigar case with it, her hand and arm would instantly have been seen against the background of the light wood. But although we were all looking at the case intently, nothing of the sort was seen; so that it would have been utterly impossible for the medium to have handled the cigar case, even if her hands had been free. This was really a very striking phenomenon, small though it was, since it was observed under such excellent conditions of control.

I have mentioned the fact that the materialized hands were sometimes small and sometimes large. When the sitters were grasped and nearly pulled out of their chairs, they usually described the hands touching them as extremely large ones, having a powerful grip. But, in the following instance, the hand was very small and most delicate in its general appearance.

During one of the New York séances Eusapia suggested that (in addition to holding her as usual) we tie her hands and feet to the hands and feet of her controllers by means of short pieces of rope. This was done. During the latter part of the sitting, when phenomena were in full swing, a tiny hand was seen to emerge over the top of the séance table and begin to untie the knots on the ropes binding her to her controllers. It took several seconds for this untying process to be completed, and when the right wrist had been untied the rope was coiled up and thrown at one of the sitters, striking him on the chest. The hand then went over and untied the left wrist, likewise coiling up the rope and throwing it out into the séance room.



The small table in the cabinet is lifted onto the Seance table, between the curtains. The medium's hands are seen to be held on opposite corners of the table, and her feet are well controlled.

The medium said: "I'm sorry; it is not my fault; tie me up again!" So her hands were re-tied to the wrists of her right and left hand controllers; and a *second* time the little hand untied the knots and removed the ropes. After this no attempt was made to fasten them again.

Bear in mind that all this was done while both hands of the medium were held visibly upon the table by two separate controllers, who were ascertaining at the time that they were really holding the hands of the medium,

and not dummy hands, and tracing her arms to the shoulders to make sure that these members really belonged to her! The untying process, as I have said, took some considerable time—ample time for them to observe and verify all that was going on.

They reported that they were undoubtedly holding the medium's hands, and of course her head was visible throughout.

The hand which untied these knots was white and small, as I have said, and was enclosed at the wrist in a sleeve of black material, which was visible as far as the elbow—and nothing beyond! The edge of the black sleeve terminated in a small white lace cuff, which was turned backward onto the sleeve itself. The dress which the medium was wearing had no lace cuff. This fact was observed very carefully at the time, both by myself and by others, who were all looking at the hand intently. Its manipulations were intelligent and sprightly.

The two gentlemen who were holding or controlling the hands of the medium at the time were Mr. Frank Tilford on one side and Mr. Daniel Frohman on the other—both practical, shrewd men of affairs, who were unlikely to be taken in by any petty trickery, and who were completely bowled over by what they had seen. It was certainly one of the most spectacular manifestations I have ever witnessed.

Those of my readers who happened to see the motion picture *Topper Takes a Holiday* will remember the incident of the decanter which rose in the air by itself, pouring out a glass of liquid into a tumbler similarly suspended in space. Of course this was done by means of trick photography, and was not intended to be taken seriously. But it is interesting to note that precisely this same thing was noted by Sir Oliver Lodge and others in séances with Eusapia Palladino years ago. They also saw a decanter raised into the air and pour out its contents into a suspended glass. So it is possible that many of the occurrences noted in fairy stories are really based upon actual happenings—psychic phenomena which had been noted and which were utilized by the narrator in the telling of his tale.

But to return to Eusapia. The phenomena witnessed in her presence were for the most part physical, though an intelligence was certainly behind them, manipulating the invisible energies involved in their production. We psychical researchers do not believe of course that when an object is moved without contact, this has been brought about by a spirit which runs around the room like a chicken, producing phenomena. No, we believe that a *mechanism* is involved, and we want to know what that mechanism is: this is why we study these phenomena in psychic laboratories.

What seemingly happens is that a form of unknown energy or invisible substance issues from the body of the medium, capable of affecting and molding matter in its immediate environment. At times this is invisible; at other times it takes form and becomes more or less solid, when we have instances of the formation of so-called ectoplasm. It is this semi-material substance which moves matter and even shapes it into different forms.

This energy-like substance issues from various parts of the medium's body, but especially from her fingertips, her solar plexus and the sexual organs—though it can be emitted elsewhere. It represents a psychic force, as yet unknown to science, but now being studied by scientific men as part and parcel of supernormal biology.

It is this energy-like substance, then, which is probably responsible for most of the phenomena noted in the immediate vicinity of the medium. But this is in turn directed by a mind of some sort: and the next question is—whose mind? Is it that of the medium or that of some extraneous spiritual entity?

The answer to this question is not easily given. Certainly many of the phenomena are controlled by the medium herself, since they are under her own volition. For instance, I have often heard Eusapia say, "Now, I shall move that stool," and, placing her hand a few inches above it, the stool moved—though there was no visible connection between the two.

In studying Eusapia's phenomena, then, I was led to these conclusions: that they may roughly be divided into three categories. In the first, certain manifestations were under the control of the conscious mind of the medium. She willed a certain thing to happen, and it did.

Second, the medium passed into trance, in which state her conscious mind was no longer active. In this state the phenomena seemed to be directed by her subconscious mind, as though she were dreaming a certain thing, and this dream actually found expression in the outer world. It was as though a dog dreamed of catching a rabbit, and the dream was so vivid that a living rabbit was actually caught and killed!

But thirdly, we have cases (in deeper trance) in which the subconscious mind of the medium seems also to be superseded, and replaced by a mind altogether different from her own—an independent mind, having ideas and volitions entirely different from those of the medium.

These were the most striking and convincing of all her phenomena—and also the most rare. I have seen manifestations of this type on only a few occasions, while witnessing hundreds capable of being explained by the power of the medium herself. Here, as in so many other instances, we seem to have an inter-blending of the power of the medium herself and an external power imparted from without.

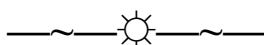
Scientific investigators of Eusapia's phenomena have attempted to explain even her most marvelous manifestations without recourse to this hypothesis. Even materialized hands they attempt to explain by means of "naturalistic" theories. What they suggest is something like this: that, just as the sculptor can mold clay by means of his material hands into various shapes, so the dynamic will of the entranced medium may similarly mold in space the semi-material emanation issuing from her own body, causing it to take the form of hands, heads and various parts of a body. They would constitute, on this theory, a variety of objectified thought-forms.

This theory is ingenious and may be all very well so far as it goes. But there are cases on record which are hard to account for on this view. For instance, at one séance given in Genoa, a complete form materialized, which was recognized by the sitters, and spoke in a low voice in *Genoese dialect*—which Eusapia did not know. Such cases certainly seem to indicate that, in some instances at least, an external spiritual being is actually involved in the production of the phenomena.

But it is certain that they have a biological basis; that is, that they are in any case dependent upon the physical body of the medium for their production. And, this being so, it is obvious that there is great need to study such phenomena in a properly equipped laboratory, fitted up with every contrivance calculated to measure, register and record these mysterious phenomena. That is why some of us have been urging for many years the setting up of such a laboratory—which is certainly one of the prime needs of our time. In it experiments could be undertaken, calculated to throw more light upon the real nature of man than all other scientific laboratories in the world combined!

Eusapia Palladino is no longer with us. She died more than twenty-five years ago. But other physical mediums have come to the fore, and some of these have been subjected to careful scientific investigation. In studying such manifestations we enter a realm of mystery; the borderland between spirit and matter. We approach the essence of life itself. It is a fascinating study, and I for one cannot but feel that the importance of such phenomena is very great—placing almost within our hands the Key to the enigmas of life and mind. They partially lift the veil from the enigmatic face of Nature, and, in the words of Sir William Crookes:

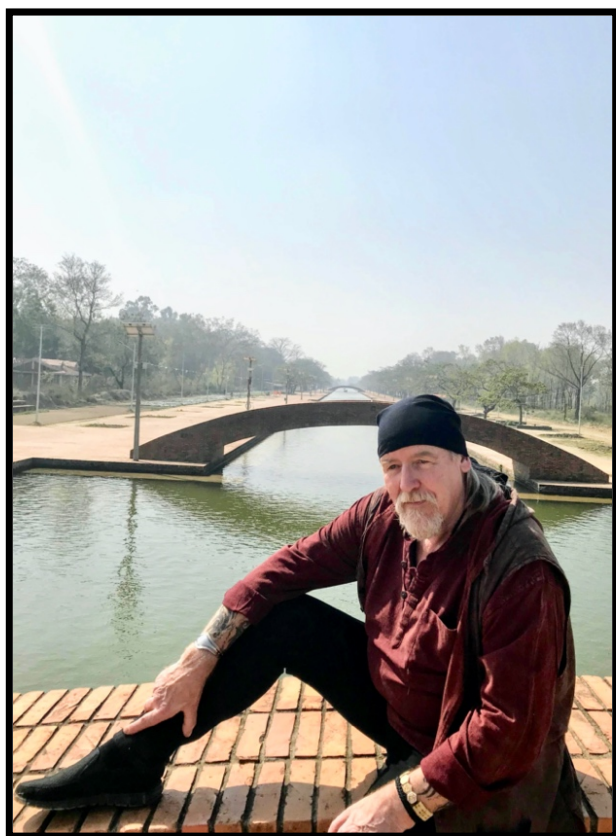
Veil after veil we have lifted, and her face grows more beautiful, august and wond'rous with every barrier that is withdrawn!



FIFTY YEARS OF SPIRITUALISM

Paul J. Gaunt

On October 30th 2019, while in Lumbini, Nepal, the birthplace of the Buddha,⁹ I celebrated my fifty years' involvement within the Spiritualist movement under the auspices of National Spiritualism, soon becoming a Class B member of the Union. My church was affiliated to the SNU, hence my membership of the Union; however, the church was run on strictly Christian lines, which did not fully fulfil my expectations or sit well with me. Nevertheless, I became a very active church member fifty years ago; the church was very well attended and the committee were of a much older generation—very unlike today!



It was within this environment at Bedford Church that much of my early life was spent. I introduced several of my friends to the church. Along with a few people in the church already, namely Hugh Aldous and David Spring, we formed, with the church's blessing, the POL group "Purpose of Life"; this primarily was to raise money and awareness of Spiritualism. We did the usual things like jumble sales, psychic evenings, coffee mornings, etc. Robert (Bob) Cracknell would do Psychic Evenings, where, for example, we would put numbers on the underside of the chairs completely out of sight and Bob would give a reading, say seat number four, the person on the seat and the psychic having no idea who the person was; he gave some remarkable demonstrations.

During this time I met two friends, a medium called Robin Stevens, and Connie Ransom; they were a big inspiration to me. We decided to do a six-week one-evening-a-week workshop (for want of a better name) on 'Public Speaking'; Robin, a fine speaker, agreed to do this with a friend, David Hopkins. Wow! This was a great education for me; David and Robin together were fabulous putting over the importance of a good talk, leading me to the rostrum.

I started chairing the church meetings and taking the platform for the address, then the church circuits with various mediums; one medium whom I worked with was Gena Brealey,

⁹ Photograph taken at Lumbini: it has a number of older temples, including the Mayadevi Temple, and various new temples, funded by Buddhist organisations from various countries, have been completed or are still under construction. Many monuments, monasteries and a museum, and the Lumbini International Research Institute are also within the holy site. In addition, there is the Puskarni, or Holy Pond, where the Buddha's mother took the ritual dip prior to his birth and where he had his first bath. At other sites near Lumbini, earlier Buddhas were, according to tradition, born, then achieved ultimate enlightenment and finally relinquished their earthly forms.

a daughter of Helen Duncan. However, I found I was so often talking to the converted, so to speak, and reliant on a medium. So I changed direction and started to give talks to non-Spiritualist groups, e.g. the Women's Guild and suchlike; I did this until 1982, then stopped public speaking completely.

With regard to the church, the POL group was most successful in raising awareness of Spiritualism in Bedford and in 1973 I moved from Bedford to the Arthur Findlay College to live and work—but that's another story. After around eighteen months at the AFC I went to London to see a show, 'Jesus Christ Superstar'; I noted an advert for a one-way coach trip to India, so I booked. It was a three-month journey to New Delhi, where I remained for a while. Gordon Higginson kindly kept my job open; on returning to the AFC the management had changed from Jimmy Young (second AFC manager) to general manager Charles Sherratt.



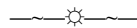
At Bedford we started to hire school halls, town halls, local theatres, etc. and put on all-day events. We worked the prices that anyone could attend with or without an entry payment. Maurice Barbanell would send back issues of "Psychic News" to put on each seat free. We had on several occasions Harry Edwards and his group of healers, and Rose Gladden. Mediums included Gordon Higginson, Robin Stevens, Carmen Rogers and Matthew Manning. The demonstrations were packed; my contacts at the AFC were most useful and we also brought along Albert Best, Ron Baker, the then SNU General Secretary, and for good measure Charles Sherratt to address the meetings; he was a fine speaker.

These are some of my very fond memories of over forty years ago. My introduction was not sought inasmuch as I did not intend to become in any way involved; in fact I knew nothing about Spiritualism or in fact had any interests within that avenue.

My introduction was powerful and at the time very disturbing, but so evidential; I have never needed to look for further proof from when it all began for me on October 31st 1969. My story was first told in "The Ark Review", the journal of the Noah's Ark Society for Physical Mediumship, issue 128, January/February 2003, pages 17-19.

However, published below is the fuller original version, as it was heavily edited for space in the Ark:

OUIJA EXPERIENCE



Early Modern Spiritualism was a time of demonstrable power from the spirit world largely beyond the senses of man; and yet through the recorded history of mankind there are numerous examples of spirit communication, sometimes being swallowed in religious pampering or categorised as superstitious evil.

It was, however, the events that surrounded the Fox Family in 1848, with its powerful demonstration of spirit communication, that made America and indeed much of the world stand up and take note of much that history had chosen to ignore.

Much ground had been prepared prior to 1848 by the likes of Emanuel Swedenborg, Anton Mesmer and Andrew Jackson Davis, their philosophical foundation stones paving the way to the demonstrable truths of 1848.

The crudity of the employment of communication, alphabetical raps and later table tilting, reached Victorian England in 1852 by American medium, Mrs Maria Hayden

and soared openly to epidemic proportions soon after amongst England's elite. This laborious, yet efficient method of spirit communication remained popular even with the progression of mediumistic development. The method of delivery in spirit communication was of basic irrelevance. The relevance was the fact that the veil between life and death had been broken, and survival of death with individuality was for all and not dependent upon religious belief. This so-called, 'crudity' was an open doorway to Modern Spiritualism for those ready to cross; a doorway that I crossed in 1969.

Halloween night, 1969, was the night in which all my preconceived ideas were to change direction.

There is no significance in it being All Hallowed Eve, except had it not have been, perhaps the events of that night may not have taken place.

After partying this night with two friends, we decided to try out the ouija board, mainly for youthful thrills and excitement, a 'scary' finale to Halloween Night. Later, while we were all sitting a fair distance from the table, the upturned glass and cut out letters etc were still where we left them. Suddenly the glass shot off the table flew through the air, and smashed against the wall some distance away!

Impressed with the results, albeit rather nervous, I decided to have another go the following evening in my bedroom with my friend John from the previous evening this time however, in a more serious and responsible manner. We soon made *contact* with a woman who called herself Laura. We were so impressed with the clarity and quality of the information she gave us. We continued with our 'corresponding' for a week or so, each time getting more and more information about Laura. Suddenly her tone became decidedly chilly.

She began to describe how badly her husband had treated her shortly before her death. Laura had given us such clear information, her full name, place of burial, husband's name, and address etc., that we decided to check out all that we had received.

We located the place of her burial and all the information she had given was correct full name, dates of birth, death location etc.

Weeks followed and we persisted our corresponding and checking to the point of visiting her husband whom, by this time had remarried. He became extremely agitated and angry when I confronted him with information we couldn't possibly have otherwise known.

By this time things had well and truly gotten out of hand. The whole situation was affecting our lives at home and at work, and so we stopped using the ouija board. This did not however, see the end of Laura contacting us! My bedroom had a decidedly heavy feeling to it my cat who would normally sleep at the bottom of my bed, would not even come close to the room.

So, scared by these astonishing revelations we called to see the local vicar, a Catholic priest, and a convent. Albeit they were all most helpful, but by far did not solve or help our desperate plea. It was just after this something quite extraordinary happened to me while walking along a passage, I had what I can only explain as a daydream—but so totally vivid.

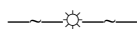
I was that night to sit alone and contact Laura, have a bible and ask her to move the glass totally on her *own volition*. I was to hold the bible at the edge of the table, and the spirit Laura to move the glass on it. I had one hand on the table and the other holding

the book, this was in no way a religious act—but simply a symbolic act to move on as I felt in my daydream.

I can feel the goose pimples on my arms typing this after so many years, she actually did this and it was almost as if someone had switched on a light, the whole atmosphere changed. And unbelievably shortly after, my cat took its place at the bottom of my bed.

After John and I sought the help of the local Spiritualist church, and I shall never forget at the first service we attended. We were approached by the medium, Robert (Bob) Cracknell, whom we had never met prior to this day, and he so astonishingly pointed to us waving his finger between us—and asked if we had been using a ouija board, he told us to meet him after the service.

Thankfully, all was resolved, and now over fifty years on, the experience remains clear with me still. This was for me the most evidential experience of spirit communication I have ever encountered. As shaken as I was by the events that unfolded, this was my introduction to Spiritualism.



Today, in my later years, I spend time in Kathmandu, Chitwan national park and the Himalayas, Nepal. Here I dedicate time putting together much of the issues of Pioneer, my Powerpoint presentations and the Arthur Findlay College yearly Christmas murder mystery, etc.

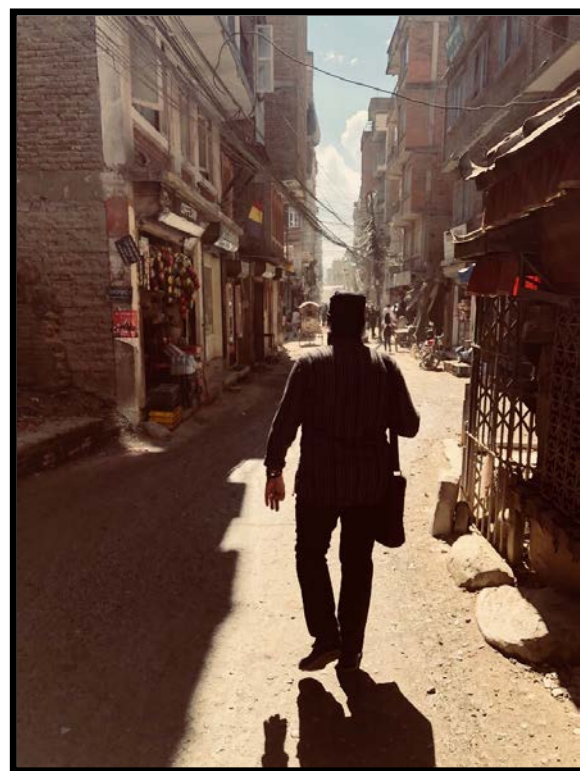


The photograph below depicts my favourite routines: a stroll through the older parts of the city, just outside the Thamel area, where I always stay. Just behind me is the devastated part of Kathmandu's Durbar Square; many of the capital's landmark buildings and temples were badly damaged or destroyed from the April 2015 earthquake. Further up this road is another one of my favourite haunts, the Swayambhunath Stupa, known as the Monkey Temple.

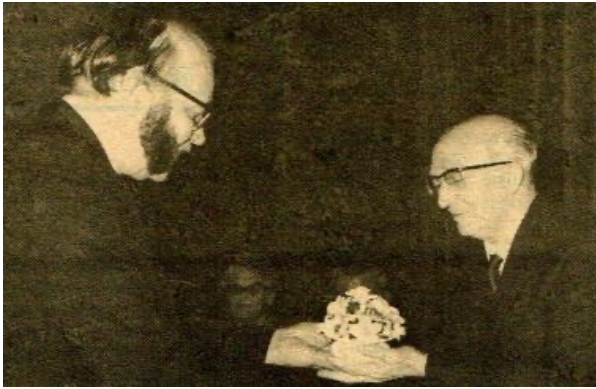
The streets are dusty but an air of magic always surrounds me; for me life is in itself a spiritual mission, no leaders, self-occupied, with no self-perceived

thoughts as I stroll down the many streets, with the Hindu and Buddhist monuments, etc. always present.

For me as I walk, a spiritual experience is not necessarily a deep-rooted experience of enlightenment; it's, in part, a process of conversations with people of so many diverse ways of life, belief systems, etc., which holds a lasting, life-changing experience for me



RICHARD (DICK) ELLIDGE



At the 1971 SNU Conference, under the Presidency of Gordon Higginson, a special event took place, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dick Ellidge taking office as the Union's General Secretary; the photo shows Councillor Frank Tams presenting Dick with a gift.

In 1971 Britten House, Tib Lane, Manchester, then the registered office of the SNU, moved to Stansted Hall; the annex was purchased as its new office and Dick Ellidge moved from Manchester to take up residence at Stansted Hall, the Arthur Findlay College, where he continued his duties as General Secretary until around 1973, then taking on a new role as SNU Consultant.

The reason for the move was that in this year the Union was faced with an ultimatum, with demands from the local fire authority in respect of fire precautions.

Essential modernisation would involve an expense of at least £2,500 to the Union's registered office at Tib Lane, Manchester, and after several deferments a final date of August 1st was given by the fire authorities to either vacate Britten House or carry out the essential work.

Dick was diabetic and suffered from heart problems; he had had two previous heart attacks and, sadly, the third was the cause of his passing in around December 1978.

Below gives a nice tribute to some of his work, which is taken from the "Two Worlds", December 20th 1952:

This Man Is the Mainspring of Organised Spiritualism

ONE of the best known workers in International Spiritualism is Mr. Richard Ellidge, the secretary of the Spiritualists' National union. As a result of his administrative duties the name Ellidge is familiar throughout England and Scotland.

Mr. Ellidge may be described as the high-tension executive mainspring of organised Spiritualism. He brings to his duties not only enthusiasm but an efficiency and general capacity which are the result of wide experience. He has also the extremely valuable quality of youthful optimism; for Mr. Ellidge, speaking comparatively, is still to be regarded as a



young man. He is a keen and efficient man of business, has travelled in practically every country in Europe, has a broad outlook, and a sane and energetic attitude to Spiritualism and its vocation.

THE SMALL UPPER ROOM

The S.N.U, secretary has grown up in the movement. He made no dramatic entry into spiritualist beliefs. Rather he has been unconsciously absorbed into the spiritualist atmosphere and conditions. At the tender age of ten years he was attending the Lyceum at the particular church with which he has been closely identified, that of the little community of Shaw, near Oldham. He says he can look back and still in imagination see the large friendly company of people of that time. They have passed to other localities or to the higher life. He has continued to be closely identified with the Shaw church, which is one of the most active and best equipped in the Union.

When he first began to take notice in a conscious way—his early interest was derived from his mother, who was a keen Spiritualist—the Shaw congregation met in a small room over a stable. There may be some Biblical significance in this fact. His mother was one of the most active members of the congregation. She was not mediumistic but she was psychic in her own way. She took the chair at the mothers' meeting and in his early years Mr. Ellidge used to accompany her.

A YOUTH MOVEMENT

In 1930 he was appointed secretary of the Shaw church, and in the following year was elected president, holding this position for the long period of 19 years. Spiritualism has actually been in existence in Shaw since 1875—the old records of that period have a mention of the church at Shaw.

Mr. Ellidge was the leader of a vigorous youth movement in the locality. There was a revolutionary advance when he was appointed secretary. The old officers who had been running the church resigned, and the young and ardent Spiritualists of the movement took over.

There followed an almost romantic development. Computing their assets, the new managers found that they to work on a capital of £36.



The need for more suitable premises was pressing and the new managers faced the problem. There was a building of considerable size available. It had been in use as a club. Mr. Ellidge interviewed the agent and told him frankly what the position was — £36 in hand, a small sum with which to contemplate the acquisition of new premises. The agent was sympathetic. He told the young representative of the Shaw church that if they could make the sum up to £40, he himself would lend the other £10.00 required to reach the stipulated £50 deposit. The price arranged was £500, a very moderated figure in relation to present-day conditions.

A PROFITABLE DEAL

The deal came off and the Union building fund stepped in to help. The only fault with the new premises was they were too big. The church used only the ground floor, and there was a large room

upstairs and five other rooms. Eventually in 1946 they determined to have an entirely new church and the building that was bought for £500 was sold for £2,250!

Fortunately, they were able to buy a small church which was ideal for their purposed. The present church has not only accommodation for the ordinary meetings, but has a healing room which holds about 70 people, and other accessory accommodation. Over £1,000 was spent in renovating and equipping the buildings, and electrical heating was introduced. The premises are in every way efficient and attractive to the eye.

Mr. Ellidge thus brings to his duties at the S.N.U., not only a knowledge of organisation and an apt capacity for administration, but a very intimate knowledge of the problems and difficulties of the ordinary Spiritualist congregation.

AN OPTIMIST

He has an inspiring confidence about the future of the Spiritualist movement. Church members and D members—independent adherents who are associated with no particular congregation—are steadily increasing year by year.

He is conscious of the fact that Spiritualism is not confined to regular attendances at places of worship. It is a knowledge which, when acquired is applied in the ordinary comings and goings of daily life. That, perhaps, is one of the greatest potencies of the movement and its effect on the genera life and conduct. It is not a one-day religion, but something which influences and colours the whole outlook.

The churches, of course, are important as centres of information and enlightenment. Mr. Ellidge mentioned some indications of progress and building up of the movement by the churches.

North Shields church is being rebuilt with the help of a War Damage Commission grant of £3,000. The building of the new Liverpool church will shortly commence. It is being erected and equipped at a cost of approximately £15,000. Mr. Ernest Keeling has made this enterprise his special interest.

CIVIC RECOGNITION

A number of new churches are being built through the S.N.U., building fund. There is an attractive church in the Victoria Park district of Manchester—a Welsh Presbyterian chapel is being converted. The building pool is furnishing £1,850 for the purpose, and the necessary building licences have now been passed. This church will be the largest in Manchester, with special provision for the Lyceum.

Mr. Ellidge can point with satisfaction to the growing recognition of Spiritualism as a religious institution. In his own town of Shaw, the Spiritualist church ranks with the other churches in the ordinary municipal and other administration. They are invited to appoint a representative for committees along with all the other churches, Mr. Ellidge, for example, has been added to the membership of the religious committee for the Coronation.

PRISON VISITOR

Mr. Ellidge was appointed secretary to the Manchester District Council in 1938 and in November, 1946 was appointed general secretary of the Union. His business interests not only made him an expert in methods and routine, but gave him contacts in foreign countries. During the war he was the export correspondent of a firm supplying asbestos equipment, and was responsible for the despatch for asbestos materials to India and the Far East by the Burma Road.

His duties as a political agent in one of the county areas were useful in establishing numerous local contacts, and also brought him into touch with most of the leading figures in Parliament, a fact which was of considerable importance when the Mediums Bill was under consideration. Mr. Ellidge was on the parliamentary committee which dealt with the cancellation of the Witchcraft Act.

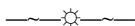
A service with which Mr. Ellidge has been specially identified as that of the visitation of various prisons in the interests of the inmates. The movement has now a recognised standing on this matter and Mr. Ellidge is himself the visitor to the Strangeways Gaol.

There are Spiritualist ministers working in this way in most of the large prisons of this country. "Two Worlds" is one of the newspapers which are on the list for circulation amongst the prisoners.

SPIRITUAL HEALING

Since the war Mr. Ellidge has visited France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Belgium and Holland. His conviction of the truths of Spiritualism has been built up as a result of a large number of evidential experiences. Its particular philosophy appeals to him more than any other religion. He is holder of the SNU Diploma and has the certificate of a minister, which he obtained before his appointment as secretary.

He has taken the chair at something like 5,000 Spiritualist gatherings, and at the present moment considers that healing is taking a prior position in the movement. He receives at his office innumerable queries on this subject. Healing courses in the churches are very popular. This department of the church's work and progression, is growing very steadily and strongly.



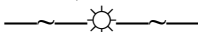
SNU Registered Offices:

The residence of Hanson Gledhill Hey, Hon. Secretary of the SNU, a tobacconist's shop at Halifax, became the *first* registered office of the Union (I believe Hey moved during his time as General Secretary, so there would have been another address).¹⁰ Around fourteen years later Mr R. H. Yates was appointed to help Hanson Hey when he fell ill around 1918. Hey retired owing to his health problems in 1920 and Yates was appointed his successor.

On the eve of the 1922 AGM word came that Mr Yates had suffered a stroke; his written resignation was read at the AGM held on July 1st 1922 at Caxton Hall, Westminster, London. Yates consented for the registered office of the SNU to remain at his home in Thornton Lodge Road, Huddersfield. At the SNU quarterly meeting on October 28th in Manchester a new registered office was discussed; after considering several towns it was agreed that Manchester offered the most central position and first-class railway facilities.

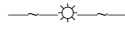
The *first rented* registered office of the Union was at Broadway Chambers, 162 London Road, Manchester. The date is unconfirmed but was circa 1923. In July 1931 the SNU's registered office moved to Hollins Chambers, 64a Bridge Street, Deansgate, Manchester. Later, in circa 1948, it would again move but this time into its first property purchased (mortgaged) by the Britten Memorial Trust, at Britten House, 12 Tib Lane, Manchester.

In 1971 Britten House, Tib Lane, Manchester, moved to Stansted Hall; the annex was purchased as its new office. Some years later, circa 1984, the Union moved just up the path in the Arthur Findlay College grounds to the newly renovated gardener's cottage, becoming the new registered office and called 'Redwoods', as it remains today.



¹⁰ 68 Crown Street, Halifax, the first office of the Spiritualists' National Union Ltd and the residence of the Hon. Secretary, Hanson G. Hey; it was demolished for road-widening in 1937.

Britten Museum & Library



Research - Study Weeks at the Arthur Findlay College

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July 4th — 10th

September 5th — 11th

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Alternatively, accommodation is available in the village; a list is available on request.

SPIRITUALIST HEALERS OF THE PAST



Ursula Roberts' name is still well-known today; she was a Minister of the SNU, an author of numerous books and well-known for her teaching control/guide, Ramadahn. However, the article below focuses on her early beginnings and her healing work.¹¹

GIRL WHO SCOFFED IS NOW A FAMOUS HEALER

By Philip Paul

When Ursula Roberts, well known healer and platform worker, accompanied her mother to their first Spiritualist meeting, both treated the exploit as a joke and afterwards laughed heartily over their visit to the “cranks.”

But in the back of Ursula's mind a small, murmuring voice whispered that perhaps, after all, there might be “something in it.”

She met a woman who demonstrated the gift of automatic writing. Fascinated, she sought privacy and “tried her hand.” And, to her astonishment, unfamiliar minds expressed their philosophy through her “controlled” hand at her first sitting.

MRS EDDY RETURNS

As time went by, she began to receive lengthy scripts from a variety of communicators. Among these were significant communications from Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Science movement. These scripts were published in book form a few years ago.

After making her first public platform appearance as a trance medium in the now-defunct Dickens Hall Spiritualist Church at Eastbourne nearly 20 years ago, Miss Roberts went on to establish her reputation as a healer — probably her best-known role today. In 1945 she was invited to take over the leadership of a Golders Green healing group, an opportunity for service which she gladly accepted.

CASUAL START

Her readiness to help was not unrewarded, for it was at Golders Green that she met her husband-to-be, tall, silver-haired, military-looking Sydney Richardson, well known chairman of many Marylebone Spiritualist Association Sunday-evening meetings.

Ursula's entry into healing was as casual and fortuitous as her recruitment to Spiritualism itself. But who will deny the obvious purpose behind these two “coincidences”?

It all started when a member of her developing circle asked her for healing. Convinced that nothing would happen, Ursula did as she was asked—and received her second major surprise. She was a healer! Not much later she was giving expert diagnoses whilst in trance.

¹¹ Taken from the “Two Worlds”, December 27th 1952.

Now, with a dozen helpers, she treats some 80 patients who attend her once-a-week clinics at the M.S.A's headquarters, as well as an average of 60 sufferers who arrive each Thursday for the ministrations of the 14 healers at St. Gabriel's Hall, Cricklewood.

In addition to her healing activities, she has found time to produce another book, "Health, Healing and You," to be published next spring.

This, in a nutshell, is the Ursula Roberts story, as told to me by the healer in an interval before one of her M.S.A. healing sessions. But there is a great deal to be told.

So far we have painted only the colours of progress and success into our picture. But, as in nearly all cases, the Ursula Roberts portrait has its sombre shades too.

FOUR YEARS OF PAINS

Stricken early childhood with tubercular infection of her right hip, she spent four bedridden, pain-filled years, some of them in the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, before she was fit enough to face more years of pain hobbling through young woman-hood.

To-day, no hint of that suffering is betrayed in her fresh complexioned face. The closest observer will not detect even a momentary hint of pain. Only the slightest limp in her far-from-slow gait remains to remind her of her malady.

When I asked her how this enormous improvement was achieved, she ascribed it to the work of her husband and a Mr. Elliott of her healing group.

"Instead of being practically crippled and doubled up with pain, I am able to walk around and carry on my work. A few years ago it was so bad I thought I would have to give up."

From many examples of psychic experiences she has encountered, she selected a story of 1940 as an example of her symbolic vision. Standing on a hill at Eastbourne, looking out to sea, she saw as though reflected in the water, a giant cupped hand, fingers pointing towards the French coast. A few days later, the successful Dunkirk evacuation was announced.

INVASION FORESEEN

The previous year, before the wholesale German conquests, she saw, clairvoyantly, a dark shadow spreading itself across a map of Europe.

She shared the experience of many mediums remarkable air-raid escape, when her guide's advice that her West Hampstead home would be safe for her was amply confirmed.

During a flying bomb attack, she was making her way from the upper part of her house to shelter downstairs when she was clairvoyantly warned not to go any further. As she hesitated, a bomb fell nearby and when she descended into the lower rooms she found them littered with huge splinters of shattered glass. Had she been present at the moment of the explosion she would certainly have been gravely injured or killed.

She smiled when I asked her to describe some cases of healing which particularly stand out in her mind. "There are so many," she said.

After a few moments thought she told me of a Miss Woolf, who had been troubled with a polypus in her nose. Contact healing proved unsuccessful and she made arrangements for a surgical operation. Then Miss Roberts came on the scene, with a suggestion that absent healing be tried.

The patient told her later that he awoke one night and distinctly heard a “snip” as of scissors. The following day the growth had disappeared without trace, never to be seen again!

THIS IS EXHAUSTING

I inquired whether her healing operations left her depleted. She laughed. “Oh dear me, no. I find writing letters much more exhausting than healing my patients. But the spirit world has looked after that side of things and provided me with a great helper, Miss Lilian Davies.”

Recalling another case of successful healing, Miss Roberts told of a man suffering with dermatitis who approached her after he had tried all other forms of treatment without improvement.

“The condition had existed on his hands since the first world war. The diagnosis showed that when he was young he had wanted to be a musician, Unfortunately, his father had forced him to weed the garden and do other menial tasks. The constant fear that this sort of work would do irreparable damage to his hands was the cause of his disease.

“When this was explained to him, the rash completely vanished!”

DESIRE TO LEAVE

I put some “stock questions.” She was definite about the mental, as well as the physical, effects of spiritual healing. Many of her group healers had started as patients, she said. The receipt of help promoted a great desire to serve others.

She was just as sure about the place of orthodox treatment alongside spiritual healing. “Ordinary medicine should always be maintained where it can be of help,” she said. “Great harm is done by neglecting either form of treatment.”

On the subject of public demonstration of healing, she showed an open mind, but her faith in the future of Spiritualism and spiritual healing is deep-rooted.

She is as devoted to her work as, in her experience, she is convinced of its efficacy. When I asked her if she has any children, she replied, “The sick and suffering of this world are my children.”

A fitting point, I think, on which to close this glimpse of a true Spiritualist.¹²



**Taken at the first Arthur Findlay College Dinner Dance on October 31st 1970.
Left to right: Healer Tom Johanson (husband of Coral Polge), Ursula Roberts and Maurice Barbanell**

¹² For more information on Ursula Roberts see Pioneer, Vol .5, No. 2: John Britnell – Father of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers.

PRIZE-WINNING ARTIST WAS CURED BY ABSENT HEALING AND SO WAS HIS DAUGHTER



This competition result with the accompanying story was published on the front page of the "Two Worlds", May 18th 1957:

This prizewinning strip cartoon in our competition was done was done by 31-year-old George Borley of Newbury, Berks, who receives a cheque for £5 5s.

Borley has a psychic story to tell, for he was cured by absent healing three years ago.

After spending 18 months in a TB sanatorium, he was due to visit another sanatorium prior to an operation on both lungs. His condition was such, he was told, that he would be confined to bed for three months.

Though, as he says, he was materialistic by nature, he later had an urge to visit his local Newbury Spiritualist Fellowship. This aroused his interest. Soon he was regularly attending.

Having learned about spirit healing he decided to approach Harry Edwards for absent treatment. The result was so successful that a surprised specialist said no operation was necessary.

The absent healing cure took about a year to complete its success. Ever since Borley has pursued a full-time job. Regularly every six months he has had a medical check-up and been given a clean bill of health every time.

Recently he was told that he was a potential healer. Already he has some slight successes to his credit.

There is even a more remarkable story concerning his seven-year-old daughter. Soon after her father came out of the sanatorium, she fell from a bicycle in a severe accident and hurt her hip. The result was pronounced limp.

Three months later the medical diagnosis was that she had contacted a TB hip. She was sent to hospital for treatment.

Because of the success achieved by absent healing in her father's case, the help of Edwards was again sought. Absent healing was also given by members of a local Spiritualist group.

Though the parents regularly visited the hospital it was not until three months later that the child told them about her clairvoyance. She described in detail the figure of a black man she saw.

The spirit visitor appeared frequently. Soon he and the girl became great friends.

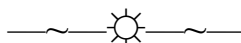
Hospital proved wrong

The hospital sister told the parents that the child would have to remain in hospital for three years. At the end she would still have a locked hip and might even have to wear calipers.

The coloured spirit visitor, having won the child's confidence, regularly treated her. He forecast correctly the course of the medical treatment, insisting that she would be completely well. He was proved right, for after 15 months the girl was discharged because her hip was normal.

Who was the coloured man? Evidence was clearly forthcoming that he was one of the guides of the local healing group. At one time when the child said he was absent, this coincided with his absence that had been noted by members of the healing group.

To all intents and purposes the daughter is now a healthy young child, indulging in all normal pursuits. The efficacy of the healing has been proved, for she has had several X-rays and medical check-ups. When the hospital was told about the spirit healing no comment was made.



CHRISTMAS WEEK AT THE ARTHUR FINDLAY COLLEGE

The theme for this year for its last week in 2019 was the 1920s. The AFC tutors were Stella Upton, Lynn Cottrell, Val Williams and Janette (Jan) Marshall, with General Manager Tanya Smith.

This included workshops on art, auragraphs, mediumship, meditation, table-tilting, remote viewing, etc.

The traditional “Murder Mystery” started with an enactment:

Guests had been invited by an unknown host under the pretence of a “surprise party!” But why? And by whom?

Resulting in the murder of Miss Flossie Periwinkle by poison
< played by Monica Salvi.





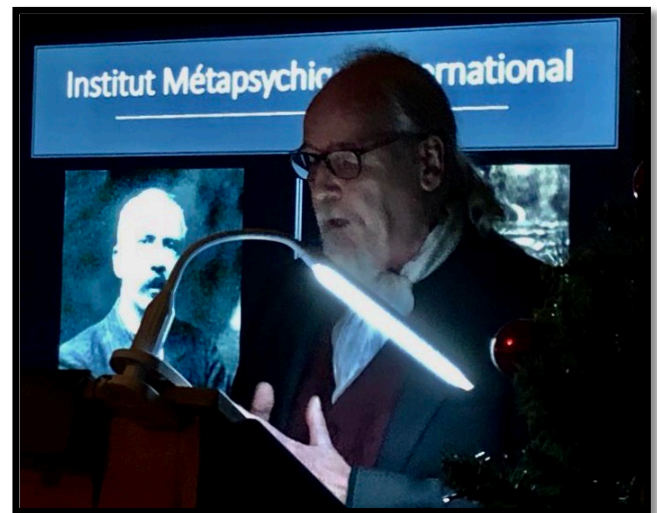
Top left to right: Mrs Bessie Constance — Stella Upton, Lady Beatrice-Somerset — Val Williams, Madam Dorothea Frances — Tanya Smith

Bottom left to right: Sir Percy Lancelot — David Bruton, Lady Winifred Leonora — Janette (Jan) Marshall, and Lady Susanna Mountfitchet — Lynn Cottrell

The hunt for clues—who did kill the beautiful Miss Flossie Periwinkle?

Earlier in the week a reconstruction was demonstrated on how the incredible phenomena of producing paraffin ‘wax moulds’ of feet and hands was demonstrated by our pioneering physical mediums, such as Franek Kluski.

The first reconstruction under séance conditions was to show the experiments held at the “Institut Métapsychique International” in Paris, which operated during 1918-c1938. An organization for the studies of paranormal phenomena, in 1919 Professor Charles Richet became Honorary Chairman and later in 1930 its President. In 1919 Gustav Geley was its director; they both experimented in November 1920 with Kluski in the production of wax moulds claimed to be produced by materialised spirits.



Professor Charles Richet, who gave us the name “ectoplasm” in 1894, noted:¹³



“Geley and I took the precaution of introducing, unknown to any other person, a small quantity of cholesterin in the bath of melted paraffin wax placed before the medium during the séance.

“This substance is soluble in paraffin without discolouring it, but on adding sulphuric acid it takes a deep violet-red tint; so that we could be absolutely certain that any moulds obtained should be from the paraffin provided by ourselves.

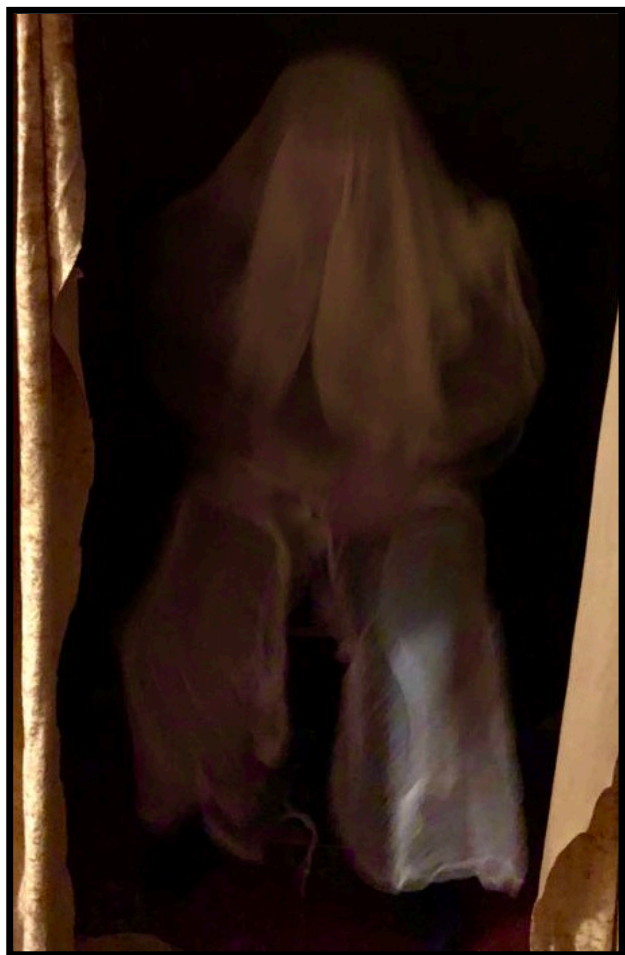
“We therefore had certain proof that the moulds obtained could not have been prepared in advance but must have been produced during the séance itself.

“Absolute certainty was thus secured”

“We therefore affirm that there was a materialization and dematerialization of an ectoplasmic or fluidic hand, and we think that this is the first time that such rigorous conditions of experiment have been imposed.”

¹³ Taken from “Thirty Years of Psychical Research”, by Charles Richet, 1923, page 543.

This was demonstrated with a commentary from myself, partly as given above and from the notes by Geley and Richet; we had, of course, to use a *human spirit* to demonstrate the process with plastic hands to complete the reconstruction. To my knowledge Franek Kluski never used a cabinet to produce materialised forms, but in order to surprise the sitters and conceal the materialisation, or as the Kluski circle would term it, the “phantom”.



As the actual conditions were simulated as far as possible, it was too dark to take any photographs of the reconstruction.

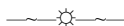
The “phantom” was played by Darren Heart, who later in the week materialised as Sherlock Homes, assisting Jan Marshall in her psychic detection/remote viewing session.



Franek Kluski has been well represented in the pages of Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 3 and Vol. 5, No. 2:

Experiments of the Polish S.P.R. with Franek Kluski & Beasts from The Beyond — Story of Franek Kluski

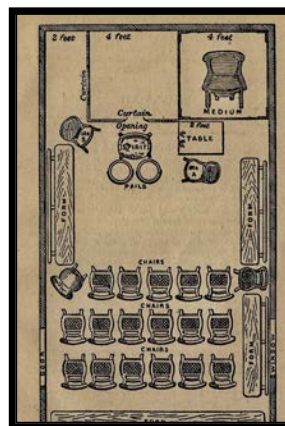
“Wax Spirit Hands” booklet — Reviewed by the SPR



We then delved further back into the Victorian era of physical mediumship with two mediums who produced wax moulds, firstly Catherine (Kate) Woods, who was one of the first. It was noted that generally prior to the year 1872 most physical manifestations took place in private circles; in July 1872 the “Newcastle Society” was formed and in the year 1873 it was discovered that two ladies had, it was claimed, very great mediumistic power — Miss Wood, aged 21, and Miss Fairlamb, aged 17.

Experiments for materialisations were tried in 1874; human faces and hands presented themselves at the openings of the cabinet where the mediums were enclosed, and eventually fully-developed human forms of men, women and children walked from the cabinet.

Restraints were discussed, leading to Kate's Belper experiments:



To obtain moulds of spirit hands or feet while the medium was detained inside the screwed up cage

Severe as the tests were, Kate said of them:—

“Your conditions are so good I think it is quite possible you may succeed”

- (1)—for the spirit to materialise inside the cabinet and come out whilst the medium sat in circle;
- (2)—for the spirit to materialise outside the cabinet while the medium sat inside;
- (3)—to obtain moulds of spirit hands or feet while the medium was detained inside the screwed-up cage

These experiments are well covered in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 8, No. 2, February 2012.¹⁴

Annie Mellon
and
“Geordie”



The focus for the reconstruction of a séance report was Kate's friend, Miss Annie Fairlamb, who by 1878 was acknowledged as one of the most “active workers in Spiritualism”; in this year she married James Barr Mellon, a name which would serve the movement of upwards of five decades.

The part of Annie was played by the AFC General Manager, Tanya Smith. I myself played the part of the researcher Thomas Ashton, who recorded the séance circa 1875, with Jan

Marshall as Armstrong, who in fact was William Armstrong, co-founder and first President of the “Newcastle Society”.¹⁵

A short quote:

All was now ready, and Miss Fairlamb was requested to take her place in the cabinet, but this she positively refused to do. She said she was willing to sit outside the cabinet, but inside she would not go. Her reason was this: she told me she was certain that if she entered the cabinet, and anything in the shape of phenomena occurred, one of the gentlemen present would declare it a trick, and not genuine spiritual phenomena, so we had to give way, and at once took our seats round the cabinet, Miss Fairlamb sitting immediately opposite the centre of the cabinet, with a clear space of about 3ft. between it and the chair on which she was seated. She was immediately controlled, and the controlling spirit requested me to bring my chair close to the medium, to take hold of both her hands, and also place my feet upon those of the medium. This latter I strongly objected to do. I said I was willing for the medium to place her feet upon mine, but

¹⁴ See the *Psypioneer* link on the new website which heads this issue: The Beginnings of Full Form Materialisations in England – Catherine (Kate) Elizabeth Wood 1854-1884 – concluded 61 Paraffin-Wax Moulds – Alfred Smedley & W.P. Adshead, 62 – What Became of the Moulds? – Alfred Smedley.

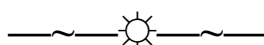
¹⁵ The “Newcastle Society”, founded in July 1872, named the “Newcastle Psychological Society”, operated under that title for seven years, after which it was renamed the “Newcastle Spiritual Evidence Society”.

could not think of placing mine upon those of the medium, However, the control would not give way, and I was compelled to comply under protest against those conditions. I was further commanded on no account to lose my hold upon the medium. Another gentleman, a complete stranger to Miss Fairlamb, was then requested to bring his chair and sit next to me, and hold me as he pleased, and so place himself that he could see that I faithfully carried out the conditions imposed upon me.

When these arrangements were completed, the control requested us to sing. After we had been singing for a short time, we all heard what appeared to be a splashing of water inside cabinet, at the same time the medium was very much convulsed and shaken, so much so, that I found it difficult to hold her, but I succeeded in keeping the conditions imposed. When the splashing ceased, the control asked me if I knew the reason why her medium was so much shaken, I replied, I did not; the control said it was caused by “Minnie” (one of the medium’s guides) when dipping her hand into the hot molten wax. We were again requested to sing, when the same remarkable convulsions of the medium, and splashing of water in the, cabinet, were repeated. We were now told they could do no more, as the power was exhausted.

Whilst I still held the medium as described above, Mr. Armstrong went direct to the cabinet, threw back the curtains, and we beheld with astonishment that the foot baths had been removed from the position in which they had been placed, to the centre of the cabinet; a magazine, which had previously lain on the table before the commencement of the seance, was spread out on the floor in front of the baths, and on it were laid two perfect wax moulds of the right and left hands, evidently of a lady by their size and shape.¹⁶

It turned out to be an educational evening exploring these fascinating physical phenomena of the past. Thanks are due to all who participated and to Janette (Jan) Marshall for taking most of these images and acting as séance assistant in the two reconstructions.



¹⁶ The full account is published in Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 4: Mrs Annie Mellon – Materialisation medium.

Pioneer ends its sixth volume

Pioneer was launched at the Torquay AGM 2013, replacing the SNU hardback magazine of the same title; a special edited edition of the first issue was published for the delegates. Starting as a quarterly electronic journal, from January 2015 it went bi-monthly and continues as such today.

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.

To date it has published over 1,240 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.

In the last year individual subscribers have substantially increased, rising to 1,700; in addition, it is sent out to SNUi members and is available on the SNU website.

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.

