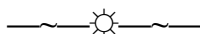




Volume 7, No. 5: October 2020

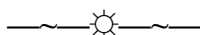
Contents list:



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 Charles Coulston for his work in sub-editing this issue



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SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION AGM

Weston-super-Mare, 2nd & 3rd July 1955

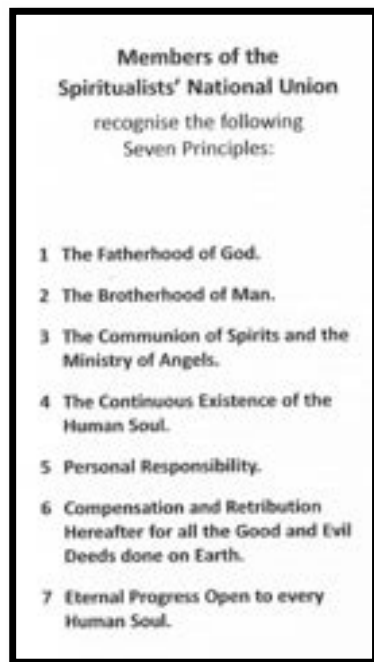
“No speaker in our movement can be inspiring if he has not assimilated a knowledge of Spiritualism”

“We are endeavouring to persuade every speaker in the Union to become conversant with a knowledge of the history and philosophy of the movement.”

Looking back to the past AGMs of the Spiritualists' National Union gives the reader a good perspective of its past work, its struggles, its then workers and how things within the Union have changed over the years. Some of the points raised at this AGM have been covered in the past issues of Pioneer, for example:

The six-part Pioneer series starting in Vol. 2, No. 1, “The Effect of the Vagrancy Act – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union”, is now available on one pdf; please see my website shown elsewhere in this issue.

Arthur Findlay's gift and transfer of funds into the Union's hands nine years prior to handing over Stansted Hall to the SNU, just before his death. Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 4 shows how after Findlay's wonderful gift many financial problems occurred and the formation of the “Friends of Stansted Hall” emerged in 1969.



Ernest Thompson followed in the footsteps of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle inasmuch as to add to the Union's Seven Principles “nine moral affirmations”, whereas Doyle's was a religious principle; Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 6: “Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U. and his Propaganda Work”:

“That a new principle be added to the Seven Principles of Spiritualism, declaring that while admitting that every Creed has its own message from on high, however by human frailty, we in the Western World acknowledge the original teachings and example of Jesus of Nazareth and look upon them as an ideal model for our own conduct.”

Pioneer has addressed the problems encountered with Christian Spiritualism and its seven principles and the removal of “freedom of conscientious interpretation of the Seven Principles” as noted in this AGM in Vol. 2, No. 2: “Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?”

The medium who demonstrated at the AGM, Magdalene Kelly, is now largely forgotten; at the end of this issue is a profile of this once popular medium.

The AGM article starts with the headline,

“Greater World Christian Spiritualist League has disaffiliated 800 of its churches ...”

Please see the end of the article for further information.



Below is reported from the Two Worlds, July 9th, 1955:

Christian Spiritualism drops 800 of its churches

THE REMARKABLE NEWS THAT THE GREATER WORLD CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST LEAGUE HAS DISAFFILIATED 800 OF ITS CHURCHES WAS A BOMB-SHELL DROPPED SOON AFTER THE START OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE LAST WEEK-END.

The news was given by Harry Dawson, S.N.U. president,¹ when he referred to the recent conviction of Norman England for fortune-telling under the Vagrancy Act.

Dawson told the delegates at Weston-super-Mare's town hall that the disaffiliations were a sequel to this prosecution. Inquiries made of H. F. Bendall, G.W.C.S.L president, revealed that while disaffiliations had been accelerated by the England prosecutions—his Salford (Lancs.) church was affiliated to the League—the weeding out process has been happening over the years.

The League, said Bendall on Monday, which 25 years ago had 1,200 affiliated churches, now has between 400 and 500. Diploma-holders are also being weeded out.²

Dawson corrected his first statement, that the disaffiliations were a sequel to England's case, later in the conference.

Dealing with England's conviction, Dawson told the conference of the advice given by solicitors holding a watching brief for the S.N.U., "We would not advise you to touch such mediums (in matters of defence) with a barge-pole."

"It was an exceptionally bad case," said Dawson. "With. psychometry, it all depends on how you use it. I was only sorry the Greater World fell into the trap and included doubtful members in their organisation.

"Eight – hundred disaffiliated churches !" he exclaimed. "There must have been a tremendous amount of riff-raff among them.

"When you fight a conviction" he declared, "you won't stand much chance if you defend ex-offenders of the law."



Harry Dawson

¹ Harry Dawson, Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 5: "Harry Dawson – Spiritualists' National Union President 1953-1958: Profile by Philip Paul, Two Worlds".

² On Wednesday, 6th March, 1946, the Home Secretary received a deputation from the Spiritualists' National Union, which placed before him the Spiritualists' case for religious freedom, the need for the abolition of the Witchcraft Act and an investigation into the position of mediums under the law, with special reference to the Vagrancy Act 1824, Sec. 4. Bendall was part of the deputation; see "The Effect of the Vagrancy Act – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union", referred to in the editor's introduction.

2,000 LOST A YEAR

Richard Ellidge, S.N.U. general secretary, told the conference: “We are losing 2000 potential members a year.³ Spiritualist churches are not compact places—they are corridors through which people pass.”

The majority of associate members, he explained, did not become full church members, but left the church instead. Actual numbers of church members had slightly increased last year.

Ernest Thompson asked whether the emphasis on psychic phenomena and the corresponding neglect of spiritual issues might not be the causes of this inability to “hold” newcomers.

EDUCATION THE KEY

C. I. Quastel, SNU. vice-president and secretary of the exponents and education committee, replied: A number of us have been working long hours every week to advance the educational work of the committee. No speaker in our movement can be inspiring if he has not assimilated a knowledge of Spiritualism.

“An enlightened platform will bring about spiritual thoughts and practices. We are endeavouring to persuade every speaker in the Union to become conversant with a knowledge of the history and philosophy of the movement.”

Later presenting his interim report, Quastel, in his capacity as secretary of the committee, declared: “All S.N.U. churches are urged to engage the services of S.N.U. mediums in preference to those who do not have the interests of the Union at heart.”

He expressed the hope “that some day the Union will organise the platforms of the whole country,” and ensure a uniformly high standard of demonstrating and speaking.

He revealed that students of the educational scheme had nearly doubled since last year.

HEALTHY FINANCES

J. B. McIndoe, retiring treasurer of the Union, spoke of its increasing prosperity. “Now,” he said, “for the first time in many years, we have a credit balance of the right size.”⁴

Arthur Findlay had transferred £2,000 of 2½ per cent Savings Bonds to the Union, it was revealed, for decoration and furnishing and “any other sundry purposes” incurred in setting up the Arthur Findlay College for the Advancement of Psychic Science.⁵

³ Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 6: “This Man is the Mainspring of Organised Spiritualism – Richard Ellidge SNU Registered Offices”.

⁴ John Brown (Mac) McIndoe, SNU President 1930-1938 – Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1: “Mr. John B. McIndoe – *The National Spiritualist*”.

⁵ In his Presidential address Dawson said: “Discussions I have had with Mr. J. Arthur Findlay, of Stansted Hall, Essex, relative to his splendid and generous gift by bequest to the SNU of his home after his departure to Etheria (a phrase coined by him in one of his books) have now been completed. Arrangements have been made to carry out his wishes in due course.

“I feel that this wonderful gift, plus the copyright of his famous books and the substantial endowment to enable the J. Arthur Findlay College of Psychic Science to become a practical reality, will be Findlay’s finest memorial, showing the deep and practical regard he has always shown to Spiritualism.”

Findlay is the author of Spiritualism’s best seller, “On the Edge of the Etheric.”

“Additional financial assistance will be necessary to ensure the steady growth of the Arthur Findlay College for the Advancement of Psychic Science, and the council commend the scheme to those who are able by gifts or legacies to support the example so admirably set,” says the Union in its annual report.

Stan Curran, who decided at the last moment to withdraw his resignation as secretary of the fund of benevolence, stated that more than half the churches affiliated to the Union do not contribute anything to the fund.⁶

IGNORANCE OF FUND

Many people, he declared, did not even know what the fund of benevolence was. “Others,” said Miss. M. D. Hibbs, president of the committee, “thought it was obsolete now that the old age pensioners received so much assistance from the Government.

“These pensioners are in the evening of their lives,” she said, “and need those extra little comforts. One of them told me, on receiving his few shillings, ‘I cried tears of joy because I felt that somewhere, somebody still thought of me.’ ”

Another inquiry into healing

“THERE are many sensitives who are finding that healing pays,” declared Harold Vigurs in moving an amendment to two motions on healing.⁷

“They don’t make charge,” he went on, “but they make it clear that they welcome donations. It is far more remunerative this way than if they accepted a fee.”

Vigurs’ amendment, which will come up next year, is “That this conference, having regard to the growth of healing activities in the movement generally, requests the national council to set up special committee to explore generally the question of spirit healing and to tender advice and guidance to our members in this matter.”

“The Archbishop has *his* committee on healing,” said Vigurs. “Some of the replies given to it by Spiritualists (who received the questionnaire) have not commanded any respect.”⁸



Harold Vigurs

NO MORE PRINCIPLES

“A creeping in of creed and dogma into an organisation that is free to think for itself.” That is how Harry Palmer summed up the conference’s unanimous rejection of Ernest Thompson’s motion to add nine moral affirmations to the Seven philosophical principles recognised by the S.N.U.

Another rejected motion presented by Thompson contained a suggestion that the teachings of Spiritualism should be expounded at public demonstrations of healing.

⁶ Founded by Minnie Harriet Wallis; see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3: “Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists’ National Union”.

⁷ A.H.L. (Harold) Vigurs, Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 2: “Harold Vigurs – Spiritualists’ National Union President 1943-1948, Harold Vigurs – “Fourteen Group” & The Principles of Spiritualism”, etc.

⁸ See, for example, the attitude of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 1: “Canterbury Demonstration – Dr Fisher Objects – Maurice Barbanell responds”.

“Surely,” said J. Capstack, chairman of the S.N.U. healing committee, “a healing demonstration, if properly conducted, is in itself the agency for Spiritualist propaganda.”⁹

“People come to be healed, not lectured to,” said another delegate.

A motion that caused controversy was presented by James McNee of Glasgow. It read: “That we amend the constitution to prevent any person holding office or sitting as member of the national council of the S.N.U. who is member of any other religious organisation.

HAVING IT BOTH WAYS?

“You can’t have a foot in both camps,” McNee told the conference. “You are either a 100 percent Spiritualist or you are playing at being a Spiritualist.”

Said Mr Corp, a representative of the S. Wales District Council, “We are distressed that the leaders of the movement could belong to other religious organisations.”

John Stewart opposing the motion, asked, “Why should we tie ourselves down? Spiritualists are a freedom-loving people.”¹⁰

Quastel, in a passionate rejection of the motion, asked for “freedom of conscientious interpretation of the Seven Principles.”¹¹

“Keep our Union broad and tolerant to every avenue of spiritual awareness,” agreed Vigurs. The motion was defeated.

ABOLISH DEATH PENALTY

McNee’s other motion – “That the S.N.U. makes its views known to the appropriate authority, i.e, the Government, that it disapproves of capital punishment remaining as one of the statutes of this country”—was wholeheartedly received and adopted.

A motion put forward by the Southern District Council, “That all speakers holding the Union’s certificate be requested to serve only S.N.U. churches, and that Union churches be asked to engage S.N.U. speakers,” received short shrift. All the speakers opposed it.

Two doctors send patients to medium

“I HAVE two doctors who send their patients to me,” said J. Capstack, chairman of the S.N.U. healing committee, and himself a healer. He was speaking at the Sunday afternoon consultative conference on “Healing under the jurisdiction of the S.N.U.”¹²

Once, when he went to give healing to a patient in hospital, he said, the head matron sent for him and declared. “You are at liberty to use spiritual healing anywhere in this hospital if you think it necessary.”¹³

⁹ Joe Capstack was one of the National Council representatives at Arthur Findlay’s funeral; he was also on the original “Management Committee”, then the “Board of Governors” in 1965 for the Arthur Findlay College.

¹⁰ John Stewart, SNU President 1941-1943, Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: “John Macintosh Stewart”, etc.

¹¹ Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 2: “Charles I. Quastel”.

¹² Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3: “Some Healing History – Healing within the Spiritualists’ National Union”.

¹³ Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 1: “Gordon Alan John Turner, Medium in TV debate with surgeon over healers in hospitals”.

JEALOUSY ATTACKED

At the Sunday evening service the guide of trance medium Bess Hewitson spoke of the “grave responsibilities of Spiritualists.” He praised delegates for their sincerity and dedication to spirit teachings during the conference.

But he condemned the “Jealousy and bickering that is killing spiritual upliftment in your midst.”

“We have a message for this age,” said David Dutton, the other speaker, “— a message which it is God’s will should be given to the world.”¹⁴

The orthodox churches have not met the challenge of science, he declared. They had closed the door to spirit guidance.

But there had come to this world a force that could check this drift from religion – a welling out of power in countless mediums.

“We must continually be able to demonstrate by these psychic gifts,” he urged, “that science does not have all the answers. We are not destined to remain a small religious sect: we are the forerunners of new approach to religion.”

The high spot of Magdalene Kelly’s demonstration of clairvoyance came when, referring to a little elderly woman who had been standing near the platform all evening, she repeated her announcement, “I’m Aggie.” Mrs. Kelly spread her arms, “That’s all she says.”

It was enough for the Spiritualists of Weston-super-Mare. “Aggie” was the nickname of Agnes Tovell, organiser of the conference, who passed on just over a fortnight ago, after heart attack.

Pioneer passes on – From C. I. Quastel, a friend

MANY delegates who met at Weston - super - Mare were saddened to hear of the passing of Mrs. A. Tovell.

For close on 50 years she devoted herself to the interests of Spiritualism in the south west of England, firstly associated with the Bristol Grosvenor Road Church, and later becoming the founder of the present beautiful and dignified SNU church in Stafford Road, Weston-super-Mare.

She was a lovable “character” in Weston. Far and wide she was known as a person of courage and moral integrity.

FRIEND TO ALL

Among her friends were people of all ranks of society, ranging from civic leaders to the poor and destitute who never found her door closed against an appeal for help.

The Spiritualist community will miss her sadly, but will be happy that in the weeks preceding her passing she was honoured by the SNU, who placed in the charge of her church the task of organising local arrangements for the annual conference and awarded her the long service award for “services rendered to Spiritualism.”

May that service continue in her new life.

¹⁴ In 1965 the charity, “The Spiritual Truth Foundation”, was founded; David Dutton was the Chairman, the trustees included Laurence Wilson and Maurice Barbanell, and the Foundation is still going today. A paper by Dutton on Helen Duncan is published in Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 4: “Helen Duncan séance during her 1944 Trial – *New séance evidence!*”.

Big business now

THE SNU is big business, so far as insurance is concerned. Richard Ellidge, its secretary, has been appointed a director on the local board of the Sun Insurance Company Limited. The total amount of insurance placed by the SNU has reached £631,000.

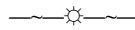
Mayor pays tribute

“IT is very good to see,” said Councillor Richard Ivens, Mayor of Weston-super-Mare, in his civic welcome to S.N.U. delegates, “that in these material days there is a body such as yourselves that thinks on a higher plane.”

“Dear, dear, what a surprise,” said Dawson. Then he invited dear old Amy Oaten on to the platform after seeing this grand pioneer seated in the hall. She, of course, is the widow of Ernest, for many years Editor of this newspaper.¹⁵

On behalf of the conference Dawson sent greetings to Britain’s oldest Spiritualist, Jessie Greenwood, who is 95 this week.¹⁶

Another of our oldest workers, Mrs. Pickles, of Blackpool, was appointed honorary vice-president of the S.N.U. She is 85.

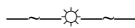


As noted in the introduction, “Greater World Christian Spiritualist League has disaffiliated 800 of its churches ...”; its President, H. F. Bendall, resigned shortly after:

One of his greatest achievements was to bring the three major Spiritualists organisations — the League, the Spiritualists’ National Union and the Marylebone Spiritualist Association—closer together.

“When I took over as president,” he said, “there was real enmity between the various bodies.

I couldn’t let that remain.”



Below is reported from the Two Worlds, August 13th, 1955:

WHY I RESIGNED—by Greater World president

“Too many old people in our movement”

H. F. BENDALL, who has relinquished the presidency of the Greater World Christian Spiritualist League, quashed, over the weekend, the rumour that he was throwing in his hand because of recent prosecutions of mediums affiliated to the League.

“I am retiring entirely as a result of advancing years,” he told me in the garden of the Greater World headquarters at Holland Park, London, W. “I think there are too many old people in the movement.” Bendall is 67.

When I asked him if the fact that the League has found it necessary to disaffiliate 800 of its churches had caused him concern, he replied:

“It’s worried us all, of course. Imagine the strain . . . and there’s still got to be a lot of weeding out. But that’s not my job now, thank goodness !”

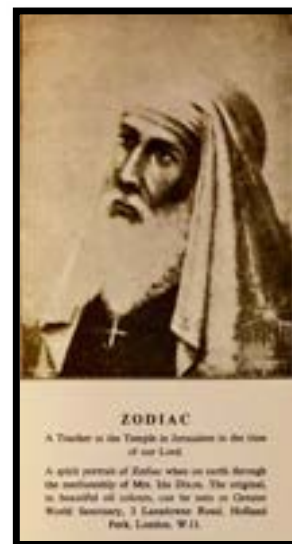
¹⁵ Ernest Walter Oaten, SNU President 1915-1920 & 1922-1923. Oaten has featured many times in Pioneer, for example in Vol. 1, No. 2: “Ernest Walter Oaten (1875-1952) – His contribution to Spiritualism was long and notable, giving almost 60 years’ service”, etc.

¹⁶ First lady SNU President, Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1: “Mrs. Jessie Greenwood, J.P. – *The National Spiritualist*”.

SERIOUS POSITION

Bendall's going could put the League in serious straits. He has managed affairs almost singlehanded since Winifred Moyes, leader of the organisation, collapsed with peritonitis four and a half years ago. Doctors told Bendall she had only a few hours to live, but she still survives, though imprisoned in a wheelchair. And she is still the medium for Zodiac, whose spirit utterance are taken down and sent to League members throughout the world.¹⁷

Since Bendall retired from the Civil Service two years ago he has devoted all his time to the League. He joined the organisation in 1931 and became secretary of the Greater World Association, the League's business side two years later. The first problem was to get rid of a £1,500 overdraft. Then he discovered they were spending £1,200 more annually than they were getting. This, too, he remedied.



In 1938 he became the League's president, a post he has held ever since—until a few days ago. He has also resigned from his other positions, which include chairmanship of a printing and publishing company.

He told me his most outstanding psychic experience. He had been asked to open a new Greater World Church in The Hague, Holland. Though he could not speak Dutch, he had arranged for his invocation to be transcribed phonetically.

When the time came for his speech he lost consciousness. He learned later that he had thrown the copy away and spoke in perfect Dutch. It was the only time he has been entranced, although he claims he always speaks inspirationally.

One of his greatest achievements was to bring the three major Spiritualists organisations — the League, the Spiritualists' National Union and the Marylebone Spiritualist Association—closer together.¹⁸ "When I took over as president," he said, "there was real enmity between the various bodies. I couldn't let that remain."

CHRIST'S FLORIN

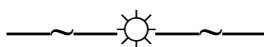
He is a man of the deepest spiritual convictions . . . and humility. He told of an occasion, when in the depth of a bitter winter, he met an old tramp walking through a snowstorm. He felt in his pocket and handed the man a florin. " 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . ' " he murmured to himself as he walked on, and added happily, "I have done it to Christ."

Then he heard a voice say, "Yes, you've given Christ 2s. !"

"It was a kick in the pants," he admits ruefully.

Bendall, who hopes eventually to travel abroad, will remain at League headquarters to help as much as he can in an advisory capacity.

Bendall has been one of Spiritualism's most successful leaders, and one of its sincerest protagonists.



¹⁷ Zodiac image, see Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 2: "Spirit portrait of Zodiac by Ida Dixon", page 66.

¹⁸ The Marylebone Spiritualist Association is today known as the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain (SAGB); see Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 1: "Visit to the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain".

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

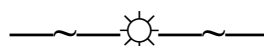
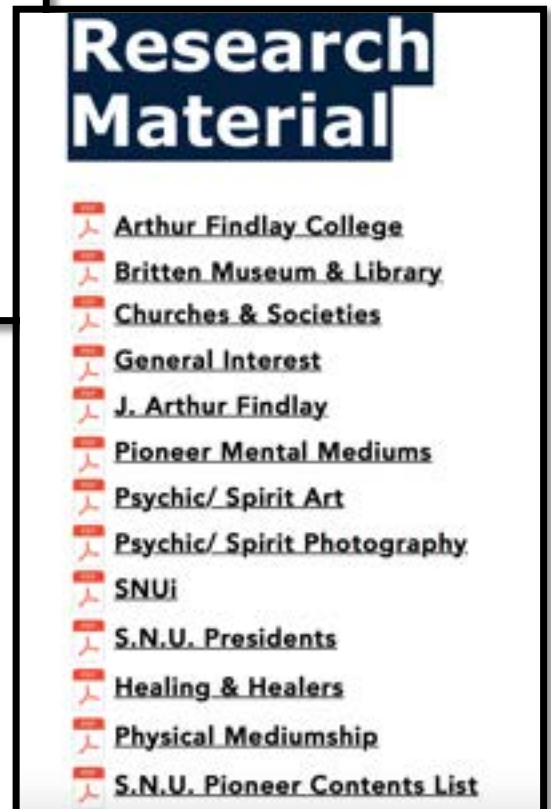
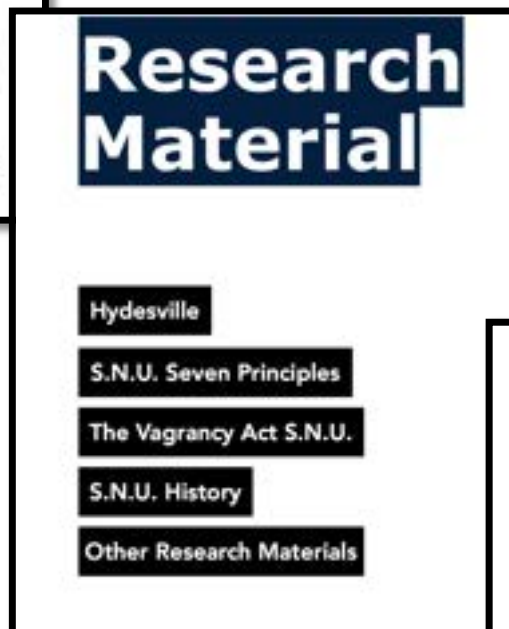
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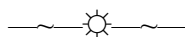
All the articles published in Pioneer over the last seven years have been grouped together within their category as much as possible.

Go to the study page:

<https://www.pauljgaunt.com/study-weeks>



HARRY EDWARDS ADDRESSED BY SILVER BIRCH



Hannen Swaffer

In November 1952 Harry Edwards was addressed by Silver Birch, the spirit guide of Hannen Swaffer's home circle.¹⁹ At the sitting Edward's helpers, Olive and George Burton, were also present. Below, Harry Edwards, together with his healing team, poses questions to Silver Birch; the articles published here is the third and fourth part from the Two Worlds, November 15th & 29th, 1952:

"The Aim Of Mediums Is To Touch Souls"

THE talk between Harry Edwards, the famous healer and Silver Birch, spirit guide of Hannen Swaffer's home circle, is continued below. It took place when the healer was accompanied by his helpers, Olive and George Burton.

Edwards asked: "If there is a condition where the patient is in such a state that there is no hope, is it a good or bad thing to hasten the end?"

"I am one of those who always believe that the body should fall away when the spirit is ready to permit it."

"You hasten the break if you hasten the end of the physical body," said the healer. "Is that a right thing to do if there is great pain and suffering and there is not much chance of living?"

"I know the difficulty and I do not wish to appear to be stony-hearted in this matter. The law is quite clear and the body should fall away when the spirit is ready, just as the apple drops from the tree when it is ripe, If the apple drops before it is ripe it is not good for the apple. I am pointing out what should take place within the framework of natural law.

LAWS TRANSGRESSED

"There is the circumstance where through drugs and poisons, the body becomes full of disease. The body was not intended to be riddled with disease; the laws have been transgressed, and so we go from stage to stage. Doesn't this point out what the natural result should be, no interference by the individual, by the doctor, or by anybody? All must come within the framework of natural law."

LIVING IN SHADOWS

On another occasion when Edwards and the Burtons were present the guide emphasised: "The true aim of the power of the spirit is to touch the souls of those who come within your ministry. Until the people of your world realise that they are souls and not physical bodies, they are going through life completely indifferent to reality; they are living in the shadows and chasing illusions. It is only when they become aware of their real selves, their spiritual natures, that they come face to face with reality. To find yourself is the object of all earthly

¹⁹ I hope to locate the first part and publish it in a later issue of Pioneer, with the concluding session between Silver Birch and Harry Edwards and co.

life, because once you find yourself you will then, if you are wise, proceed to develop that divinity which lies within you. It is mostly true that in your world people do not find themselves, and are unaware of their spiritual nature until some sorrow or tragedy touches them. It is only in the darkness of life that light is found

GREATEST SERVICE

“You meet mostly those who are afflicted in body and mind and the healing should induce in them a realisation that they are spiritual beings, and if you can touch their spiritual natures, if you can kindle the divine spark, the flame will come in time and its illumination will brighten the whole of their lives. Now that is not always easy. You may succeed in putting right a limb that is misplaced, or clearing up a disorderly condition, but if in so doing the individual is aware that he is a spirit with a body, not a body with a spirit, then you are indeed performing the greatest service that is possible.

“You must appreciate that we are more concerned with the spirit than with the body. If the spirit is right, then the body will be right, but if the spirit is not right, not in true alignment, then the body cannot possibly be right. I would like you to appreciate this because it is an aspect of your labours that you cannot measure. The gratitude and thankfulness of those who obtain a cure, or relief, or a betterment, is as naught compared with the soul being touched and the releasing of that tremendous dynamic that is within them.

“NO EASY TASK”

“It is not an easy task on which you are engaged; it demands great sacrifice and service. It is performed amidst difficulty and the pathway is not an easy one. But the path of the pioneer is never easy, neither is the road of those who give service one that is freed from obstacles. You must not expect that it should be so. Each obstacle and difficulty is a challenge to your own nature that you should rise triumphant above it and allow the pure gold of the spirit to be exhibited.

Here Harry Edwards asked. “With the healing of the mind, or the healing of the soul, is that not done more from your side than from ours?”

“Yes, it must be so” the guide replied.

“Is the part we play very little?”

“It is little and large,” answered Silver Birch. “It is all a question of attunement. If you realise what takes place, it is a question of stepping down or lowering the vibration, frequency or radiation of these healing forces which, as you know, are differing kinds of rays, to a potential that can be manifested in physical form. That is one way. The other method is by using rays which produce a direct effect either on the mind or the spirit, that is, the consciousness of the sufferer, thus allowing the natural curative power to get rid of any disharmony or disease. That does not sound very clear.”

“Yes it is clear, but its application is not easily seen,” Edwards commented.

POWER OF THE SPIRITS

“Let me put it another way,” said the guide. “Nobody in your world knows what life is. It cannot be resolved into a physical, chemical or scientific explanation. Life eludes because life cannot be resolved into any material formula. Now we say that life is spirit and spirit is life. That power of the spirit which is released in your activity is life itself—the same power that enables individuals to have consciousness, to breathe, to move, to walk, to think, to reflect, the same power that enables the whole of the natural phenomena of life to perform and fulfil their functions, the same power that enables the tree to grow,

the rose to bloom, the tide to ebb and flow. It is all part and parcel of the same power of the spirit.

A GUIDE'S ELOQUENT PRAYER

At the opening of every sitting at which Silver Birch makes a communication, he begins with an impressive invocation, and each sitting closes with a benediction. The following is a typical example of his invocations:—

“I PRAY to the Great White Spirit that we may be enabled to reveal the operation of the laws that belong to the spiritual realms. I pray that we may be enabled to give a clearer understanding of the Great Spirit and His relationship to all the phenomena of life and to all His children who dwell in the universe.

“The Great Spirit has been so misunderstood throughout the centuries, misinterpreted, limited and restricted that we seek to reveal the Great Spirit as perfect law in operation. The Great Spirit is responsible for every manifestation of life. All that exists does so because of His power and His sustenance.

The whole order of creation pays tribute to his Law. The mightiest and the lowliest, the strongest and the weakest, the birds, the flowers, the trees, the wind, the ocean, the mountain, the hills and the vales, the sunshine and the rain, the storm and the lightning—all these are but expressions of the Great Spirit of all life.

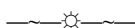
“We seek to reveal that all are fashioned in His spiritual image, that His spirit manifests through their being, that they move and breathe and live because the Great Spirit is within them and they are within the Great Spirit. None has the power to come between the child and the Father, for all the inspiration, all the truth, all the wisdom, all the revelation, all the knowledge that belongs to that infinite reservoir can be reached by each child of the Great Spirit as he desires, in aspiration, humility and service, to become an instrument for that mighty power.

“We seek to reveal the greatness latent within every human soul, the mighty force waiting to be released, pent up through misunderstanding, waiting to surge through the physical being and express spiritual heights in their daily lives.

“We would seek to make all children live lives in fulness, in beauty, in understanding of the purpose for which they were born, so that they might extract from life all the richness all the sweetness, all the beauty that is theirs for the asking.

“We seek to bring the Great Spirit closer to His children and His children nearer to the Great Spirit, to overcome all the obstacles that stand in the way, to banish all the restrictions and limitations so that that the children of His world of matter may know the Great Spirit and seek to reveal Him in service.

“That is the prayer of Thy Indian servant, who seeks to serve.”



We continue below our account of the seance at which Silver Birch, guide of Hannen Swaffer's home circle, discussed healing with Harry Edwards and his helpers, Olive and George Burton.

Silver Birch Talks To Harry Edwards On Healing Problems

“What makes you live is the fact that you are a spirit. It is in essence that that power, in varying degrees, according to the development, the evolution of the patient, is released. Healing consists in applying this power to the soul of the patient where it is a disease that has its origin in the soul and not the body. As you know, there are two kinds of diseases, those that begin in the mind or the spirit, and those that are purely physical. The physical ones require the healer's touch, and those that owe their origin to mental or spiritual process require the application of the power of the spirit.



KARMIC LAW

“There is a limitation imposed by a set of factors; your own evolution, the evolution of your two collaborators, and the evolution reached by the person who comes for healing. What I call the karmic law is also at work, a process of cause and effect all the time.”

There are many diseases of the mind or the soul, but they have different effects on the body,” said the healer. “I assume, therefore, that there must be qualitative healing forces to deal with the individual healing condition.”

THREEFOLD MAN

“Yes, that is perfectly true,” said the guide. “Man is a triune being. Primarily, man is a spirit, that is the seed. The foundation of existence. Spirit is the first cause. The spirit is expressed through mind, which is the centre of consciousness, and mind regulates the body, which is the physical apparatus. Mind, spirit and body are inter-relating factors that affect one another. Not only does mind affect the body, the body qualifies the mind; you cannot have one without the other.”

“That works both ways,” said Edwards.

“Yes,” agreed Silver Birch, “the limitation of the mental and spiritual expression of the individual affect the body, and the body can be regulated to a height as yet unknown by the mind and the spirit. Study the fakirs who train themselves to have a complete mastery and discipline over their bodies. They can perform bodily feats that to the eyes of the Western world are impossible. That merely means that they have trained the mind to rule the body with a consciousness, a deliberate consciousness, that is not usually done.”

Edwards asked, “If you kindle that consciousness within the spirit, as we may do, is not the spirit a dominant factor in the individual and could it not be more easily done from your side than from ours?”

EARTHBOUND SOULS

Silver Birch answered: "In some cases Yes, but in the majority of cases No, because, like the many individuals who come to our world, although they are no longer on earth they are still nearer to earth than they are to spirit. Their evolution is so comparatively low that they are unable to respond to spiritual stimuli. Where you have this condition in your world we cannot reach them. That is what your mediumship consists of, it is the nexus, the stepping down process. The attuned medium, the evolved medium, is able both to reach out to spirit and to respond to matter.

LONELY PATH

"That is why it is very important that the healer, or the medium of any kind who desires to achieve the greatest results, should also strive to develop his own spiritual nature. It must be so that the higher you reach spiritually, the greater is the good that you can do because your range is extended. It is part of the law. As a corollary, it may be emphasised, too, that this process of development is a lonely path in which, as the individual unfolds, he leaves familiar signposts behind. I think you appreciate that; you cannot have one without the other."

Edwards intervened with: "You said of the healing rays, in one aspect of them, that they come and affect the physical body. Can you give me an indication where or how the change takes place between a spirit healing force and the physical change? There must at some time come the link-up where the spirit can be converted into matter? Can you give me any indication where the link is?"

The guide answered: "It depends on the kind of healing that is to be performed. Some will find it hard to believe this, but in some cases the centres are the old ones laid down by the masters of wisdom. The 'third eye' and the solar plexus are used because these are centres where body, mind and spirit link up. As an alternative, the subconscious mind of the individual, where it is receptive, is acted upon in such a way so that it is stimulated into sending the necessary chemical reaction to the affected part in a manner that it would normally do if health were there and not disease."

Edwards said: "It is clear, but I still cannot see where the 'no man's land' is. Can you give me an indication of a more tangible link between the physical condition and spirit healing force? There must be somewhere, some manner, where they change."

SPIRIT CONDENSER

The guide replied: "That is rather difficult my son, because it is not possible to explain it in a manner that I think I could make you understand it, but it is somewhat akin to what I think in your word is called a condenser, the function of a condenser being to regulate the transmission of one frequency into another. That is what mediumship is. In some cases, what you call ectoplasm is used, but not in the form in which it is used at a séance to reproduce a voice, or for materialisation, but in a more invisible —."

"An in-between state?" suggested Edwards.

COMBINED POWER

The answer was, "Yes, where it is sufficiently plastic and malleable to spirit influence but yet sufficiently semi-physical to work in the material world. It is your power combined with it that acts as the condenser. Then this healing force actually flows into the individuals either through the pineal gland or the solar plexus. The vital force streams through their whole being and that is when they feel this warm electrical vibration.

“What you have to appreciate is that there is no set method. It is all a question of experiment. Every time you have healing you attract more and more what you would call scientists from our world. They have noted the reactions; what rays have been used; they have measured them; and that is why you have found a quickening in the results. You have noticed, for example, that often there is a healing before the patient comes on to the platform, and that will continue. The greatest part of your work is done, not in public, but in the silence of your soul.”

Edwards said: “That does lead me to another question. There is an idea prevalent – you have just spoken of the gathering of scientists on your side – that there is conflict between various healing guides should one of our patients receive absent healing from us and physical healing from another medium. It seems to me to be contrary to all spiritual law. What do you think?”

PROVED BY RESULTS

The guide answered, “I say let the results determine it.”

“But that is not an argument that we can use.”

“In some cases there is a conflict. This cannot be laid down because there is a varied set of circumstances with every patient. You cannot look at an individual and say if he comes to you you will heal him. It may be that the stage of evolution he has reached and you have reached will determine that you can succeed, and it may be that you can partially help and others, with another set of conditions, can go a stage further.

INFINITE VARIETY

“The more one sees the working of this simple but intricate process, the more one guards oneself against laying down arbitrary laws. The power of the spirit is infinite in its variety of manifestations. The wisest plan is not to assert what must and what must not be. There are certain essentials of motive and desire to serve but after that who is to say what will succeed or what will not succeed?”

Edwards said: “We are not concerned with the details, but with the general principle, whether there is co-operation of all the healing guides to help a patient if necessary.”

Silver Birch replied: “The hall-mark of an evolved soul is that he will not deny anybody. We will help wherever we can. This is the standard set in the highest realms. Never refuse, my son, never turn away a soul. You have produced mental and spiritual effects that are eternal in their nature. Do not attempt to judge. You cannot see with eyes of the spirit.

“You help far more than you know. Be assured that the service that you render is one of the greatest services that can be performed in your world. Where it would seem that physical success has not crowned your efforts, do not despair; it is no reflection on you or who are associated with you. The natural law must always work. You know there are no miracles; all is regulated by infinite love and infinite wisdom.

Here is a typical benediction:

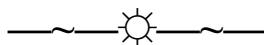
“We are around and about you because we love you, and the love that we have for you makes us always seek to serve you and, through you, those who require service – the weak ones, the ones who have lost their strength, the ones who have fallen by the wayside, the derelicts of your world, the weary and struggling souls who do not know where to turn, who can find no comfort in the religion of earthly churches but who have a yearning for

the truth, those whose souls seek expression but who are choked by the creed and the dogma and the teaching of opposing sects.

“May you become conscious of that mighty power that is around and about you, of the great love that is always being poured into your world, the inspiration that seeks to express itself through you, the truth that is waiting to be revealed, the wisdom that seeks to illumine your world, and may you strive through service to make yourself accessible to the mighty power of the spirit, so that you may become at one with the great Force, the Great Spirit, that is behind it all, so that, working in unison with His laws and filled with His knowledge, you may become instruments of His servants for all His children. May the Great Spirit bless you all.



**Big Jump, better known as “Silver Birch”, and his medium,
Maurice Barbanell**



A QUESTION OF FRAUD!

concluded

A twisty path indeed has been trodden over the two last issues of Pioneer, with its articles on conscious and unconscious fraud in physical mediumship and the difficulties shown in the early development of form mediumship, as well as the psychological considerations raised, together with the claims of serious injuries or even death to the medium if the necessary required fluids such as psychic force, psychoplasm and ectoplasm, etc. are seized, light shone on the alleged spirit form, the medium touched without permission, etc. Claims have been challenged but those who make such claims appear unable to back them. For example, Mrs E. Wakely noted,

“May we ask Mr. Boddington to give the *name* of the medium who was killed through being tested by any method. *We want facts.*”

All responsible researchers and sitters should, of course, be responsible and accountable for their actions, for example the “National Laboratory of Psychical Research” director, Harry Price, had a strict policy in place – “Do not seize teleplasm without the medium's permission!” It was further noted that Helen Duncan was in fact aware of the proposed seizure of Mrs Grover in 1938! Duncan was seized on three occasions, firstly in 1933 at Edinburgh; due to the structure of the charge she was found guilty at the trial but deemed innocent at the following Spiritualists’ National Union AGM.²⁰

In this third and final part of “A Question of Fraud” much of the material has given the reader *first-hand* accounts and original reports by those actually present, for example, in the last issue with the second seizure on Friday, January 9th, 1880 Mrs Corner (Florence Cook) was under the protection of Edmund Dawson Rogers, Chairman of the Séance Committee of the British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS), London, when a sitter, Sir George Sitwell, suddenly seized the full-form materialisation of ‘Marie’, who appeared attired in white robes. The seized ‘Marie’ was found to be the medium herself. Albeit it was without doubt the medium herself who was *acting* as the alleged spirit, ‘Marie’, it was well argued by the BNAS chairman that he

“... believed her to be totally unconscious, and therefore totally guiltless of any deception, ...”

On the other hand, Spiritualists and the psychic press have publicly acted responsibly on numerous occasions on the practice of conscious fraud, for example Ernest Oaten in the first part of this series stated:

“To exploit the deepest emotions of the human soul and the most sacred of human associations by using fraudulent means to exploit them for personal gain is a detestable and disgraceful thing, showing a lack of all fine feeling and of decency.”

“When, however, as in the case of Mrs. Grover, it can be definitely shown that preparations were made beforehand to practice fraud by carrying into the seance-room the materials used for fraudulent purposes, such as butter-muslin and band of linen with a large

²⁰ An SNU sub-committee was appointed to look at the situation which had arisen from the prosecution and conviction. Their unanimous conclusion was that the alleged facts of the case were not “supported by the weight of evidence at the trial.” President John McIndoe agreed; at the SNU Conference held in Doncaster on July 1st, 1933 and after a lengthy discussion a resolution was passed approving the Committee’s report by fifty-seven votes to two—Duncan was innocent and her Diploma remained.

safety pin in it, there is only one conclusion to be reached, namely, that a deliberate attempt had been made beforehand to deceive the sitters.

“And we hope Spiritualists, despite their sympathy for the bottom dog and the desire to practise kindness and the spirit of brotherhood will let no false sentiment stand in the way of keeping the Movement clean.”

It was also pointed out by Oaten that “it has been the policy of *The Two Worlds* for fifty years to make such facts known wherever they occur.”

The alleged exposures and the consequences of a *seizure* of a physical medium have not so far appeared to have the *drastic effects* which are so often noted in our literature of injury and even death to the seized medium. It is on this note that Pioneer will look at the effects of the early high-profile alleged exposures, given that the early mediums’ spirit guides/controls looked strongly like a *double* of their medium! Some mediums preferred to be secured to avoid the possibility of unconscious fraud but it was also noted on occasions that the mediums appeared out of their cabinet, free of their binds, sealed knots, etc.



Catherine (Kate) Wood was one medium who agreed, on occasions, to be severely tested during full-form materialisation; her materialisations occurred sometimes in lighted conditions, often sitting outside the materialisation cabinet, thus making her fully visible to all present. One example is at Belper in 1877, where Kate accepted further challenges: 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.²¹

Various reports in the Spiritualist press reported Kate Wood as being very susceptible to *evil* spirits—a better and more correct term would be *low* spirits. It can be

noted in the John King séances with Charles Williams that they were sometimes of a rough character. Kate was developed in what most Spiritualists would call the correct way, that is, under the protection and harmonious auspices of development groups run by experienced Spiritualists; Kate fell into such responsible hands at the Newcastle Spiritual Evidence Society, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Venturing away in 1876, she initially maintained early protection and

²¹ In the early 1870s a group of psychical researchers emerged who became known as the “Sidgwick Group”. Catherine Wood (along with Annie Fairlamb, later known as Mrs Mellon) would become the focus of some of their researches. A report dated February 17th, 1875 from two members of the group, F.W.H. Myers and Edmund Gurney, led to Miss Wood and Fairlamb being more fully investigated by this group; it was reported: “... Pocky leant over him to kiss Gurney he felt no body; nothing but drapery. Asked whether her trunk is materialised she replies that it is not—only head hands and some kind of legs—not regular feet. She [Pocky] retires to a point near the cabinet but quite outside it, so that wall of room is plainly visible between her and cabinet. She then dematerialises herself—sinking away into a slight white mark on the ground in about half a minute. This mark soon disappears. When the mediums have recovered we enter and examine seals and knots. We do this carefully. All is unbroken, though the nails had been driven so thoroughly through the substance of the silk that a slight push severed the silk from nails and seals.”

procedure at the Derbyshire experiments, where she received careful and judicious supervision. Alfred Smedley and Mr W.P. Adshead undertook test séances; Adshead at Belper recorded an incident of *low spirits* on February 13th, 1877:

“As usual, Miss Wood, on entering the seance-room, went at once into the cage, was bound and sealed to her chair, and the door of the cage screwed up. As I was about to let the curtain drop in front of the cage I observed Miss Wood lying back in the chair as in a death-swoon. Thinking she was perhaps more deeply entranced than usual, I said nothing. She must have remained in that condition for nearly a quarter of an hour, as not the slightest movement was heard.

“Then “Pocka” took control,²² and informed us the conditions were bad; that in coming to the seance some drunken men had jostled against the medium; that spirits who had been drunkards in earth-life were present, and their influence would prevent any manifestations taking place that evening; that, on being bound, the medium had been controlled by a spirit who had committed suicide by poison, and that she had been injuriously affected by the control; that the cage must be opened and the medium released at once, taken home under control and put to bed. This was done, and she remained under control until a late hour.”²³

However, there is no doubt that Kate Wood was seized and found to be impersonating one of her alleged spirits, “Pocka”, on two occasions! On August 11th, 1877 the “Blackburn Times” reported on a series of seances held with Miss Wood at Blackburn. “The Medium & Daybreak” of August 17th reported the story; the paper's founder editor, James Burns, noted that there were present on the first occasion twenty-eight or twenty-nine sitters, including a newspaper reporter and a doctor. Burns noted:

“From the flippant, slangy, self-sufficient style in which the report is written, it is easy to be guessed what kind of influence predominated in the circle.”

Below is quoted from the “Blackburn Times”, as published in “The Medium & Daybreak” referenced above:

MISS WOOD CAUGHT PERSONATING A SPIRIT

Since the above was placed in type, our worst suspicions have been realised; the medium has been caught imposing upon the circle—caught in the very act of playing the spirit. It appears that the committee, finding it was impossible to have satisfactory manifestations whilst so many “sceptical minds” were in their midst, went through a weeding-out process, and recommenced sitting on Monday last with a smaller circle, understood to be composed of thorough-going Spiritualists. The seances were held at the house of a friend; and it was believed that they would thus obtain such phenomena as were witnessed during Miss Wood’s first visit to Blackburn. There was nothing at all on Monday; but on Tuesday night “Pocks” did something more than take possession of the medium; she took possession of the sitters by appearing in their midst, and distributed biscuits and kisses to those whom she thought worthy of such spiritual favours. The biscuits, we should, explain, were handed to her; but the dessert, in the way of kisses, was all her own.

One of the sitters, Mr. T. E. Atkinson, of 76, Whalley Road, has been looked upon all along as a confirmed believer, but the fact is that he was a confirmed sceptic after all he

²² “Pocka” is also referred to as “Pocks” and “Pocky” in some reports.

²³ “Some Reminiscences”, by Alfred Smedley, published in 1900: Adshead noted: — “We were afterwards informed by those who accompanied Miss Wood to the seance that in passing along the street two drunken men rushed from the road on to the pavement, nearly knocking the medium down. This fact, to those who know anything of sensitives and the laws which govern mediumship, will be premise enough on which to build a theory which will account for the peculiar occurrences of the evening.”

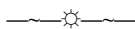
had seen; and when he observed “Pocks” supplying him with a bit of biscuit, he was more than ever assured that it was the medium on her knees. Shortly afterwards he disengaged one hand, and lightly touched “Pocks” garment—a circumstance which caused her to get out of his reach, and to complain when she returned to the chair that someone had been attempting to poke holes in her dress.

On Wednesday night, sitting was resumed under customary conditions, that is, the medium was tied more or less securely to a chair, which was placed in a recess with a curtain before it. Mr. Atkinson was present with two friends in court in the shape of his wife and a grown up daughter. “Pocks” affirmed that everything was favourable, and that good manifestations might be expected. Indeed, it was intimated that three spirits might appear at once; but nothing was seen until about eleven o’clock, when several present saw a form emerge from the recess, and immediately afterwards various sitters on the shadier side of the room were touched with a tube, or fan, provided for the purpose.

It was really so dark that our wide-awake friend could not see “the spirit,” though he could hear the taps being administered on the other side of the room. But he was not to be imposed upon any longer; and was determined, if he could, to make a seizure, as he had not signed any regulations, and was fettered by no promise. It was the last seance of the series, and his only chance of exposing the humbug; so, with a courage which does him great credit, and guided by his ears, he dashed across the room, and made a grasp at the form, which, however, slipped through his hands. It became a race then for the recess, but the vigilant sceptic was more alert this time, and seized the figure whilst it was still amongst the sitters. What a struggle then ensued! It was as if life and death on both sides depended upon it, though there was no screaming and not a word was said.

The company seemed paralysed; there was much to hear, but nothing to see, and they knew not what it meant. The strong man proved in the end too powerful for the desperate woman; and when matches were lighted by Mrs. and Miss Atkinson, the medium was found on the floor, near the curtain of the recess, in attire which was confined to chemise, stockings, and a pair of —!

Miss Wood braved it out to the last, hardened sinner as she is, and speaking as “Pocks,” after being assisted to her chair, declared that she had been controlled by an evil spirit, who had all but stripped her naked, and sent her out in the circle. This was too much for Mr. Atkinson, who gave his opinion of what he called her “devilment,” and went so far as to say that, unless every penny that had been paid for the seances this week and last was returned to the sitters, he would put the case in the hands of the police.



Problems again arose five years later when Kate Wood was seized *impersonating* "Pocka" during a séance at Peterborough. The alleged exposure was well covered by the Spiritualist publications, including E. Dawson Rogers, who was featured in the last issue in connection with the seizure of Florence (Cook) Corner by Sir George Sitwell just two years earlier. Dawson Rogers was the founder of the then weekly journal, "Light", noting "It is with deep regret that we publish the following communications, but fidelity to the truth leaves us no alternative.—ED. "LIGHT." (E. Dawson Rogers)" September 16, 1882:

MISS C. E. WOOD EXPOSED

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

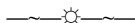


SIR,—Last night, Miss C. E. Wood, of Newcastle, gave a sitting at my house. There were seventeen friends present, the majority Spiritualists. Miss Wood was tied to an armchair by two gentlemen. After sitting for two hours, a form draped in white came from the cabinet, then immediately retired. Then the supposed "Pocka" came out in white to a small table in front of me, played two small musical boxes, gave some sweets to a gentleman, kissed a lady, and chatted for some minutes. Then Mr. Cade, who is a medium, and a sitter at Mr. Chapman's circle, at Stamford, who sat on my left, suddenly seized the supposed "Pocka," and instead of a little Indian girl it was Miss Wood with her dress off, and covered with muslin, part of which was secured. I have retained some, and Mr. Cade part. In the interest of Spiritualism, I hope you will publish this, as Miss Wood is so well known as a so-called professional medium. It is only loyalty to the cause that compels me

to discharge the painful duty of reporting this unsatisfactory sitting.—Faithfully yours,

ROBERT CATLING.

Granville-street, Park-road, Peterborough,
September 12th, 1882.



To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—With your permission I would like to place on record an account of a seance at which I was present in the house of Mr. Robert Catling, of this city.

For the information of your readers I may say that I have been very intimately acquainted with Mr. Catling for about eight years; he has been a very devoted friend to the cause of Spiritualism before I knew him and ever since. Miss Wood arrived at his residence on Thursday, 7th inst. She was received and treated as a friend by Mrs. and Mr. Catling till the night of Monday, 11th inst., when the séance was held about which I wish to speak.

I may say that Mr. and Mrs. Catling went with Miss Wood to Stamford on Sunday, the 10th inst., when a séance was held at Mr. Chapman's Lyceum. This séance gave great satisfaction to all but one or two. Mr. Cade, who is to some extent identified with the Spiritual movement in Stamford, was present, but was not satisfied with what he saw, and he came to Peterborough on Monday evening, to be present at our séance.

During the séance, while what was supposed to be "Pocka" was outside the cabinet, Mr. Cade sprang forward, and there was a scuffle. The light was very dim. I stepped to the cabinet, and could see Mr. Cade sitting in the chair in which the medium had been tied at

the beginning of the séance. He called for more light, and held a figure draped with white in his arms, which seemed to struggle to get free. A gentleman who tried to turn up the light turned it out in mistake. I kept my place for about a minute, and when the light was turned on I could see that the figure with which Mr. Cade struggled was Miss Wood, the medium. She had a quantity of muslin wrapped round her head and shoulders, but through openings I could see parts of her body. I said to Mr. Cade, "We had better leave her to the ladies." I turned to call some of the ladies, and when I turned back again, in what seemed to me about one minute's time, Miss Wood was dressed in the black dress in which she commenced the seance, and the muslin was hidden away. Mr. Cade said, "We must have the muslin;" and after another severe struggle the muslin was found in some part of her and taken from her. These are a few of the disagreeable facts connected with this séance.

On Friday, when we were making arrangements for the Monday's séance, I suggested as a test that a piece of tape should be sewn round each of the medium's wrists, and the ends given to the sitters to hold, but Miss Wood objected to this, I think, very reasonable test.²⁴

As the result of what I have seen, I have come to the painful conclusion that Miss Wood deliberately planned the deception, and that practice has made her too perfect in the art of deceiving.

I did not feel the least excited through the whole séance, and I do not feel the least discouraged now. Fraudulent mediums will always exist in proportion to foolish people.

Let us study Spiritualism by spiritual methods. Let us get our heads clear and keep them so, and let us—

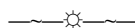
"Keep a brave heart still."

When we have cleared the path of folly and fraud true spiritual manifestations will—

"Come as a waking joy
After bad dreams,"

THOS. MCKINNEY,

New Fletton, Peterborough,
September 12th, 1882.



Frank Herne and Charles Williams, noted elsewhere over the last two issues, were major mediums at the beginning of form materialisations, especially in public demonstrations. It was in 1871 that Frank Herne was joined by Charles Edward Williams; their partnership was successful and they held séances at 61, Lambs Conduit Street, Holborn, London. Around April 1872, Herne and Williams started their form materialisations. Florence Cook, who had attended some of Herne and Williams' early séances, had been a pupil of Herne as arranged by her father, Henry Cook; around June 1873 they ended their partnership and continued independently. Charles Williams continued giving public séances at the Holborn address.

In 1887 William Harrison published a report in the Spiritualist newspaper, "An Exposure of Imposture", on Friday, 20 September, 1878; the account was also published in the October issue of "Spiritual Notes".²⁵ News was received from The Hague that two mediums working

²⁴ In response Miss Wood stated in her letter dated September 16th, 1882 and published in "Light" on September 23rd, 1882:—"Mr. McKinney says I objected to what he calls the "reasonable test" of a piece of tape sewn around each of my wrists, the ends to be held by sitters. This is put by him in such a way as to constitute a perversion of the truth. The fact is that *two or three days before, in the, course of conversation*, such a test was mentioned, but I recommended its non-application, as I thought that the sitters holding the tapes might, through their inexperience of such phenomena, jerk my wrists and injure me during any possible manifestation; but I offered to have my wrists sewn in the manner suggested, the ends of the tape to be sealed on both wall and floor in view of the circle."

²⁵ "Spiritual Notes" was the official monthly journal of the British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS). However, the journal was short-lived and was in production only from 1878.

together, Williams and a medium called Mr Rita, were unmasked; not only were they seized but “John King” apparel was found!

On Tuesday evening, the 10th of September, some good investigators held a séance with Messrs. Williams and Rita at the rooms of one of the sitters. Two days before the mediums had given another sitting, and suspicions were aroused by some of the manifestations; therefore some of the sitters made up their minds to obtain security on that point, convinced as they were that both mediums cheated in the most impudent manner. On the said evening, at first the usual physical manifestations at the table occurred, but were very weak. After that the cabinet was made, and Messrs. Williams and Rita placed behind the screen. After some singing and the playing of the musical box, the materialisation began. “Charlie,” one of Rita’s spirits, showed his face, lighted by his spirit-lamp.

At once one of the sitters near the cabinet made a leap, grasped Charlie, and caught the collar of Mr. Rita’s coat. A struggle ensued in perfect darkness. The gentleman cried out, “I hold the medium,” and others entered the cabinet to assist in catching the two struggling mediums. Heavy blows were given and received, and furniture was broken. As at last a light was struck, the two mediums tried to escape out of the room, but luckily the lady of the house had shut the front door, so that they were again seized, and brought into the room and searched, notwithstanding their courageous powers of defence, for some of the gentlemen who held them can give proof of their muscular force. Williams, chiefly, was foaming with rage. Rita resisted less. The following objects were found on the mediums, but hidden between their clothes, shirts, pockets, &c.

On Rita, a reddish-grey, nearly new beard (Charlie’s); three large handkerchiefs, one of them of muslin; a very small ditto—he kept in addition two for his own use; a bottle of phosphoric oil: the bottle is of the size of an ordinary flat-round scent bottle, convincing us that the light of Charlie was nothing else.

On Williams, a black beard (very old, dirty, and used) sewed on brown silk ribbons (John King’s); several yards of dirty, soiled, and very frequently used muslin; some muslin handkerchiefs, which served without doubt as John’s turban, &c.; a bottle of phosphoric oil; a small bottle of scent (for the perfume), in which particles of phosphorus were found, which made us draw the conclusion that they used it for cleaning their fingers after showing spirit lights in the cabinet. Mind this, the beard and all the muslin very, old, dirty, and been long used. This is an important point to the English. Afterwards, on searching Mr. Williams’s hand-bag, a small tube filled with very minute pieces of slate-pencil was found. These points fitted into a flat, thin fishbone or spring, serving probably to produce the phenomenon of writing between sealed slates, if room enough is left to introduce the instrument. Williams had the most complete apparel. After the finding of the above-mentioned objects, the two mediums looked perplexed. It was about twelve o’clock; they were then turned out of doors, without trying to gain a better opinion for themselves by accepting the offer of some gentlemen to give a test *séance* to prove that they were mediums. In fact, they ran away to The Hague next morning as early as possible.



Similarly, Francis (Frank) G. Hearn appears to have had the same fate but not so detailed. For further information on the above quotes please see, as previously mentioned, Psypioneer's eight-part series, "The Beginnings of Full-Form Materialisations in England", available on one pdf; please contact the editor for a copy.

Further high-profile mediums such as Annie Fairlamb/Mellon/Cleave and Elizabeth Hope Reed, better known as Madame d'Esperance (sometimes spelt D'Esperance and Esperance) were both similarly seized during their séances.

To conclude the quoted reports, published below is the 1880 first-hand report on the alleged exposure of Elizabeth d'Esperance,²⁶ published in the "Medium & Daybreak", September 10th, 1880. The editor, James Burns, noted: "In presenting the following evidence it is necessary to add that we have cut down the first letter nearly one half. In this department we only want a statement of fact—not insinuations and prosecutory pleadings."

THE SEIZURE IN MRS. ESPERANCE'S CIRCLE



THE SEIZURE SEANCE By "RESURGAM."

Tuesday, the 24th of August was intended as the final weekday seance to be held by Mrs. Esperance, before leaving England. Twenty-four persons, besides the medium, then formed the seance, of whom seventeen formed the inner circle nearest the cabinet, and the remainder were in the outer row at the back of the others and at intervals. I was at the top end of the inner circle, by side of the circle manager, next the medium. Mr. Warnes, the gentleman who seized the form purporting to be "Yolanda," was the fifth person from the bottom end of the circle, and ten other persons sat between him and me. My son, however was in the outer circle, very nearly at the back of Mr. Warnes, but nearer to the bottom of the circle, being behind the third and fourth sitters exactly, and thus close to where the seizure occurred.

After the customary singing for the commencement of harmony I was observing to myself that I felt no indication of the spirits then being at work, for, whenever they are collecting the "power" from the sitters, I can recognise the fact by my own feelings. A gentleman then arose to deliver an invocation, and, at the same time, I, to my surprise, saw a form just inside the curtain at the further end of the cabinet, and I at once entered the fact in my note-book, as, "a form at Mrs. Fidler's end of the cabinet, like 'Yolanda,' but taller, I think." As the invocation proceeded, "Yolanda" retired a moment, and was next seen at the nearer opening of the curtains, in the prostrate form of Mahomedan prayer, and at the conclusion of the invocation she arose and looked curiously at the strangers present, and then retired, presently emerging with a small veil half over her head to look again at the visitors, when she held out her skirts for trinkets to be thrown to her, this action causing me to note the extreme scantiness of drapery clothing, as every contour of the body was discernible, while the neck, face, arms, &c., were bare, and the legs half way to the knees or more.

²⁶ Psypioneer, Vol. 9, Nos. 9/10: Doubt about Madame D'Esperance's Early Life – Lis Warwood.

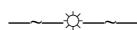
She retired within the cabinet, and raps were heard for the alphabet to be called over, and “p.” for “pitcher” spelled out. Mr. Armstrong handed up the pitcher with approved quantity of water, and “Yolanda” retired with it within the cabinet, as usual, but very soon emerged with the pitcher full of roses and other flowers. She walked out into the centre of the circle with the pitcher on shoulder, and then across to Mrs. Fidler’s end of the circle, where she commenced to distribute the flowers, and had given some by handing the pitcher for each one to help him or herself to one therefrom. She had so helped a gentleman, and my son also, who were in the back row of sitters there, and also the first four of the sitters in the front row, and was in the act of holding out the jug or pitcher towards the fifth sitter (Mr. Warnes), when I heard, instantly, a scream proceed from that spot, and my daughter, who was at my elbow near the cabinet, at my end, also gave a scream of fright on the same instant. A man’s voice had said, “I’ve got you at last.” “It’s madam.” “It’s the medium.” “I’ll not let go till there is a light.” “Turn up the light!”

As an instant *ruse de guerre*, and believing the medium still to be in the cabinet, I called out: “It’s not the medium, she is here in the cabinet!” The form continuing to loudly squeal, and scream, and struggle energetically, I stepped to the cabinet, as Mr. Armstrong rushed to the rescue of the form purporting to be “Yolanda.” I carefully but swiftly passed into the inside of the cabinet, well knowing that, if so be the medium were there, she would be in fatal convulsion, or death; but, however, the cabinet was absolutely void of all living entity. Mrs. Esperance, of course, was not there; her chair was empty, the gauze partition was uninjured and unmoved; but I was truly shocked when I observed the dark dress of Mrs. Esperance lying, carefully placed, on the floor of the cabinet, at the foot of partition, and in front of the chair; while the pair of boots belonging to Mrs. Esperance were on the floor, one under the chair partially, and in part under the dress, while the other was clear of contact with anything else. This shocked me exceedingly, although I had been fully warned and truthfully informed by my own spirit-friends that I should actually so discover the medium personating a spirit.

On Mr. Warnes seizing “Yolanda,” my son had rushed upon him with intention of at once knocking him down, but seeing that it was unmistakeably Mrs. Esperance, my son of course wisely abstained from such an assault, and contented himself with merely taking firm hold of Mrs. Esperance by the wrist and the man by the arm to pull the two asunder; at the same time a lady in the rear caught Mr. Warnes by the throat firmly, and so compelled him to lose his hold of Mrs. Esperance. I only wonder the medium was not dismembered, as the united tugging was incredible.

Now I found, on carefully close inquiry that, from the very first instant, all so closely concerned were satisfied that it was, from the first, Mrs. Esperance, and not a spirit-form; hence nobody there would strike the man who had seized her, as he merely demanded more light to see her features by, and used no further violence than holding her by the wrist very tightly. A lady turned up the light fully, on which I rushed and turned it down again, as even a mortal lady should be spared exposure to too much light under such circumstances, and I was sorry for Mrs. Esperance.

Mr. Armstrong by this time had received the liberated “Yolanda,” and partially carried, but chiefly dragged, her towards the cabinet, as quickly as possible; a lady observing that Mrs. Esperance was too much for him to carry.



The writer of the above report, who was in fact Mr Pettitt under the pseudonym of “Resurgam”, was naturally criticised for his comment,

“... although I had been fully warned and truthfully informed by my own spirit-friends that I should actually so discover the medium personating a spirit.”

as he gave no warning of the pre-warned pending danger to the circle or the medium herself, with whom he was himself a frequent sitter. From Pettitt’s (“Resurgam”)’s description of the unfolding events of the seizure it is clear that he appeared not to have told his son or daughter about his spirit friend’s warnings. In the following reports of the seizure of Esperance Pettitt is held in a negative light for a number of reasons, especially in Grace Fidler’s report. Unfortunately, the various reports are too long to publish here; however, any reader wishing a pdf of the “Medium & Daybreak” reports, please contact the editor.

The “Resurgam” report refers to Mr William Armstrong, who was a well-known Spiritualist researcher, co-founder and first President of the “Newcastle Psychological Society”,²⁷ founded in July 1872 as previously noted, the society where Kate Wood would start her career, along with Annie Fairlamb, better known as Annie Mellon.²⁸

Below is William Armstrong’s version of the seizure of the medium, also published in the same edition of the “Medium & Daybreak”, which gives the reader a different perspective:

MR. W. ARMSTRONG'S REPORT.

“The truth shall make you free.”

To the Editor of the MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK.

Sir,—The Spiritualists of Newcastle having circulated throughout the country reports injurious to the character of Mrs. Esperance as a medium, you have been kind enough to request me to furnish you with my opinions, based on my experience from my standpoint of the circumstances connected with the unfortunate seance held in our rooms, on Tuesday evening, the 24th ult. I have been very anxious to know what were the opinions of the other members of the circle, and on what grounds they had formed their opinions and based their conclusions, and I think I have riddled the whole.

I will now endeavour, in as few words as possible, to describe the seance, and what part I took in it. The meeting was one, the order of which has so often been described that I need not repeat it here. The circle was composed of twenty-three ladies and gentlemen, including the medium. The seance was opened in the usual way by singing a hymn; the medium entered the cabinet, and the conditions of the seance were stated. No one it was expected would take hold of the form if any should appear, without the form giving permission to do so.

Very shortly, “Yolanda,” the flower girl, came out of the cabinet. She appeared to look very anxiously at some one in the direction in which her enemy was afterwards found to be sitting. She stepped back, and stood for some time with her back against one of the iron columns supporting the cabinet as if in a state of suspense, cogitating what she should do. She appeared to make up her mind, and called for the pitcher, which was handed to her nearly half full of water. She required more, and was supplied from the water-bottle. She then entered the middle compartment of the cabinet, taking the pitcher with her. Presently she came forth, pitcher in hand, and commenced distributing her flowers at the extreme

²⁷ The society, founded in July 1872, was named the “Newcastle Psychological Society” and operated under that title for seven years, when it was renamed the “Newcastle Spiritual Evidence Society”.

²⁸ Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 4: Mrs Annie Mellon – Materialisation medium.

part of the circle from the medium. My eye for a second or two was off “Yolanda” when I was startled with a sudden scream from or in the cabinet.

(It is generally admitted that the first scream came from the cabinet, one gentleman says he heard the medium moaning when “Yolanda” was on the floor.)

I saw at once what was up, “Yolanda” was caught. I jumped to my feet, hesitated a moment between the cabinet and the form when “Yolanda” screamed, I sprang forward, and got “Yolanda” who was lying with her face on the floor, her arms above her head, held in the iron grip of her captor, and the same time calling out to him to leave loose, but he would not loosen his hold until a lady who sat behind him seizing him by the throat choked him off. When freed, I carried what remained of “Yolanda” into the cabinet, and placed her on the chair. My first impression was that the chair was vacant, and that was afterwards confirmed by two of the sitters.

And here comes, to me, the most wonderful part of the whole business, and is to me an additional incentive to be careful of rash conclusions. The student of the occult must observe all the facts if he be desirous of arriving at the truth. He must be prepared to meet with difficulties and disappointments, but he must not suffer himself to be carried away by his emotions, or he will soon find himself in the Slough of Despond; but enough of this, and now for the facts. I took up and carried “Yolanda,” I had no difficulty in doing that, she was like a cork in comparison to the weight of the medium, and was fast melting away. I placed her as I have already said in the chair (you, sir, and your readers may believe what I have further to say, or they may not; it is a matter of indifference to me, as it has been my privilege all along to witness phenomena in advance of that enjoyed by others, but which they all must have in good time), and laid my hands on her bare neck and shoulders. Her bare arms hung down before her, a part of the white drapery still remaining. I reached over her shoulders to feel for the long hair (the medium’s hair is very short), while doing so, “Yolanda” raised her bare arms and gave me a gentle push in the breast, I drew back my left foot, which was in advance of the right, and *instantly* laid my hands again on the shoulders, not this time of “Yolanda,” but on those of the medium dressed in her brown cloth dress in every respect buttoned up to the neck, just as she entered the cabinet, and as she retired from it. I brought my hands gently down her arms as they hung by her side. I have been asked if there was time for the medium to dress in the cabinet, I say emphatically, No; had she been conscious she could not have done it.

I took both her hands in mine and held them; the metamorphosis was complete. I have seen many transformations; but to me this was the most astounding. There I stood holding the hands of the medium, sitting on the chair, where, but a moment or two before, sat the form of “Yolanda.” I do not profess to be versed in the scientific modes of investigation so much insisted on by some people, but I do profess to be able to observe facts as they are presented to me, and I was quite able calmly to observe what was going on before me, until the raps on the wall, above the head of medium, rapped out, through the alphabet, “give the medium restoratives.” By a singular coincidence a lady present had a little brandy in a flask. That lady has attended hundreds of seances, but never before had she a drop of alcohol in a séance room.

She helped me to a little in a glass, but the difficulty was to get it into the mouth of the medium in the unconscious state in which she was, with her teeth firmly set. I succeeded at last in getting a few drops between her teeth, when she struck at the glass, and dashed it against the wall, exclaiming, in a moment of consciousness, “Get away you nasty thing.” Conscious for a moment, and but for a moment, for she now became convulsed, she ground her teeth, and her hands were clenched so that I could not open them. In this state she remained some time. When the spasms relaxed, I put the glass, with a little more brandy, to her mouth; she made a convulsive snatch at the glass with her teeth, and I succeeded in pouring the brandy into her mouth. I now took both her hands in mine, and held them until

she recovered consciousness; which was some time; but long before I had reasoned out the position.

She required to be supported into a cab, taken home, and carried into her room. So soon as she was conformably seated and rested I examined her arms and wrists; as I was told that there must be some marks on her arms—they must be blackened with the iron grip of “Yolanda’s” captor, and the struggles made to release her. I am happy to say there was not the least discolouration or the least mark of any kind, either then or on the following morning, when I again examined them. She did not complain of her arms in the least; but she did complain of her neck then, and has done ever since: but more of anon.

In the investigation of this subject of manifestations the medium is an important factor, and the state of their feelings and their experience can be obtained if it is well to do so; these may assist us in our inquiries. With this end in view, I asked the medium:—

“Did you see ‘Yolanda’ in the cabinet?”

“No, I did not.”

“What, then, were your feelings; will you give me your experiences?”

“Yes; I was just sitting this way (bent forward with the hands on the knees), not thinking of anything in particular, when I felt a sudden grip in the region of the heart, such as I felt and described on a former occasion. I felt a pull forward, and, falling in doing so, I grasped at the iron stanchion with my left hand; I missed with the right. I screamed. I felt pulled forward off my seat. I tried to scream again, but could not, but heard my voice in the distance, and felt as in a nightmare, as I dropped down upon the floor. Of what transpired afterwards I have no knowledge, until something disagreeable was put into my mouth, which caused sensation, and I exclaimed, ‘You nasty thing,’ or something to that effect.”

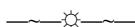
I have thus given you a very brief statement of the facts as they came under my own observation. I have endeavoured to reason the subject with myself. I know the chair was vacant. I am told the medium’s clothes were in the cabinet on the floor, while “Yolanda” was outside; how much more than her clothes I am not informed. No one felt them; it may have been the medium on the floor for anything they know, and I am satisfied from the weight of “Yolanda” that she was not the medium, and from what I witnessed in the cabinet I am thoroughly convinced that the medium, as a whole, was never out of the cabinet.

There is no evidence whatever against the medium; the same “Yolanda” has from time to time given the very best proofs of a distinct individuality.

That Mrs. Esperance is a medium of the highest order none of her “exposers” dare dispute. In her presence husbands have met their wives and wives have met their husbands; parents have met and acknowledged their long-lost children; children have recognised and embraced their parents; forms have grown up in their presence, passed before them, and again dematerialised; forms have been seen without heads, and heads have been seen rolling on the floor, laughing without a body; flowers and plants and fruits have been produced under unexceptionable conditions; sitters have seen the medium brought out of the cabinet by the forms; they have seen these forms dematerialise alongside her and again build up; all these things have they seen, and much, much more through the mediumship of Mrs. Esperance; but all this is forgotten in a moment—“Yolanda” is trapped, and there is an “exposure.” Yes, Sir, there is an exposure, but whence and of what? Not of the medium. She has nothing to fear, nothing in her conduct to be ashamed of. But I leave it to intelligent Spiritualists to say who have exposed themselves, and to what purpose,—Yours for the Truth,

Wm. ARMSTRONG.

Newcastle, Sept. 6.



The question remains: when a medium is seized, or caught in what appears to be blatant fraud, are they *actually* in a trance/somnambulistic state and therefore unaccountable for their *unconscious* actions—or *conscious*, suggesting that they are therefore accountable for their actions, i.e. premeditated fraud?

Editor's Notes:

The numerous first-hand accounts published in the Spiritualist press of the day in this short series of “A Question of Fraud!” without doubt give the reader an informed understanding of the foundation and the early development of form mediumship.

Generally speaking, in the various accounts it can be noted:

There seems little doubt that the seized alleged spirits were indeed the medium himself or herself—*with* or *without* drapery.

Reports show that the medium when seized appeared to be dazed, confused or in trance; also noted is the alleged spirit form *usually* closely resembling their medium, their *double*.

The seizures reported have in all cases shown that they were the mediums' alleged control/guide, though not friends or family of the sitters,²⁹ but they almost certainly suggest that it is not the medium's *double* which is seized, as some literature suggests. If this was the case, the medium would presumably be in their chair in the cabinet and the items of their *physical* clothes not scattered about in the cabinet, as has been noted.

So, the difficult task remains of deciding if possible, when an alleged materialised spirit is found to be without doubt *the medium* acting as the *spirit*, whether or not, when caught, they were in actual fact unconscious of their actions, or conscious in the action of fraud. Of course, it is also a rather convenient escape for the true fraudulent medium to claim they were in fact fully *unconscious* of their actions and controlled by sceptical sitters, and/or low spirits, etc.!

It has been noted that during these sometimes rather rough seizures of suspected fraudulent actions of the mediums cited, some seized in *ectoplasmic form* with the drapery later *disappearing*, there appears to have been *no* detrimental reaction in some, *no* serious injuries recorded, and certainly *no* deaths!

What can be concluded:

In all cases quoted the medium was not in their intended position, i.e. the cabinet, and none of the seized mediums/spirits received any serious injury or worse, as is often warned. The early articles by William Harrison, founder editor of the “Spiritualist” newspaper, give the reader the complex psychological formation and the problems of the early development of materialisation mediumship.

All the seizures cited are very similar, apart from the velocity and violence of the attack on the alleged spirit form. It is clear that all the seizures must be looked upon on their own merit, and the reader must judge, if at all possible, as to who may be guilty of deliberate, conscious fraud. With the psychological processes of materialisation it can be readily accepted that the *unconscious* state of the medium may well induce their actions to a control other than the intended spirit control/guide desired, as well indicated throughout this series.

Apart from the Sir George Sitwell seizure of the full-form materialisation of ‘Marie’, who appeared attired in white robes but was found to be the medium herself, Mrs Elgie Corner (Florence Cook), and the Elisabeth d'Esperance seizure of the full-form materialisation of ‘Yolanda’, who also appeared attired in white robes, these quotes are fairly detailed, with both

²⁹ Excluding the later medium, Clive Holmes.

outcomes in favour of the mediums being innocent and unaccountable for their *unconscious* actions; in both accounts no drapery was found. However, the d'Esperance seizure is more complex, which readers can themselves discern. For example, it is noted in the Sir George Sitwell seizure that Edmund Dawson Rogers, Chairman of the Séance Committee of the British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS), London, took hold of the seized figure. It is noted:

“He [Dawson Rogers] endeavoured to soothe her, but finding that she was getting heavy in his arms, and fearing that he should be able to prevent her from falling, he proposed to lead her out into the adjoining room. She replied, “Yes, do!” and he was about to remove her, when she suddenly exclaimed, “Why, I am undressed; get away, get away” ...”

It is noted similarly in the first part of the d'Esperance seizure by “Resurgam” that his report notes:

“Mr. Armstrong by this time had received the liberated “Yolanda,” and partially carried, but chiefly dragged, her towards the cabinet, as quickly as possible; a lady observing that Mrs. Esperance was too much for him to carry.”

Both reports suggest that Dawson Rogers and William Armstrong are both carrying the full body weight of the medium herself! However, in Armstrong's version this is not so:

“I [William Armstrong] took up and carried “Yolanda,” I had no difficulty in doing that, she was like a cork in comparison to the weight of the medium, and was fast melting away. I placed her as I have already said in the chair [...] and laid my hands on her bare neck and shoulders. Her bare arms hung down before her, a part of the white drapery still remaining.”

Like the alleged entranced ‘Marie’/Corner (Florence Cook) and ‘Yolanda’/d'Esperance, both similarly in their unconscious state remained perfectly quiet and silent, then trembled violently/convulsed, and spoke some confused utterings. This is what Madame d'Esperance said about her experience in a letter to James Burns, and published in the same issue of “The Medium & Daybreak” as the above reports of her seizure:

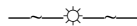


When I went into the room, rather late, the light was turned down, and I could not distinguish one person from another after coming from the daylight outside into semi-darkness. I don't remember speaking to anyone, but I remember noticing that the room was nearly full, and I felt sorry for it, and very tired, for I thought there would be little or no phenomena, owing to my weariness, and many who came would be disappointed. You see those highly coloured reports caused people to flock to the rooms in order to try to see their friends as he had seen his, and consequently very great disappointment has been felt, and I have been vexed and annoyed very often when I have learned of poor people travelling a hundred miles or so, paying hotel expenses, attending one or two seances, and seeing nothing to satisfy them. Of course no one was to blame in the matter except themselves perhaps, but it has always made me feel very sorry.

However, I went into the cabinet, not feeling much inclined to talk to anyone. I did not know for a while that “Yolanda” had gone out, and when I did know I did not care to bother myself about her or her doings. The next thing I knew was a horribly agonizing pain all over me. I cried out, but felt as though in a nightmare, and the sound I made was like that made by one trying to scream when oppressed by some bad nightmare, and it sounded as though it was a long way off. I remember falling from my seat and catching at the uprights

of the cabinet as I did so, and missing them, and feeling as though I was missing hold of my life.

I don't remember touching the ground—only the act of falling from my seat, and nothing more but a vague recollection of something being forced down my throat, seeing somebody's face close to me, and hearing voices. I don't remember getting to the friends where we were staying, nor very much that passed next day, except that I knew I had a very great deal of work depending on my shoulders that must be done and only I could do it.



A few days later she noted that she was better and her post-séance memories were returning. It can also be noted in this instance that d'Esperance received no body bruising from her seemingly violent seizure; it is recorded in this series and other reports that marks placed on a spirit form are often reproduced on the medium.³⁰

Seizures of full-form materialisations – effects on the mediums:

1873 Florence Cook: Alleged spirit of “Katie King” seized by William Volckman. Severe shock reported.

1877 Catherine (Kate) Wood: Alleged spirit of “Pocka” seized by Mr Atkinson. No injuries to the medium reported.

1880 Mrs Corner (Florence Cook): Alleged spirit of “Marie” seized by Sir George Sitwell. Drapery disappeared; medium again in convolutions/shock.

1880 Elizabeth d'Esperance: Alleged spirit of “Yolanda” seized by Mr Warnes. Drapery disappeared; medium in convolutions/shock and temporary memory loss.

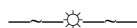
1882 Catherine (Kate) Wood: Alleged spirit of “Pocka” seized by Mr Cade; stated muslin was found on the medium. No injuries to the medium reported.

1887 Charles Williams & Mr Rita: Alleged spirit of “Charlie”; both mediums seized by sitters. Theatrical materials and muslin found on both. No injuries to either medium.

1937 Clive Holmes: Appeared apparently lifeless; he seemed in a very bad state and complained that he could not see. Convicted to a term in prison.

1938 Mrs Elizabeth Grover: No ill-effects. Admitted to fraud.

All the above reports suggest no serious injuries, no burns as often suggested, no deaths.



³⁰ Plate of the “Phantasmal Photograph of Yolanda with her Medium Madam D'Esperance”, taken from Cesare Lombroso's “After Death – What”, published in 1909.

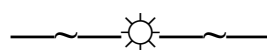
For further research and some interesting photographs see “Historical Perspective: Revealing the Real Madame d'Esperance: An Historical and Psychological Investigation”, by Adrian Parker and Elisabeth Warwood, published by the “Journal of Scientific Exploration”, Vol. 30, No. 2. Available free online.



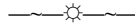
FIG. 50. PHANTASMAL PHOTOGRAPH OF YOLANDA
WITH HER MEDIUM, MADAME D'ESPÉRANCE.



THE PHANTOM OF YOLANDA.



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

As noted in the introduction to the SNU 1955 AGM lead story, Pioneer would publish a profile of Magdalene Kelly, which was reported by the Two Worlds correspondent, Philip Paul; the photograph is by Leon Isaacs, published in the October 29th, 1955 issue:

Magdalene Kelly

*Mrs. Magdalene Kelly, one of Spiritualist's foremost sensitives
"north of the border."*



AT her home near Edinburgh, Mrs. Magdalene Duncan was busily preparing to visit her sick father, a few miles distant.

Her 12-year-old daughter entered her room and asked where she was going. Mrs. Duncan told her. "Oh!" exclaimed the girl, "there's no need now. Grandfather died at six o'clock this morning!"

Since her daughter had not visited the sick man for several days and there had been no contact between the two homes following their last attendance at the old man's bedside, Mrs. Duncan's reaction to her daughter's statement was decisive and emphatic. Having given the girl a thorough reprimand, she set off on her journey.

As she foretold

Arriving at her father's home, however, she discovered that what her child had said was true. Her ailing parent had indeed died—and at the very hour her daughter had named.

That was many years ago. Now, the occurrence is remembered as one of the forerunners of a great mediumship. For the little girl duly grew up and in marriage became Mrs. Magdalene Kelly, one of Spiritualist's foremost sensitives "north of the border."

Born in Linlithgow, of stubbornly-orthodox Church of Scotland parents, Magdalene had three sisters and two brothers. Her childhood experiences convinced her that she was possessed of a gift "stronger than myself."

She was married in 1921 and bore her husband, James — he passed over two years ago—a son and a daughter. Both are Spiritualists.

It was largely because of her husband's interest in the movement that Mrs. Kelly attended the Spiritualist meetings which recruited her to the cause.

Her psychic debut

At one such meeting, in Motherwell some 20 years ago, the medium booked to give an address and demonstration did not arrive. Mrs. Kelly's brother was—and is—secretary of the church. On the spur of the moment, he asked her to take the missing sensitive's place.

"There were no complaints afterwards," grey-haired, homely Magdalene remembers, "so I suppose I came through the test all right."

Later, she sat for the Spiritualists' National Union diploma, which she gained. Thereafter her mediumship went from strength to strength. She still lives in Motherwell and journeys to take meetings in London three or four times a year.

A question as to her hopes for the future produced an unhesitating reply. "I want to see a good dozen of young mediums coming forward to serve the cause. The future of the movement should be worrying every one of us today."

She makes considerable personal efforts to ensure that coming generations will have their quota of trained mediums. Every moment she can spare from her public work and personal commitments goes in the service of developing psychic gifts in young people. Nevertheless, she does not subscribe to the idea that anyone can be a medium.

Unexplored talent

"Every human being has potential psychic talents, but, in the majority, they are so deeply buried under the personality that no amount of tuition or encouragement could bring them out," she commented. "Yet even those who will never become mediums can make a useful contribution by giving their sympathy to help those with psychic gifts."

Another outstanding memory of her own career concerns a time when her son-in-law had a haemorrhage from a duodenal ulcer. Rushed to hospital, he was given a transfusion of 16½ pints of blood within a matter of hours.

Despite this prompt aid, his reactions were not favourable. The doctors told his wife that his passing was inevitable—"only a matter of time." One of the most brilliant medical men in Scotland was consulted — and confirmed the death sentence.

Health restored

But, regardless of these expert views, Magdalene assured the patient and her daughter that he would effect a complete recovery. Time proved her right once more—he was restored to full health and now leads a completely normal life.

Her career has included humour as well as drama. Not so long ago she had provided a sitting for a woman and was congratulating herself on an outstanding success after reeling off an almost unending stream of evidence which included many names and all of which was acknowledged as correct by the recipient. But her mediumistic pride was short-lived. At the end of the sitting, the woman exclaimed, "All this has been very interesting, but I only came to get news of my dog !"

New life wanted

Magdalene does not believe that mediumship entails any departure from normal living. "The more natural the life you lead the better," she says.

Now, she is considering an invitation to tour South Africa and demonstrate her abilities there.

Before bidding me farewell she gave her views on Spiritualism today. "I think we don't put in the effort we used to. But as long as we get the right workers we will make headway. The movement is definitely growing, but we need something to give us new life."

