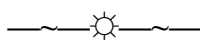


Volume 8, No. 5: October 2021

Contents list:



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

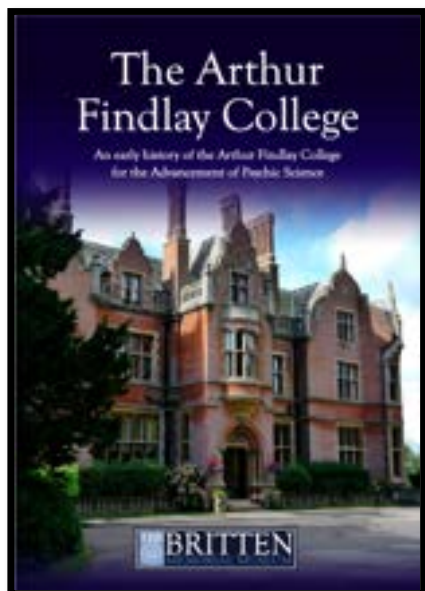
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THERE MAY BE A NEW BUZZ AT STANSTED HALL!

On September 17th, fifty-five years ago, “The Arthur Findlay College for the Advancement of Psychic Science” was officially opened by the SNU,¹ albeit this magnificent gift from J. Arthur Findlay would for almost a decade pose a very heavy financial burden for the Union. It would not be until the end of 1977, after much fundraising, members’ financial support and the selling of the SNU registered office, “Britten House”, at Tib Lane, Manchester, that the survival of Stansted Hall was on a firmer foundation.² The early years of the opening of the Hall, as it was then affectionally known (today the AFC), is outlined in a Pioneer article in its second issue, “The J. Arthur Findlay College, for the Advancement of Psychic Science – The early years”.³

It can be noted in the early years that the Hall was pretty much self-sufficient, with its market garden in a walled area next to the annex. Within the grounds was the gardener’s cottage; today it is the SNU registered office, Redwoods, which was later extended. I remember well the village grocer bringing the fresh vegetables to the kitchen, where there would be vegetables waiting from the Hall’s Garden to sell or exchange with the greengrocer.

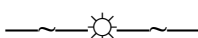
Another fine outlet around 1966 were the beehives:

Seven hives of bees were installed by a member of the Chelmsford Spiritualists’ National Church, which the owner would maintain, and any honey produced would be given to the Hall.

The Hall’s honey was indeed a big hit with the students and the kitchen alike; I was delighted to note, while listening to President David Bruton’s Address at the 119th AGM, July 2021:

“We are also in talks with a local beekeeper concerning the potential to site some hives on the estate.

Stansted Hall is surrounded by meadows and has a vibrant and diverse selection of wildlife flora and fauna, so the introduction of a colony of bees to the estate will do much to improve the local environment and of course there is the added bonus of Stansted Hall honey, which we are sure will be a big hit with the students.”



¹ Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 4: “September 17th, 2016, marks the Golden Anniversary of the Official Opening of Stansted Hall – “May this house flourish” ”

² Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 4: “Friends of Stansted Hall – Founded 1969”– “Stansted Hall Cleared of Debt”.

³ Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 2: January 2014; it is also available in a hard copy on the SNU website: <https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/the-arthur-findlay-college>

SPIRITUALISM IN NORWICH

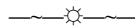
By HORACE LEAF

Once upon a time many of our pioneers and churches / societies were associated in some way or another with the Spiritualist Lyceum movement, which history shows was so important in the early growth of the Spiritualist movement. Here Horace Leaf, in his article published below by the Two Worlds on April 5th, 1952, gives an overview of his views on his experience with the Lyceum. The article further leads the reader into Christian Spiritualism and the leadership of a religious head, in which Leaf outlines his views and that of the SNU and its Seven Principles.

From the start of the Spiritualists' National Federation in 1891 to its re-constitution as the Spiritualists' National Union in 1902, the adoption of the Seven Principles, which many members did not want, was legally required in the new constitution, so there was little choice.

For some decades, the Principles were changed and used to suit the various societies. Church requirements resulted in bringing Christian Spiritualists into Union churches—however, these changes of the wording and the additions to the Seven Principles were not changed within the constitution. The then wide interpretation of the Union's Principles would in time cause problems with National Churches, as some churches were being run by declared Christians on Christian lines.

They stated that their 'liberty of interpretation' gave them the freedom to include Christian belief and practices while following SNU Spiritualism.⁴ Gordon Higginson put the feelings of the majority of members into a few words at Conference in the 1970s: "I have nothing against Christian Spiritualism, but if the church was National Spiritualist, then it must remain National Spiritualist. If they did not want this, then they should find their own buildings and not pinch ours!"⁵



Mr. Horace Leaf.

Many years ago I was invited to lecture and demonstrate in a Y.M.C.A. hall in Norwich, and formed the opinion that the organisers of the meeting aimed at "downing" Spiritualism. Nevertheless, from my point of view, the entire effort was a success.

All the questions, that were asked after the clairvoyance, were intended to expose the fallacy of Spiritualism; but as a matter of fact presented no difficulty from our angle. Indeed, they enabled me to make clear beliefs which are uncertain and confusing from the Christian standpoint, but not from the Spiritualist.

A few years later I delivered an illustrated lantern lecture on "Materialisations" in one of the principal public halls of Norwich, which was filled to capacity; and I was informed that the Bishop of Norwich was present with about a dozen clergymen. My chairman

⁴ Charles Coulston, SNU Consultant, notes: "Liberty of interpretation issue: the Council of the Union, which was at that time the policy-making body of the Union, agreed to accept this [legal] advice from the Union's solicitors and the Council's acceptance of it was relayed to members at the Union's 1988 Annual General Meeting. The reference to liberty of interpretation was accordingly deleted from the Union's Articles of Association and elsewhere from that point in time."

⁵ For further information please see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 2: "Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?"

was a leading surgeon of the city. It was great pleasure for me to deliver a similar lecture last Saturday with the same doctor in the chair.

Since that first meeting Spiritualism in Norwich has progressed tremendously, having a splendid church of its own and enjoying the support of large congregations.

The Norwich Christian Spiritualist Church, to give it its full title, fortunately aims at presenting a complete case for Spiritualism and exploits in the interests of the Cause every factor capable of appealing to the public from a practical religious standpoint.

Nowhere, as far as my knowledge goes, is there a better equipped clinic for magnetic and spiritual healing; and few churches can be more patronised by the sick. Needless to say there are many remarkable cures to the credit of the healers who so unselfishly give their services.

My interest was particularly aroused by the Lyceum, which I was invited to address in full session as well as in class, The principal aim of the Lyceum is to encourage the development of the personality of the children an objective which other religions seem largely to have overlooked.

Doubtless the reason for this is that they must appeal more to the faith of the children than to their critical faculties; and at Christian Sunday Schools any questions encouraged necessarily bear on elucidating Christian interpretations of the scriptures, than adverse criticism.

It would perhaps be misleading to say that children who attend Lyceums are asked to adversely criticise the proceedings but if any ever venture to do so, it may be taken for granted that, instead of being silenced, they would be listened to with respect and answered with courtesy.

I have put it this way because I well remember that in my Christian – church – going days I ventured to ask the teacher a debatable question and as a result was ostracised by teacher and pupils ! This did more to shake my confidence in the church than perhaps anything else.

It was quite amusing as well as pleasing to see at Lyceums with what zest the children undertook any task imposed on them by their leader, such as calling the roll and marking the register, taking up the collection, and other little services.

It was not merely the little person doing this work who was delighted and perhaps flattered, but the other children also. No doubt they in turn would be called upon sooner or later to perform similar functions.

It was impressed on me by the Leader, when he requested me to talk to the pupils, not to emphasise Spiritualism as much as to work it in with entertaining and illustrative remarks.

The aim of the Lyceum was not to force beliefs on children, but to encourage them to be interested in religion in such a way as to be able later on to make a reasonable decision on the subject. This is an excellent method.

Spiritualists are fortunately, unlike Christians, under no moral compulsion to persuade children to believe the same as they do, lest they became unbelievers and end up in perdition.

Perhaps Spiritualism has done the world no greater service than to inform them that it is not beliefs which determine mankind's well-being in the hereafter, but motives with their consequent conduct.

This means that although we hope the children will become Spiritualists, we shall not be too worried if they do not since universal justice will in the end bring all to rights.

The class that I later addressed, or rather, whose questions I answered, were for the most part teen-agers, and I was impressed by the fact that most of the queries bore on social services, in which the nature and cure of diseases played a principal part.

Of course, their questions vary from week to week and as only a brief period is devoted to class work, practically only one line of thought can be developed at each class meeting.

A unique feature of Lyceum work is of calisthenics. NO other church seems to realise the importance of this feature at Sunday School, although good many churches and chapels do devote some time, out of Sunday School, to physical training.

One of my recollections of Sunday School was the lack of variety, and I have no doubt that had I been permitted to rise from my chair and parade to a cheerful tune around the hall, I should have attended class much more willingly.

Whoever has attended these calisthenics at Lyceum meetings will have noticed the teachers, invariable adults, join in them with as much enthusiasm as the pupils, and this must be a great source of enjoyment to the youngsters.

If physical exercises of so simple but healthful a nature can please the grown-ups, then why should it not please them !

It is a long time, I regret to say, since I previously attended a Lyceum meeting. Circumstances do not often permit it, chiefly because Spiritualist Churches fail too often to realise their importance; but I can assure those who have not yet attended any that they have missed a very good thing.

The reaction of many Spiritualists in opposition to the new “Spiritualist Revival” Society acclaiming the leadership of Jesus Christ, has made me glad to know that there are still many who intend to protest against any form of sectarianism in our ranks.

Is it not strange how individuals within our religious organisations—for it has a religious purpose — bemoan the fact that some of us will not tolerate the idea of setting up, within the S.N.U., any particular Spiritual leader, whether he be Jesus, Moses, Buddha, or Mahomet.

We, who adhere to the principle of man being his own Saviour and finding his own way to the kingdom of God, happiness, or call it what you like, without necessary prayer of intercession on our behalf by any, or through any, leader in spirit are not anti-Christian or narrow-minded intolerant fanatics.

We recognise the right of the Christian Spiritualists and kindred organisations to live in peace and promote goodwill in the world, as *separate organisations*, which can surely, in my opinion, exist side by side with all the S.N.U. churches which urge the adoption of the Seven Principles *without any additional clauses*, but which cannot allow, without protest, the propagation of gospels of “different truths” from a common S.N.U. platform.

Surely the S.N.U. religious platform has to be preserved for a direct advocacy of definite truths in an organisation which flies a particular religious banner, which is clearly enough defined to tell the whole world what is our religious gospel.

Co-operation between “kindred bodies” is possible and desirable when dealing, for example, with legal matters and the clearing out from all our ranks of racketeers and undesirable infiltrations, but complete *unity*, in a religious sense, can never become

possible until, officially at least, we all see eye to eye upon the fundamental principles of Spiritualism, which generations ago, knit our pioneer workers together.

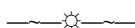
Without this complete religious harmony, we will become a disintegrated group of isolated survivalist churches, sheltering for administrative purposes, under an S.N.U. umbrella, but ready to split up and go our separate ways, with no combined force of religious objective, once the disapproval of outside orthodox bodies has ceased and we have become conventionally “respectable.”

Surely the Seven Principles are comprehensive enough to embrace, and be embraced by the whole God-conscious world, and if individuals wish to acclaim the guidance of a particular spirit, be he Jesus or some other great reformer, cannot he do so in the privacy of his heart without outlawing, as an organisation, the great body of world religionists, who for obvious reasons cannot be identified with any “Christian” or other sectarian Spiritualist body?

It has always been my belief that all people, of all shades of religious thought, should be admitted to our Spiritualist churches, but that our official speakers should be agreed in common purpose to mould the thoughts of our congregants towards an understanding and acceptance of what the Seven Principles really mean.

When this is done, we will find mere tolerance of each other becomes real union.

Then—and only then—will this Spiritualist Movement of ours step outside its present bounds and embrace the whole world.



Editor's Note:



The contribution to Spiritualism of Horace Leaf F.R.G.S. (c1886-1971) spanned decades. As a medium, lecturer, teacher and author, he became acquainted with Spiritualism in 1903 but then as a critic; in 1904 he discovered he had psychic ability and began to sit promiscuously for development until 1907, when he decided to take his development seriously, giving his first address as a medium the following year. However, he had by then already started to contribute to the British Spiritualist press, becoming a regular contributor to the *Two Worlds* and, later, for the American press, including *The Progressive Thinker*, *Banner of Light*.

In the *Two Worlds* Leaf serialised circa 1912 ‘Historical Records’, the histories of societies and churches, and in the July 2014 issue of the ‘SNU Pioneer’ his account of the early introduction of Spiritualism and of the formation of the first society at Keighley is republished.⁶ Leaf contributed another series in the *Two Worlds*, “Notable National and International Personalities in Our Cause: Interviews with Prominent Workers for our Movement at Home and Abroad”; many of these articles can be found in the pages of *Psypioneer* and *Pioneer*.

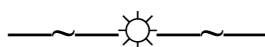
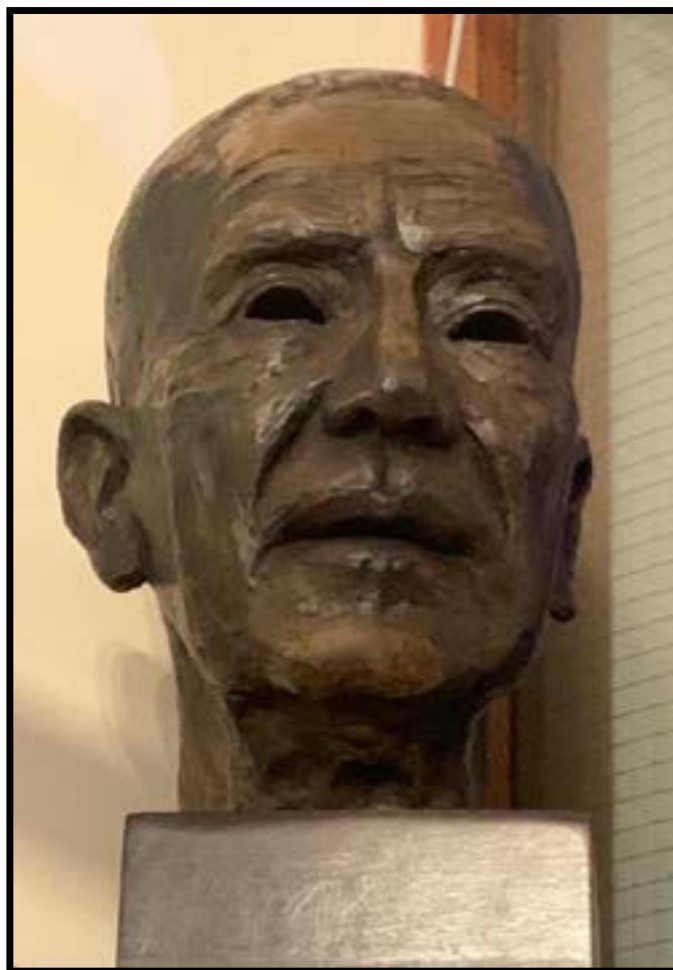
⁶ *Pioneer*, Vol. 1, No. 4: “Richmond & Weatherhead – An account of the introduction of Spiritualism at Keighley”.

Leaf authored several popular books, including ‘What is this Spiritualism?’ (1918), ‘Under the Southern Cross’ (1923) and ‘The Psychology and Development of Mediumship’ (c1926). He lectured widely at home and abroad as a normal speaker as well as inspirational speaking; he demonstrated clairvoyance and psychometry, as well as practising healing and physical mediumship.

He was closely associated with the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, his name first appearing in an Association programme in October 1915; in 1960 the M.S.A. changed its name to the ‘Spiritualist Association of Great Britain’ (SAGB).⁷ Soon after James Hewat McKenzie inaugurated the British College of Psychic Science at 59, Holland Park in April 1920,⁸ Leaf became staff lecturer on the psychology and development of mediumship. From this work he developed his book, ‘The Psychology and Development of Mediumship’, with McKenzie writing the foreword.⁹

In the early 1950s Horace Leaf was awarded honorary membership and the Diploma of the Spiritualists’ National Union.

Also displayed in the Britten Museum & Library housed at the Arthur Findlay College is a large bust of Horace Leaf and his typewriter.



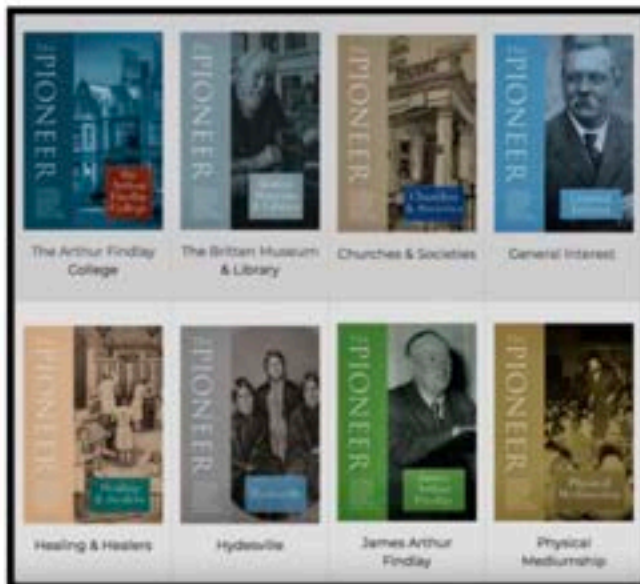
⁷ See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 1: “Visit to the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain”.

⁸ See Psypioneer, Vol. 3, No. 8: “A Knight Errant of Psychic Science James Hewat McKenzie”.

⁹ Psypioneer published two interviews with Horace Leaf forty years apart, in 1915 and 1955; both appear in Vol. 10, No. 7, July 2014.

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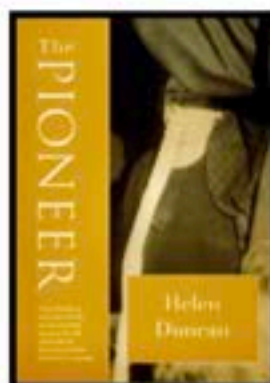
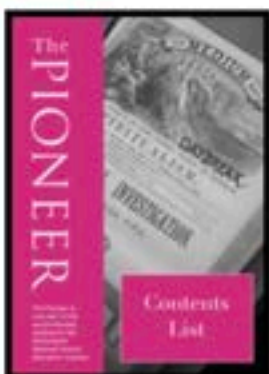
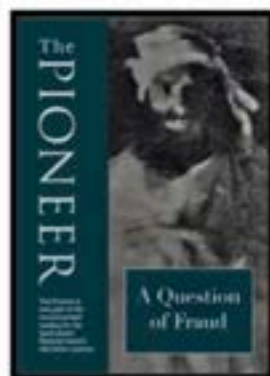
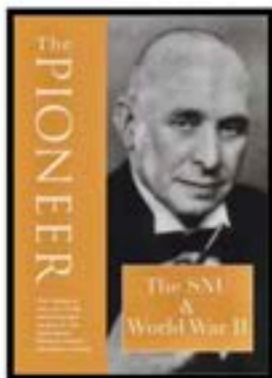
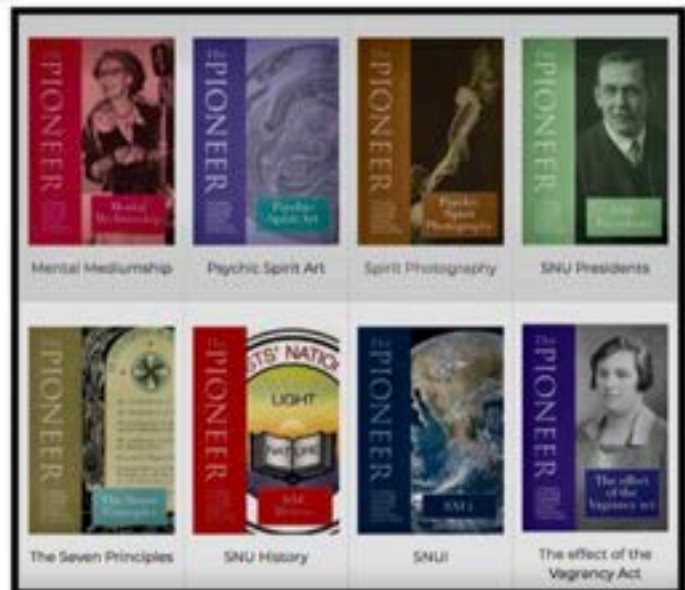
All the articles published in Pioneer over the last eight years have been grouped together within their category as much as possible

A selection of important subjects from the history of the Spiritualists' National Union.

Designed to cover key topics for anyone studying one of our courses or for anyone looking to further their knowledge on the history of our movement.

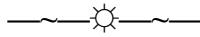
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The Pioneer journal is a unique insight into the history of the Spiritualists' National Union and its pioneers.



REV. SUSANNA HARRIS

American voice-medium



Reading about Arthur Conan Doyle's travels and lecture tour of Australia and New Zealand in his 1921 book, "The Wanderings of a Spiritualist", I noted Doyle's meeting and séance report with the American direct-voice medium, Mrs Susanna Harris.¹⁰ Recently I was reading some of her British séance reports in the Two Worlds, etc., urging me to put together this article.

Doyle states:

As I am on the subject of psychic experiences I may as well carry on, so that the reader who is out of sympathy may make a single skip of the lot. Mrs. Susanna Harris, the American voice-medium, who is well known in London, had arrived here shortly after ourselves, and gave us a sitting. Mrs. Harris's powers have been much discussed, for while on the one hand she passed a most difficult test in London, where, with her mouth full of coloured water, she produced the same voice effects as on other occasions, she had no success in Norway when she was examined by their Psychic Research Committee; but I know how often these intellectuals ruin their own effects by their mental attitude, which acts like those anti-ferments which prevent a chemical effervescence. We must always get back to the principle, however, that one positive result is more important than a hundred negative ones—just as one successful demonstration in chemistry makes up for any number of failures.



We cannot command spirit action, and we can only commiserate with, not blame, the medium who does not receive it when it is most desired. Personally I have sat four times with Mrs. Harris and I have not the faintest doubt that on each of these occasions I got true psychic results, though I cannot answer for what happens in Norway or elsewhere.

Shortly after her arrival in Melbourne she gave us a séance in our private room at the hotel, no one being present save at my invitation. There were about twelve guests, some of whom had no psychic experience, and I do not think there was one of them who did not depart convinced that they had been in touch with preternatural forces. There were two controls, Harmony, with a high girlish treble voice, and a male control with a strong decisive bass, I sat next to Mrs. Harris, holding her hand in mine, and I can swear to it that again and again she spoke to me while the other voices were conversing with the audience.

Harmony is a charming little creature, witty, friendly and innocent. I am quite ready to consider the opinion expressed by the Theosophists that such controls as Harmony with Mrs. Harris, Bella with Mrs. Brittain, Feda with Mrs. Leonard, and others are in reality nature-spirits who have never lived in the flesh but take an intelligent interest in our

¹⁰ Chapter VI, pages 139-142.

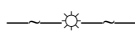
affairs and are anxious to help us. The male control, however, who always broke in with some final clinching remark in a deep voice, seemed altogether human.

Whilst these two controls formed, and were the chorus of the play, the real drama rested with the spirit voices, the same here as I have heard them under Mrs. Wriedt, Mrs. Johnson or Mr. Powell in England, intense, low, vibrating with emotion and with anxiety to get through. Nearly everyone in the circle had communications which satisfied them. One lady who had mourned her husband very deeply had the inexpressible satisfaction of hearing his voice thanking her for putting flowers before his photograph, a fact which no one else could know. A voice claiming to be “Moore-Usborne Moore,” came in front of me. I said, “Well, Admiral, we never met but we corresponded in life.” He said, “Yes, and we disagreed,” which was true.¹¹

Then there came a voice which claimed to be Mr. J. Morse, the eminent pioneer of Spiritualism. I said, “Mr. Morse, if that is you, you can tell me where we met last.” He answered, “Was it not in ‘*Light*’ office in London?” I said, “No, surely it was when you took the chair for me at that great meeting at Sheffield.” He answered, “Well, we lose some of our memory in passing.” As a matter of fact he was perfectly right, for after the sitting both my wife and I remembered that I had exchanged a word or two with him as I was coming out of *Light* office at least a year after the Sheffield meeting. This was a good test as telepathy was excluded.

General Sir Alfred Turner also came and said that he remembered our conversations on earth. When I asked him whether he had found the conditions beyond the grave as happy as he expected he answered, “infinitely more so.” Altogether I should think that not less than twenty spirits manifested during this remarkable séance. The result may have been the better because Mrs. Harris had been laid up in bed for a week beforehand, and so we had her full force. I fancy that like most mediums, she habitually overworks her wonderful powers. Such séances have been going on now for seventy years, with innumerable witnesses of credit who will testify, as I have done here, that all fraud or mistake was out of the question. And still the men of no experience shake their heads. I wonder how long they will succeed in standing between the world and the consolation which God has sent us.

There is one thing very clear about mediumship and that is that it bears no relation to physical form. Mrs. Harris is a very large lady, tall and Junoesque, a figure which would catch the eye in any assembly. She has, I believe, a dash of the mystic Red Indian blood in her, which may be connected with her powers.



Editor’s Note:

Arthur Conan Doyle had made over the years a number of controversial statements! For example, his involvement and investigation in what were known as the “Cottingley Fairies”, initiated by the Theosophist lecturer of a London branch of the Society, Edward Gardner. Arthur Conan Doyle wrote an article about the photographs that appeared in the December 1920 issue of *The Strand Magazine* and his subsequent 1922 publication of “The Coming of the Fairies”. The acceptance of elementals includes former SNU president Ernest Oaten and Emma Hardinge Britten, all of whom are featured in *Pioneer*, Vol. 7, No. 2: “Elementals, Fairies, And Fairy Lore – Ernest Oaten, & Editor’s Note.”

Doyle makes an interesting remark in his book quoted above:

¹¹ Vice-Admiral W. Usborne Moore can be noted in *Pioneer* in his investigations into the Bangs Sisters: Vol. 7, No. 6: “Bangs Sisters – Precipitated Paintings”.

“Harmony is a charming little creature, witty, friendly and innocent. I am quite ready to consider the opinion expressed by the Theosophists that such controls as Harmony with Mrs. Harris, Bella with Mrs. Brittain, Feda with Mrs. Leonard, and others are in reality nature-spirits who have never lived in the flesh but take an intelligent interest in our affairs and are anxious to help us.”

No doubt this consideration by Doyle of the possibility that some spirit controls/guides could be *nature-spirits* caused some discussion in its day. “Harmony”, the control of Susanna Harris, is claimed to be the medium’s daughter, who in earth life was called Stella and was lost under tragic circumstances. After her death she attached herself to her mother’s mediumistic work as her guide/control and comforter, using the name “Harmony”. Other possible candidates mentioned by Doyle were Mrs Brittain’s ‘Bella’ and Mrs Leonard’s ‘Feda’.

Annie Brittain and Osborne Leonard were at the International Spiritualist Congress (sixth) held in Glasgow on 3rd-10th September 1937 under the presidency of John McIndoe (Lady Conan Doyle, Hon. President). Papers were given by some well-known mediums on ‘The Mediumistic Trance’; this is what Annie Brittain said about her guides/controls:



Mrs. Annie Brittain in the course of her paper, said: “During my professional career I have been entranced innumerable times by two controls—Wild Rose, a Hindu girl, and Belle, a Cingalese. The sensations felt whilst being entranced by these spirit guides are totally different from when strangers take control. With the former (the guides) the sensation begins with a blending of my personality and theirs. For instance—I nearly always begin to give a psychic reading to a sitter in the normal state.

“Should Belle decide to control, the first condition I notice is a clearer perception of the psychic surroundings of the sitter, followed by a tightening of the muscles of the forehead. There is a deeper state of concentration and the physical surroundings begin to disappear. I am still conscious of the presence of the sitter, but see and feel only the psychic conditions. Then comes a slight twitching or jerk, and I have lost consciousness and the spirit control has taken charge of the reading.

“When entranced by the latter (the stranger), I begin to feel that I am not myself; my own personal feelings are submerged or overshadowed. My mannerisms change, I perhaps change my position, crossing my legs in a way not natural to myself. It seems as if the muscular system is affected first, then I have a desire to talk about things unknown to myself and I feel as if I am gradually being overwhelmed and crowded into a small space and my mind-activity imprisoned. A feeling of impotence steals over me, the command of my body has gone, a wave of trembling passes through my nervous system over which I have no control, and the little spark of consciousness which remains to me flickers out, and all knowledge of the physical body and the sitter is lost until I return.

“The sensations are not always the same, they seem to vary with different controlling entities.”

For further information on Osborne Leonard and other mediums on their own observations of the trance condition please see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 4: “The Mediumistic Trance”. Further, Doyle mentioned that Mrs Harris’s powers had been much discussed, i.e., she had no success in Norway and was examined by their Psychic Research Committee, Doyle suggesting that some of the problems were due to the mental attitude of the researchers, etc. This was in 1920, when Harris was tested in Norway over 25 séances; they concluded, and accused her of, fraud.

Susanna Harris, born in 1854 to Elizabeth and Henry Kuhn in Philadelphia, USA, was widowed in 1921. Later, on October 6th, 1923, she married Joseph Kay. Susanna Harris died in 1932.

Some six years earlier Harris was again brought to attention in alleged fraud in the Netherlands. A detailed report can be consulted, titled:

“H. N. de Fremery and the ‘Harris Affair’”

This well-constructed report by Loes Modderman is available in Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. 9 and can be downloaded on the link given on the index page of this issue or via my website given elsewhere in this issue.

Henry Nicholaas de Fremery (1868-1940) was an editor and lecturer on spiritist subjects and had attended many séances in Holland and overseas. Occasionally he came across fraud, which made him aware of some of the tricks fraudulent mediums used.



Henry de Fremery was convinced of genuine mediumship, one of his close friends being the well-known medium Alfred Voût Peters. De Fremery was not a scientist but was more interested in investigating the phenomena to rule out any possible fraud. This stood him very much alone in the spiritist community, as most people did not need his scientific interests as proof to believe and most mediums were not eager to cooperate in experiments. We can note here that Arthur Conan Doyle’s and Henry de Fremery’s investigations were at different ends of the scale, given Sir Arthur’s words while mentioning the Norway affair:

“I know how often these intellectuals ruin their own effects by their mental attitude, which acts like those anti-ferments which prevent a chemical effervescence. We must always get back to the principle, however, that one positive result is more important than a hundred negative ones—just as one successful demonstration in chemistry makes up for any number of failures.”

Several planned séances with the American medium Rev. Susanna Harris were at the invitation of the *Vereeniging voor Psychisch Onderzoek* from March 31st to April 7th, 1914, in The Hague, with two additional séances on April 8th and 9th in Amsterdam [further dates were added]. De Fremery was in doubt about Mrs Harris, based on his experience of the séance on April 9th, and so he planned to attend the séance of April 16th to see whether this doubt was misplaced or not; this was his first experience of a direct-voice séance held in the Odeon theatre in Amsterdam.

This background information is taken from the article in question; given that it is a long, twenty-one-page report I will merely continue to quote here the *negative* conclusions regarding the séances held on April 9th and 16th, 1914:

“De Fremery described the seance room: pitchblack curtains, doors where not a glimmer of light could get through.”¹²

“At the seance of April 9, 11 women and 13 gentlemen were present, who were instructed to hold each others hands; under no circumstances could the circle be broken, or dire consequences for the medium would follow.”

“If feeling a trumpet or something else touching one’s body, one was instructed to say ‘thank you’, and no one was to grip a trumpet. And the most important: no light, *or the medium could die.*”

This is how de Fremery graphically describes Harris’s entrance:



“The imposing figure of Mrs Harris, followed by her interpreter, entered the room, and the first thing she did was re-arrange the circle, by putting the ‘positive and negative elements’ alternately. Then, she opened her portmanteau from which she took three folded trumpets and a music box. Unfolded, the trumpets were 1 meter in length and by pouring water through them she showed that no devices were hidden inside. She put all three near her knees on the ground. Then she proceeded with an even stronger warning than the one given by the secretary of the *Vereeniging voor Psychisch Onderzoek* beforehand, mentioning a medium gone blind and another losing his memory because of sitters’ misdeeds.”

“De Fremery was appointed to sit at Harris’ left side and hold her hand. When everyone was sufficiently subdued, the seance could begin, with loud singing of our anthem in utter darkness. Then de Fremery told what happened next, and his scepticism is obvious. A deep voice next to de Fremery said loudly ‘Good Evening’ and he almost jumped out of his chair. A falsetto voice, ‘*Harmony*’, answered. ‘Spirits’ were saying banal things, to sitters *who gave all the information away*. De Fremery was, understandably, not at all impressed. It was obvious to him that the medium was groping for information and that ‘*Harmony*’ used the vocal chords of the medium.

“But the bass voice changed directions. De Fremery tried to find Harris’s left leg with his right, but couldn’t. He then felt a trumpet slap his head. A message ‘don’t you dare to doubt me’, maybe?

“De Fremery decided to give the medium, for now, the benefit of the doubt, but he had clear suspicions. So he did what every critical sitter should have done: listen to the medium’s breath, and how that differed from, or synchronised with the voices, which proceeded to dialogue *alternately*. His listening at the chest of Harris was revealing: as a

¹² “The evening before, on April 8, one instant the softest light peeped through the windows, not having any effect on the complete darkness, but nevertheless, according to the medium ‘no manifestations had been possible’.”

voice stopped, she inhaled. The longer the talking, the deeper the inhalation. For De Fremery there was no longer any doubt about the voices: *they were Harris' own*.

"That evening De Fremery went home, pondering what he should do. He signed on for the seance of April 16, and decided to talk it over with G. J. de Bruin,¹³ who was invited in the fateful seance to sit by her left side. He listened sharply, like de Fremery had done a week before, and came to identical conclusions.

"De Fremery, knowing that he would, had asked the sitters to stay a while after the seance, since he planned to confront the medium then and there, without the risk of physical damage to the medium.

"All would have gone according to plan, if not a **Mr Richter**, who had harboured his own suspicions, *had managed to crawl on hand and knees to grab the trumpets*, something that was strictly forbidden. He even took them apart.

"No 'spirit' protested. The medium, oblivious to what transpired, went on speaking through the third trumpet. Then Mr. Richter called out to make light. The medium was a fake, he announced, and to prove it he had taken two of her trumpets without any objections from the spirits or Mrs Harris. This was about 10 minutes before the planned end of the seance, for which every sitter paid f 5.-, quite a large amount in those days. De Bruin, in his capacity of chairman of Harmonia Amsterdam, tried to restore order, and everybody started singing again. Lights were switched on, the medium 'awoke' and was, mightily distressed.

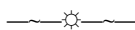
"Mr. Richter, the real 'culprit', had his own story. He was a member of a spiritist circle, and there he heard from a medium friend that Mrs Harris was in the habit of hiding fresh flowers in her voluminous bosom to present them as 'apports'. Light during a seance would have exposed her and that the voices were all coming out of her own throat, said that medium, and Mr. Richter believed her. With a talent for drama he decided to test Harris in his own way. Later he said that he never planned what he did. He had just acted on the spur of the moment. It was a deadly test. The happy dialogues continued, and Harris never felt it, till Richter spoke out loud.

"Later de Bruin testified that Harris' left hand never left his, but her left foot was nowhere to be found. The woman on the right side of Harris told de Fremery that the medium's hand wasn't in hers most of the time. At strategic moments there were suspicious disappearances of hands and legs to where nobody could follow, De bruin testified.

"The absolute darkness and all the warnings were the conditions to keep the sitters in awe. Mrs Harris never realised that this darkness was also her undoing, since she couldn't prove she *wasn't* cheating either. After the seance she left in distress with her interpreter, and obviously nobody stopped her to confront her."

The arguments, conclusions and discussion which followed the fateful séances are well worth reading, bringing out many points of interest. Later followed a lengthy article, "Mrs Harris' Mediumship, Pro and Contra", by G. P. H. Zahn, who analysed several of the arguments given. Based on his own evaluation of what transpired, he concluded that

... there is '*no absolute certainty that Harris was cheating, but also no definitive proof that she wasn't*'.



¹³ Mr G. J. de Bruin, chairman of Harmonia Amsterdam and the one responsible for the séance room.

However, there are sufficient reports of test-séances to equally endorse her genuine mediumship, for example by Dr Abraham Wallace, Estelle Stead, Felicia Scatcherd, etc. These examples can be found, along with Doyle's mention of the *coloured water in the medium's mouth*, in James Coates' "Is Modern Spiritualism Based on Facts or Fancy?"¹⁴

To conclude:



Dr William Jackson Crawford was born in New Zealand in 1881. Like Henry de Fremery he believed in adopting scientific methods when investigating mediumship; he was a lecturer in engineering at the Municipal Technical Institute, Belfast. Around the time of the article published below, taken from *Light*, December 5th, 1914, he had decided to investigate the physical phenomena of Kathleen Goligher and the group around her, known as the Goligher Circle, and make a prolonged study of the dynamics of telekinesis as demonstrated by Kathleen Goligher and her sisters; as his investigations continued this would lead to the production of ectoplasmic structures known as "The Psychic Structures at the Goligher Circle".

Crawford sat with the Goligher circle for six years until he committed suicide on July 30, 1920; for further information please see *Pioneer*, Vol. 4, No. 5: "Dr. W. J. Crawford & the Goligher Circle".

Here Dr Crawford addresses some of the points of the above-mentioned séances, which were made public in the British Spiritualist press of the day:

THE DIRECT VOICE AND ITS PROBLEMS.

NOTES ON THE MEDIUMSHIP OF MRS. SUSANNA HARRIS.

BY W. J. CRAWFORD, D.Sc.

Perhaps the following notes, having reference to a recent séance, with Mrs. Harris as the medium, may be of interest to some of your readers. It will be observed that I do not describe any of the many conversations between unseen entities and the sitters, for this kind of thing has, in my opinion, already been sufficiently done. What I endeavour to do is to record a few impressions—they are little more than impressions—received during the evening. Mrs. Harris invited me to sit beside her and to hold her left hand and wrist throughout, and in addition I controlled the movements of both her knees. The net result was that the least movement of any portion of her body was apparent to me.

(1).—BREATHING OF THE MEDIUM.

A Dutch correspondent has made the assertion in your columns that Mrs. Harris, by some mystery of respiration, produced the voices herself. Well, then, as soon as she was in trance, or what she says is trance, I put my ear to her back and listened intently. I could obtain no evidence of the assertion made by your correspondent. On the contrary, her breathing was easy, gentle, and long, and just like that of a young child asleep. She gave me the almost certain feeling that she was really asleep, and, moreover, this easy, deep

¹⁴ "Is Modern Spiritualism Based on Facts or Fancy?", by James Coates, published in 1919: Chapter VI ... Séance with the Rev. Susanna Harris under test conditions. Available as a free download at "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" link given elsewhere in this issue.

breathing continued uninterruptedly while voices were speaking round and over all parts of the circle. Even when “Harmony” was controlling directly, and presumably using her vocal organs, the breathing was still easy and of the sleep-like quality.

(2)—BODILY MOVEMENTS OF THE MEDIUM.

There were many physical manifestations. Often three metallic raps were given on the trumpet lying on the floor more than a yard away. On these occasions a nerve or muscle in the back of the wrist I held moved in perfect synchronism. The movement was slight, but startlingly perceptible. The same thing has been noticed with Eusapia Paladino.¹⁵ I am inclined to think it denotes “reaction.” Only with impact movements, such as the rapping, was this wrist motion apparent. There was nothing of the kind with any steady movement, such as the carrying of the trumpets or the musical boxes round the circle and over the heads of the sitters. I wonder if there is a throat “reaction” in Mrs. Harris while trumpet voices are speaking !

When “Harmony” asked for a song “because the power is going done” or “because they are drawing strongly here,” &c, Mrs. Harris would become slightly physically agitated in the sense that she would uneasily move her knees a little or give small spasmodic jerks with other portions of her body—which bodily movements would quickly subside towards the end of the song and before phenomena started again. It would almost seem that the operating agencies were, during this period of respite, working upon the medium for the purpose of throwing off further quantities of the mysterious “magnetism.” I would like to emphasise the fact that none of these unconscious movements of Mrs. Harris were in any way violent as was the case with Eusapia.

(3).—MOVEMENTS OF MATERIAL OBJECTS.

Perhaps what surprises me most is that the entities can see perfectly in the pitch dark. An electric light wire hung from the ceiling right into the middle of the circle, with porcelain shade attached, but no lamp—gas was used when light was required. While a musical box was floating over our heads, I asked that it should be made to touch the electric wire, and, after a pause, it touched the porcelain shade neatly and perfectly, at any rate judging by the sound. If a trumpet was temporarily put down it was usually rested against my knee—so softly and easily that one could have sworn very deft fingers were at work. When it was required again I felt a circular movement of the part that rested on my knee, and when this circular motion had become pretty pronounced, it was deftly and noiselessly wafted away. I fancy the trumpet is, while in the air, in a state of whirl about its longitudinal axis for the purpose of adding to its stability. It is extraordinary that with two long trumpets, two musical boxes, chairs and people, and with an electric wire hanging down, the physical movements are so unerringly carried out, and that not anybody or anything is unwittingly touched.

(4).—THE “HOLDING” POWER OF THE VOICES.

If a voice is speaking to a sitter it is almost fatal, with this medium, to ask for a name directly. Names are frequently given, but it seems they must be spontaneously given by the voice. As a case in point, a friend—or one who represented himself as such—who recently died by accident in America, called out his surname to my wife. My wife asked for his Christian name. Result—trumpet dropped to floor. In a few seconds the trumpet was raised again and the conversation resumed, and then the entity gave particular details as to the manner of his death. My wife asked another direct question—sudden drop of trumpet to floor. In a few seconds the trumpet was raised again and more conversation

¹⁵ See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 6: “Eusapia Palladino – Hereward Carrington”.

followed. "Harmony" said that these direct questions broke the line of communication for the time being and that an entity should be allowed to talk, and questions should be put rather indirectly to him. This is feasible and rather likely. With Mrs. Wriedt the line of communication for the voice seems stronger, with the result that more sustained and definite conversation is possible.

(5).—THE PROBLEM OF VOICE PRODUCTION.

I asked Mr. "Jones" how the voice was produced. He laughed, and said, "That is for you fellows to find out." He added that they on their side thought they had done their part in the fact of producing the voices at all. I gathered that Jones would find the explanation troublesome.

(6).—MEDIUM AND CONDITIONS.

When the entity previously referred to, who had met a sudden death in America, had departed, "Harmony" gave us a little lecture on "conditions." She said the fact of her controlling the medium directly was beneficial in this respect, that it prevented the taking on by the medium of the last earthly conditions of illness of those who spoke to members of the circle. She said this was the object of the control. Otherwise the medium would experience more or less the last earthly pangs of the visitants, and would have her strength depleted and her usefulness impaired.

(7).—STATUS OF "HARMONY."

Many people believe that "Harmony" is a secondary personality of Mrs. Harris. I do not. I have many reasons which would take too long to detail here. "Harmony" sometimes speaks through the trumpet but usually controls the medium directly. While controlling, it would seem that she is to all intents and purposes a human being. She gives clairvoyant descriptions and little prophecies, and helps out difficult situations. She communicates with other entities by direct conversation, which surely would not be necessary if she were at the time a discarnate spirit.

(8).—THE CIRCLE.

There is nothing awe-inspiring or harrowing about it. The entities who speak seem very human and altogether good-natured and kind. There was never a cross word. Nothing was said that could by any stretch of the imagination be considered personal outside the dictates of good taste. Furthermore, if there had been any desire to injure anyone physically, that desire could easily have been carried out. The dropping of one of the musical boxes from the ceiling on to the head of a sitter would put him *hors de combat*. But I am convinced that the greatest care is taken of all present by the controlling entities.

(9).—SOME CONCLUSIONS.

I am convinced that Mrs. Harris is a medium of great and wonderful power. I am certain that she does nothing to produce the voices and physical phenomena by any known methods. What I think is that round her there exudes a field of energy, or at least a field of energy-capacity of such a nature that physical movements can be produced through and by means of it with unerring accuracy. What a pity it is that the whole thing cannot be sympathetically and scientifically studied ! Money is plentiful enough in this country and what is required is the raising of an adequate fund—given voluntarily by those who can afford it—for the express purpose of erecting and equipping a proper laboratory where rigorous study could be given to the whole question. Five years of such work would probably render plain many things now obscure.

SUSANNA HARRIS

1854 – 1932

In Maurice Barbanell's column, "All Worlds Are One", in his newly-founded newspaper, 'Psychic News',¹⁶ dated September 3rd, 1932, he published:

Not Afraid Of Death

Estelle Stead showed me a letter which she received from Susanna Harris, that well-known American medium, in which she wrote:

"I am getting old now and do not expect ever to cross over the water again. I often think of all those who have passed before me to the Higher Life—Miss Scatcherd, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Dr. Abraham Wallace, and now Dr. Lamond. I look forward to the time when I shall meet them and your father."

This is how a Spiritualist thinks of death.



¹⁶ Pioneer, Vol. 8, No. 3: "Psychic News was Founded by Maurice Barbanell and Jack Rubens", "Psychic News in Perspective – Leslie Price", "Three "Dead" Men Began Psychic News – Maurice Barbanell".

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This page also has a selection of downloadable important subjects from the history of the Spiritualists' National Union, designed to cover key topics for anyone studying one of our courses or for anyone looking to further their knowledge on the history of our movement.

Also, a link to all “Pspioneer” issues often referenced in Pioneer

Psychic News Dinner Dance 1957

Hannen Swaffer – Arthur Findlay – Former SNU President Percy Wilson

Throughout our history from the early days of Emma Hardinge Britten, pioneers have continually advocated the importance, strength and necessity of the Home Circle—Hannen Swaffer was a staunch reminder of this; over many years he was supportive of the “Link Association of Home Circles,” founded in 1931, which developed into an international association, albeit for physical development.¹⁷ We need only to search “Home Circles” in the pages of Pioneer to note the underlying benefits of many of our famed mediums. Arthur Findlay talks on survival; Percy Wilson followed Findlay as Psychic Press Chairman.

Below in a report from Psychic News, October 5th, 1957:



Guests greet each other at the Psychic News dinner. Left to right: Mrs. Percy Wilson, Mrs. Arthur Findlay, Arthur Findlay and Hannen Swaffer.

The real future of Spiritualism is in the home circles

**– says Swaffer at Psychic News
Dinner**

Two men who by their pens have done more for the cause of Spiritualism than any other living writers were the guests of honour at the Psychic News 25th anniversary dinner at the Park Lane hotel last Saturday.

They were Hannen Swaffer, doyen of journalists and public champion of Spiritualism in press

and on platform for more than thirty years, and Arthur Findlay, whose books on Spiritualism and comparative religion are already classics that have exposed the errors of orthodoxy and probably influenced more people towards truth than any other psychic writings.

It was an occasion all present will remember. Swaffer reminisced inimitably—and also spoke of the future of Spiritualism as he saw it. Findlay reviewed the foundations of history on which Spiritualism firmly stood — and stressed the importance of the psychic press in the future.

And in reply to their toast to “Psychic News” the chairman of this newspaper, Percy Wilson, quoted words of guidance from a famous pioneer.

Here are the reports of the speeches:

“We don’t want to convince the learned and the wise, we only want to comfort and heal.”

So said Hannen Swaffer, still one of England’s few great orators, when he spoke as a guest-of-honour at the Psychic News 25th anniversary dinner.

Swaffer told his audience that in his early days he said to himself, “Within a year or so we shall convince England.

¹⁷ Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 3: “A Question of Fraud! – Editor’s Note”.

“Then I saw the snags. I came to the conclusion that it was in the home that Spiritualism counts. I realised, and many guides told me, that Spiritualism was not meant to be a world movement.

“It is meant to be like the Fabian Society: a permeating, educative, and all-pervading thing—in the end.”

He spoke of his own home circle with the guide Silver Birch, whose medium is Maurice Barbanell. To Swaffer’s mind the words of Silver Birch are “the most eloquently simple and beautifully inspired of all the spirit messages that have brought truth to this world today”.

“Spiritualism should consist of the development of the home circle. The future of Spiritualism will be in the home circle.”

Pointed

Swaffer then started to tell how Psychic News was founded by a tin-tack. It was during the days when he and Maurice Barbanell toured the country lecturing on Spiritualism, to 250,000 people.

“We went on the platform at Leicester, and someone—either a Catholic or an actor—put on my chair a drawing-pin. My guides were working well that night, but Barbanell’s were not. We changed places. He sat on it!”

But how that gave birth to Psychic News Swaffer never got round to telling, except to say that during those week-end tours he learned a lot about Spiritualism, and Barbanell learned a lot about journalism.

Swaffer confessed that he was a strange Spiritualist, because he had no personal desire to survive. “Complete annihilation would suit me.

“I don’t want to talk to dead friends. I want to meet them in the flesh. But through this wonderful truth I have been able to comfort the broken-hearted.”

Speaking of his own recent bereavement, when death released his wife after loss of memory and weeks of unconsciousness, he said:

“I did not want her to come back, in case she reproached me.”

When, finally, the message from her reached him, with elaborate precautions, these were her words:

“I was to regret nothing,” said Swaff. “Mrs. Swaffer would not have had it any other way and was happy to serve me now as she had done before.

“ ‘Love waits unchanging throughout the changing years, dark though the streams of living memory. Love laughs at death, for death is but a dream, from which we wake to immortality.’ ”

Swaffer still cannot resist a good story or a telling quip.

He told how his wife had said she was delighted to know that at last she would be able to hear her voice in her own home—“even if it was only a squeak.”

Swaffer had quipped, “She being dead, yet squeaketh.”

He ended by referring to his own favourite Spiritualist hymn, “Open my eyes”.

“If all of us tried to do this—I try, but I can’t—I’m human,” he said.

“But if it spread afar it would transcend the flaws. And I fully believe that by association it would make all men friends and usher in the dawn of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.”

* * * *

THE origin of every world religion was a psychic experience. The whole history of the human race revealed that each new turn of events directly resulted from some inspirational or phenomenal upsurge.

“With history behind us—why do we need to worry about what the psychic researchers have to say?” asked J. Arthur Findlay, until recently chairman of Psychic News.

Forty years ago he had a remarkable psychic experience. It came about without any effort on his part. Since then he had discovered that every world religion had a psychic cause which produced it.

“To have revealed the origin of the world’s religions is one of the greatest contributions Spiritualism has made to mankind, and as religion has been the cause of nearly half the events in history the importance of this contribution is not difficult to realise.

“When we accept the phenomena of Spiritualism we are not accepting something that has recently come before the world of thought, but a revelation that has prevailed for thousands of years.

“Spiritualism explains history and enlarges our view of the past, besides giving comfort and satisfaction. In the broad sense, what Spiritualism stands for can be accepted as true, as present and past history testify its reality.

“Some psychic phenomena may be attributed to telepathy or something else, but not all, and the broad conclusion can be drawn that what Spiritualism stands for can be accepted by the intelligent man and woman as something real and factual.

“The pages of a psychic newspaper, such as Psychic News, are of immense value to all Spiritualists, because they give a world-wide view of the subject, instead of just pegging it down to the few isolated cases which are dealt with by the psychical researcher.

“The psychic newspaper is a comparatively recent appearance, but it has come to stay.

“I think the psychic Press has a wonderful opportunity of putting before the public the whole of Spiritualism—its history and philosophy. Only through a psychic Press can people get a full view of what’s behind the Spiritualist movement.

“In years to come they will become more and more honoured and respected.”

* * * *

“If ever Spiritualism becomes bound then it will surely die,” said Percy Wilson, chairman of Psychic News, responding to the toast to this newspaper.

“Let us not be narrow. Let us be as broad as we can be, so that the whole of our philosophy will sweep into every other philosophy and every other Church, whatever its beliefs may be.”

He quoted Abraham Lincoln’s famous words:

“I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right—stand with him when he is right and part with him when he is wrong.”

When Hannen Swaffer quoted this in his weekly column in the World’s Press News, he recommended it as a motto for every honest journalist, whatever his politics.

Mr. Wilson recommended it as a motto for the psychic Press.

He quoted a passage from the well-known Spiritualist William Howitt:

“Can you give fresh wings to the wind? Fresh impulse to the tides of the ocean? Add fresh speed and brilliancy to the light?

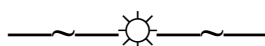
“But Spiritualism is light, the light of the universe. It is the wind of God’s spirit; it is the ocean of God’s power.

“It is as clear as the sun that it is one of those sublime elements that no hand but that of the Creator can wield: that needs no conductors or associations of men to advance its ends.

“Its aliment, its strength, its glory, have been the sneers and the malice of the wise and religious, the learned and scientific. Like Mithridates, it has lived on poisons.

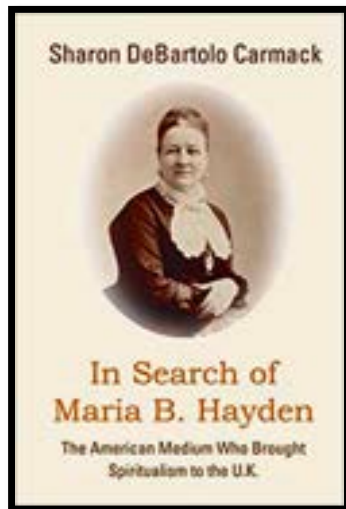
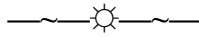
“In vain have the churches banned it as demoniac; in vain has science pretended to dissect and expose it; in vain has the Press a thousand times announced that it was detected as a base fraud and annihilated.

“Today it stands up before the face of its enemies, more robust, more ethereal, more gigantic, and ubiquitous than ever ! Like the Angel of the Apocalypse, its feet are on the land and the seas; its outstretched wings overshadow the poles !”



JOHN B. CONKLIN

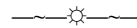
An Early American Pioneer Medium



Sharon DeBartolo Carmack DSNU has done some in-depth research into two of America's earliest mediums, one of whom is Maria B. Hayden, publishing a valuable biography in December 2020:

"In Search of Maria B. Hayden: The American Medium Who Brought Spiritualism to the U.K."

Sharon has kindly sent Pioneer a copy, which will be reviewed in due course.¹⁸ In addition, more recently, Sharon has produced a paper on Emma Frances Jay-Bullene, an American trance medium who visited England in 1855; this so far has been published in the SNUi News, August 2021.¹⁹



Another early American medium was John B. Conklin

My research into J.B. Conklin began some years ago in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 5, No. 10, October 2009: "Nettie Colburn Maynard (part one)".²⁰ The second part was published in Vol. 6, No. 2, February 2010: "Dr. Walter Franklin Prince versus Simon P. Kase". It is during the second article that the alleged involvement occurred between John B. Conklin and President Abraham Lincoln. This research would bring into play a more critical look into Lincoln – Maynard – Conklin.

This further research was brought about by an article by Leslie Price, the founder editor of *Psypioneer*, published in Vol. 1, No. 4, August 2004:

Short quote:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, SPIRITUALISM AND EMANCIPATION

"In February 1872 a "Mrs Linder" stayed in Boston for ten days, making frequent visits to the medium Margaret Fox. She believed she was in touch with her husband, Abraham Lincoln, who had been assassinated as American president in 1865.

"Lincoln's political career coincided with the rise of American Spiritualism and his interest was the subject of newspaper stories at the time. They continue today – thus on 31 January 1998, *Psychic News* (the Spiritualist weekly newspaper published in England) reported "Mediumship promoted the abolition of slavery" and gave an account of Col. Kase's activities, of whom more below. In contrast, the founder editor of the newspaper, Maurice Barbanell, had been personally interested in the Nettie Maynard testimony and republished her book in England.

¹⁸ Maria Hayden and Emma Frances Jay-Bullene: please see *Psypioneer*, Vol. 2, No. 10, October 2006: "Mrs. Hayden's visit to England in 1852-3".

¹⁹ Spiritualists' National Union International (SNUi) was set up as a Branch of the Union in 2009. It provides online access to information, education, and training to enable members around the world to take an active role in the Union and to promote Spiritualism in their own country. With a team of online tutors and opportunities to take part in online services, SNUi students are welcomed into an international community that forms a network of friendship and support. Please see Pioneer booklet SNUi as advertised elsewhere in this issue.

²⁰ "Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?" by Nettie Colburn.

“Dr Walter Franklin Prince (1863-1934) worked with the American SPR (1917-1920) and later with the Boston SPR, becoming president of the SPR in London for 1930-1. His great strength was in the analysis of documents. Typical of his work on a small scale was a paper, “The Aetiology of a “Psychical” Legend” in JSPR, December 1930, pp. 148-57. Members of the SPR today can read the paper through the Society’s database. (Aetiology is the study of causes.)

“Prince examined the story told by Col. Kase that a medium had inspired Lincoln to free the slaves, a story which appeared in the newspaper “Spiritual Scientist” and was also quoted by Emma Hardinge Britten in “Nineteenth Century Miracles” (1884, pp. 484-7). Prince was able to show that at the date in question Lincoln was already well advanced in emancipation and that Kase’s knowledge of the military situation was nil. Best of all, he was able to quote the testimony of the medium herself, Nettie Colburn (later Nettie Maynard), **who claimed no more than to have encouraged Lincoln in what he was already doing.**” ... See the referenced article for further information.

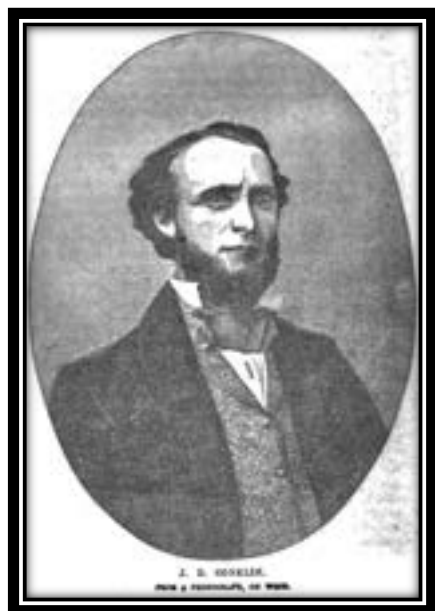
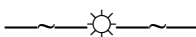
Who was John B. Conklin?

During the above-mentioned articles, I had no early biographical information on Conklin except that he was the medium whom Emma Hardinge first consulted in New York, as will be documented in this article. The early life of Conklin quoted below is taken from the valuable website run by historian Marc Demarest, “The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals”²¹ (IAPSOP). The site also archives the now defunct issues of Psypioneer (May 2004 until December of 2016) noted on the index page of the Pioneer issues.

Below is quoted from Nichols’ Monthly:²²

THE LIFE OF A MEDIUM

Or, the Spiritual Experiences of J. B. Conklin



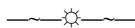
THE LIFE OF A MEDIUM is a new, and will be, we think, an interesting feature of this series. We have known Mr. CONKLIN for some time past, as a *test medium*, of remarkable uses. He is a man of the most entirely honest, simple, unpretending character, who does what he believes to be his duty, uninfluenced by any worldly motives. By the advice of the spirits, he has taken a house in a central location, No. 134 Canal street, New York, which is open several hours every day, for free circles, where all inquirers are invited to come, without money or price, and test the reality of spirit communications.

He is supported in this expensive, and as his friends thought hazardous undertaking, by voluntary contributions, by the sale of a monthly paper, THE PUBLIC CIRCLE, published at six cents a copy, and by

²¹ “The IAPSOP is a US-based private organization focused on the digital preservation of Spiritualist and occult periodicals published between the Congress of Vienna and the start of the Second World War. Our all-volunteer staff digitizes, indexes and makes available free-of-charge these periodicals, in our archive, for use by students and researchers: <http://iapsop.com>”.

²² A Magazine of Social Science and Progressive Literature, 1855-1857, Monthly, New York, NY, then Cincinnati, OH. Publisher: H. Watkin & Valentine Nicholson. Editor: Thomas Low Nichols and Mary Sargeant Gove Nichols.

private circles, at such hours as are not occupied with the public ministrations. It is our belief that this humble medium is in this way, the instrument of more spiritual good, than all the clergy of New York. We have not known any person to go to his rooms, in any proper spirit of candid inquiry, without being satisfied of the honesty of the medium, and the reality of the manifestations.



“Life of a Medium” was serialised in Nichols’ Monthly from June 1855 to August 1856, covering many aspects of this medium’s early life and development and reflecting the early Spiritualist atmosphere in which Conklin worked and toured in these early days. The full account is downloadable from IAPSOP on the link given. Below I continue to quote from “Life of a Medium”:

EARLY EXPERIENCES—STRIKING INTERPOSITIONS—FIRST MANIFESTATIONS:

“The great interest taken by the public in the spiritual manifestations of the present day, has made every fact in that connection of importance to investigators. At the solicitation of friends who are acquainted with some of the particulars of my spiritual experience, I propose to present a brief narration of incidents which have attended my career to the present hour, when I find myself engaged in making known, through the agency, as I must believe, of the spirits of those who have lived in the human form, the glorious truths of immortality.

“I was born in the city of New York, in 1825, and remained with my family till the age of nineteen years, when I went to sea. Up to this period, I had observed nothing that had directed my attention particularly to the spiritual nature of man, either in this sphere, or in the after life. True, I had been taught, and had received, the general doctrines of the Bible, as they had been expounded by those who had charge of my poor education; for I know little but what I have seen in my experience of life, and what the spirits have taught me. Without reflection, I embraced all the dogmas that were given me, not questioning the authority that proclaimed itself as the exponent of God’s will and truth.

“An incident soon occurred in my new avocation, which served to awaken my attention to the ways of Providence in the government of individuals and of the world. My seafaring experience had made it easy for me to obtain employment with those who “go down upon the sea in ships.” Accordingly, I was shipped as a seaman on board the pilot-boat “John McKeon,” of New York, a fine vessel, of an admirable class, named, as is customary, in honor of a prominent citizen. The melancholy fate of that vessel, and of the “Gratitude,” lost at the same time, will be sadly remembered by many of my readers, for not a man of their crews has been heard of since they sailed from New York. I had fully intended to sail in the “John McKeon,” and went home, for the purpose of obtaining my clothing; but, on returning to the pier, I was much disappointed on ascertaining that the vessel had sailed about an hour previous to my arrival; the master, anxious to get to sea, having determined not to wait for me. This incident made a deep impression on my mind; for, had I sailed, my fate would have been that of the poor mariners who “were never heard of more.”

“Another event, of a similar, but more decided character, deepened this impression. In 1841, I shipped for Thomaston, Maine, with Captain Dudley. I remained there three weeks, receiving from the Captain every kindness and attention, and was much attached to him, as he invited me to his own table, and patiently taught me navigation, encouraging me with the hope of becoming a mate. We loaded for New Orleans, but as we lay wind-bound, there came to me an inward monition, a mysterious influence, of which I then knew but little, which said, “*Leave !*” Though contrary to my views and inclinations, I felt compelled to obey the warning, and went ashore. It was in the dead of

winter. I had no money—no friends—no mode of subsisting—yet I obeyed that voice ! The Captain refused to pay me my wages, in order to compel me to return to the vessel; but all was in vain, and at last, finding me resolute in my seeming folly and obstinacy, he gave me my dues, and sailed without me; but not until after I had slept in a lime kiln, to prove that I was in earnest. There was another vessel in port, bound to New York. The captain of it would not take me on board, because he had an understanding with Captain Dudley.

“What was now to be done? Desperate necessities compel the use of desperate means. I took a skiff at night, rowed off to the vessel anchored in the stream, let the boat float away, and concealed myself in the forecabin, making my appearance when we were passing Owl’s Head, and were well on our voyage, much to the surprise of the captain; who, finding me on board without his knowledge, made the best of it, put me in the mate’s watch, and offered me a pleasant and lucrative situation. I had no *earthly* reason for this strange conduct. Every motive of inclination and gratitude prompted me to remain with my kind friend, who had taken a personal interest in my welfare. The true cause was known by the result. The “Zephyr” was lost on that voyage, and all on board, except the captain and one seaman, perished ! Was there no Providence in this ? Or was it only a strange coincidence, unaccountable, but meaningless. I must think that *effects* have *causes*.”

Conklin would continue in the same line of work undergoing similar experiences, strengthening his conviction that he was *in the guardianship of some higher power*. Conklin continues his story:

“In 1845, I visited my sister, in Chesnut street, Philadelphia, where there occurred an incident which seemed to bring me into closer relations with my friends of the other sphere of being. One evening, while sitting in the back basement, and explaining Signor Blitz’s thimble trick, for the amusement of the assembled group, the door of the room suddenly opened, and the rustling of what appeared to be a lady’s silk dress was heard by all and so assured them of the presence of some stranger, that a general escape was made up stairs.

“I did not then know that that house was what is called “haunted;” and much less did I know that the front room, in which I was to sleep, was particularly liable to nocturnal visitations. I retired for the night, and after being on the sofa for a few minutes, and in expectation that my sister would remove my lamp, which I had placed near the door, I lay quietly awaiting its removal. I had been startled by the strange sound, but it had passed from my mind. As I lay here, a lady entered the room, took the light from its position, and placed it on the mantel-piece, where it remained burning till morning. Before she left the room, she put the clothes over me. I had supposed that this was the act of my sister, but on inquiry found that neither she, nor any other inmate of the house had entered my room !

“Since that time I have become better acquainted with this being, who represents that she was murdered in the room I occupied. Although strongly urged to make some examinations of this house, I have never attempted it, though time may reveal some relics of mortality beneath the floors. However, more useful investigations may be made in other directions, perhaps, though they may be less marvellous to those whose studies are prompted by curiosity.

“This anecdote will have little weight, I know, with many persons who believe that all ghost stories can be reasonably accounted for; and who will say at once, that it was my mischievous sister, making herself sport by working upon my credulity. I have entire faith in the honesty of my sister; and I am now too familiar with what is called the

supernatural, to distrust her, for the sake of accounting for one of a thousand of similar appearances, I have related the circumstance as an event in my experience.

“As I wish to make a frank, and as far as needful, a full record of my spiritual experience, that which I have had as a professor of religion, and a communicant of a Christian church, next demands my attention. Accepting the Bible, as taught and explained to me by the preachers of the denomination whose meetings I attended; conscientiously wishing to walk in the right path; susceptible to strong impressions; I became a convert and member of the Methodist Church; and for a time, I meekly submitted to its discipline, and received without questionings, the dogmas of its creed.

“My sincerity and piety, I think, were never questioned by the leaders of the flock. I was, for a time, as blind, as unreasoning, as teachable, as they could wish. When I heard of the “Rochester rappings,” I believed them to be, either an ingenious fraud, or the work of the Devil. But as the subject became more and more noised about, my curiosity became excited; I felt an inward prompting to seek the truth; and when Mrs. Brown, one of the Fox sisters, came to the city of New York, I had the manly independence to visit her, and investigate for myself the claims of the alleged spiritual manifestations. I exposed myself to the ridicule, sneers, and scoffs of the unbelievers about me; the most bitter and bigoted of whom were members of the church to which I belonged.”

Meeting Mrs Brown:

The eldest Fox sister during the initial events of 1847/48 at Hydesville was in Rochester teaching music and knew nothing of the rappings her family were encountering until they had moved from the Hydesville house and were staying with her brother David and his wife Elizabeth a few miles away. At this time she was known as Mrs Ann L. Fish; she had married Bowman Fish in 1829 and in 1850 she remarried 29-year-old Calvin Brown, who died a few years later circa 1853. In 1858 Ann Leah married Daniel Underhill, spending the rest of their lives together.²³

Conklin continues:

“At my first visit to Mrs. Brown, the spirit of my mother-in-law, or an intelligent agency, purporting to be such spirit, and whose assertion I did not feel qualified to deny, made herself known to me, and stated that she had twice before communicated with me. It was true that I had seen her recently, in two dreams, of a very vivid character. Further communications were given to satisfy me of her identity, which I saw no reason to dispute.

“At this, my first interview, through a medium, with a departed spirit, I was directed to go home; to form a circle there; and was told that this spirit would then communicate with me further. The request seemed to me but reasonable—it would remove any possible suspicion of trick, or collusion; and I obeyed the injunction. The first circle consisted of myself, my wife, and child. We sat around the table, laying our hands upon it, and waiting for the mysterious rappings to commence. No rappings came; but to our astonishment, the table itself raised up upon two of its legs, gently, and came down upon the floor, producing the “tippings,” as they are



²³ For further information please see *Psypioneer*, Vol. 4, No. 9: “The Fox Sisters: Riddle of the records”, by Lis J. Warwood.

called; a mode of manifestation easier to investigate, perhaps, than the raps, as being subject to the three senses of sight, touch, and hearing.

“Efforts have been made to account for these tippings upon natural principles. They have been attributed, either to the trick of the medium, or the involuntary exertion of muscular power.²⁴ But no theory accounts for a tithe of the various manifestations. And, where it might be possible to suppose deception, voluntary or involuntary, in physical manifestations, the supernatural intelligence of the messages and responses still remains—a still more unaccountable phenomenon.

“The alphabet was soon called,²⁵ and there was spelled out the following sentence:

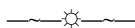
“My dear children, these things appear strange, yet stranger things will soon convince you of their spiritual origin.””

“I was anxious to pursue the investigation.

“After supper we sat again ‘in circle.’ Now something new astonished us. As if to satisfy my wife’s incredulity, we had the rappings. The sounds came freely and loudly in every part of the house; and frequently they could be heard for two or three hundred yards from my dwelling. The village where I resided, was aroused like a barrack at the beat of the morning drum. Neighbors flocked in from all sides; and for two months, during the winter, my house was besieged by those who were ready to enlist in the cause of truth, or who wished to show their own strength by opposing, ridiculing, or denouncing what they considered either an imposture, or delusion of man, or the machination of the foul fiend.

“Here was I, a poor Methodist church member, ignorant of the world’s lore, selected as an humble instrument to convince thousands, as I have had the privilege and satisfaction of since doing, of the immortal nature of man; of the *reality* of the unseen world, and of the Great Living Truth, that the spirits of the departed can and do hold communication with us who are going forward to the same destination; showing that the grave is no longer “that bourne from which no traveller returns.”

“My Methodist brethren, with a blind faith in their religious system, now called upon me, remonstrated against my doings, and begged me to acknowledge that I had been playing tricks, to astonish the people. They would have had me done this, even against my own consciousness of truth and right, for the good of the cause of religion, and the overthrow of Satan; but as I could not become a party to such a falsehood—as I could not resist the evidence of my own senses, and of the verity of the daily manifestations, of which I was the involuntary medium, they considered me unfit any longer to be a member of their communion. I was invited to leave the church, because I was ready to receive to-day, those manifestations and interpositions, which they wished me to believe, only occurred two thousand years ago. I was called a “backslider;” I had “fallen from grace;” I was an “emissary of Satan,” because I had been chosen to demonstrate to others the great realities of Eternal Life.”



²⁴ English scientist Michael Faraday (1791-1867) considered table-turning to be the result of ‘involuntary muscular action’.

²⁵ The calling of the alphabet was not devised by the Fox children on March 31st, 1848, as is often reported, but by William Duesler, a neighbour of the Fox family (and former tenant of the house) on the night in question. This process then became dormant until it was resurrected later by family friend Isaac Post in Rochester. This process, later used by the Fox sisters, led them to be known as the ‘Rochester Rappers’. It was later used by the early mediums Maria Hayden, John Conklin, Ada Foye, Emma Hardinge, etc.

Conklin continued his experiences, investigations, and development from haunted houses to demonstrating what was then called *Spiritual Manifestations*; the term *Modern Spiritualism* would not become popularised until around the mid-1850s:

“I passed my evenings, for about three months, in sitting in a circle with two mediums. This was for the purpose of development, as it is called; a gradual and unconscious fitting of the spiritual element of the individual, to become the medium of impressions, or the instrument of spiritual action.”

Conklin returns to the eldest of the three “Rochester Rappers”, Ann Leah (née Fox) Brown:

“It was during the anxiety on my part to understand more clearly than I then did the modes and purposes of spirit communication, that I visited the distinguished medium, Mrs. Brown. I know not how many times I went there—perhaps it might have been twenty—but invariably nothing satisfactory was given to me, while others were surprised and gratified. I received nothing more than “not now,” or “some other time,” to all my inquiries. This was exceedingly perplexing to me, and cost me in time and money much more than I could afford. Yet I persevered—for the investigation of truth, when once commenced, is not easily relinquished. Finally, one evening, at Mrs. Brown’s, I received a communication by the alphabet, in these words:

“ “My son, thou hast not played thy part well. When thy minister and brethren smote thee on the right cheek, and set a mark on thy forehead, thou shouldst have bared thy bosom also, and permitted them to know that an honest man feareth not death. “GEORGE FOX.”

“This astonished me; but as I was not the son of any person by the name of Fox, I was not satisfied, and felt some discontent, inquiring who it was. To which the reply came, as follows:



“ “John, be candid, and accept a word from thy friend, for there is a new song about to be put in thy mouth, whose echoes will vibrate sweetly through the souls of men.”

“Directions were then given me to sit for the purpose of developing myself as a medium, and the communicator asserted that he would be a father, brother, friend, everything to me, that I might desire. This was done to make me easy with respect to those sacrifices which every Spiritualist is called to make in these days, for the truth—when for its sake relatives must be held inferior in importance to those grand relations of truth and love which bind man to his Creator. The communicating spirit subsequently was ascertained to be George Fox, the celebrated Quaker; and through many trials I have had wise counsel from him, and he has proved, indeed, to be all that



could be desired, and even more to me than he promised. In the many difficulties which are liable to occur at public circles, I have seldom failed to receive his assistance, and he usually enables me to disarm very powerful sceptics.²⁶

“Up to this time, I had never made any charge for my services, and was much averse to doing so, fearing the imputation of mercenary motives, when my only conscious desires were to seek and find the great truths of immortality, and to aid others in their investigations.²⁷ But, besides giving all my leisure time, business hours were often trespassed upon; and I felt the necessity of giving more attention to the requirements of my family. I finally compromised, by devoting all my time to my medial office, leaving those who might be benefitted to make me such contribution or compensation as they thought proper.

“This plan was, at that time, a total failure. I persisted, until I found that those who wished to attribute to me unworthy motives were never at a loss to do so; while candid and well-meaning people were often thoughtless of justice, and seemed quite unconscious of the fact that I could not give them my time without an equivalent. While some would not hesitate to occupy hours of my time, without a thought of remuneration, acting as if they had done me a favor by consenting to investigate a subject, which, it seemed to me, ought to be of quite as much interest to them as to me, others did not hesitate to say that a man must be insane, who would sacrifice his time, as I was doing.

“On consideration, and consultation with my guardian spirits, I therefore resolved to use such discretion as the circumstances demanded: to fix upon a moderate price for those who came to public circles, and a fair compensation for time spent in private ones; and in this way I was able to support my family, and to defray the cost of keeping open a room, in a central, and therefore expensive locality, for public use. But at no time, even when giving ten or twelve hours a day to public or private circles, was this compensation considerable. I was anxious to give every visitor the utmost latitude of investigation, and to have them fully satisfied with the result. With awkward questionings, and needless repetitions, and trivialities, much time was consumed; and the methods, adapted to the condition of inquirers, were slow. Still, every day and hour gave convincing tests, to all who had the candor or discernment to perceive them, of the reality of the Great Fact,

that spirits exist, and can, and do communicate with men.”

With all this said and done Conklin became a Test Medium; this is not to say by committees who would put the medium/s through controlled tests like the Fox sisters,²⁸

but for the sitter to test the spirits !

“I have been called a Test Medium, because my work has been almost exclusively that of giving persons their first convincing evidences of the immortal truths of spirit life and intercourse—a humble mission, but one which seems to be the basis of development, and the first step in spiritual progress. Before people can accept of the wisdom ready to flow into the minds of men from the spirit world, they must believe that spirits exist. And when their existence is tacitly admitted, as men admit the dogmas of religious creeds, without any vital and practical faith, their power to communicate with men in the form must be demonstrate.”

²⁶ George Fox 1624-1691 (image shown) was the founder of the Religious Society of Friends, better known as the Quakers or Friends.

²⁷ For Emma Hardinge Britten’s view on mediums charging for their services see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 4, page 108: “Mrs. Hardinge to the Spiritualists”.

²⁸ See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 4, August 2019: “ “Ordered by the spirits” – How the First Public Meeting Came About to Demonstrate”.

One such *first-time* sitter was then known as actress Emma Hardinge, who attended a séance at Conklin's residence in Canal Street, New York. On Emma's part this did not go well at all! The image shown is c1860, when Emma was aged 37. Recorded in her Autobiography, Chapter II, page 16, is her response to her *first* experience in a Spiritualist circle in America:²⁹



“... I became so deeply interested in the plain, straightforward account of spirit intercourse, and the wide-spread manifestations of spirit phenomena they related to me, that at length I consented to accompany Mr. Ranney, a worthy Canadian gentleman, who was one of the much dreaded “Spiritualists,” to a place wherein, as I was assured, I could learn the truth of what he alleged for myself.

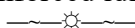
“Notwithstanding the fascination which this subject of possible Spirit return possessed for me, it required many conversations and much persuasion to induce me to visit the *Spirit depot*, as I contemptuously phrased it, where I was to obtain the promised evidences. When my scruples were at length overcome, I accompanied my new friend to a shabby looking house in Canal Street, and after ascending two or three flights of uncarpeted narrow stairs, I found myself in dismal ill-furnished room, where a number of commonplace looking people were sitting round a wooden table, watching with seemingly deep interest its heavy and incessant rockings to and fro.

“Although this “Circle room,” as I was informed, was a public one, and open to any strangers who paid the stipulated fee at the door, my companion whispered to me that the party was in the midst of receiving a communication from “the *Spirits*,” and we must wait quietly where we stood until it was completed, when no doubt we should be invited to join the circle. Without the slightest idea of what connection might exist between a Spirit communication and that rocking table, but keeping both eyes and ears carefully on the alert, I heard a thin, sad-faced looking man at one end of the table keep on repeating letters of the alphabet over and over again in a monotonous tone, until he at length stopped, when one of the party who seemed to have been engaged in writing something, said, speaking in a clear loud tone: “The Spirit answers, Immortality would be a mere fiction were there no other evidence of it than Bible teaching.”

“This was enough for me. These horrid “ghoul” like looking infidels were pitching into the Bible ! Without having the slightest idea of the question which had called forth this answer, or by whom, or in what manner the answer came, it was enough for me to hear the words—“fiction” “Bible”—jumbled up together in a slighting and irreverent way.

“Like hundreds of others whom I have since observed running away at the first moment they hear anything concerning their stereotyped faiths that they do not like, instead of stopping to enquire or reason about, I, too, ran away—or rather, I should say fled—rushing precipitately down the stairs into the street, and back to my own room, to fall on my knees and pray for forgiveness for having visited such an infidel place, and been found amongst such infidel people.

“It was some time before the shock which my *religious* nature had received subsided, and then, weary of the *ennui* which enforced idleness imposed upon me, ...”



²⁹ The Autobiography of Emma Hardinge Britten, posthumously published and edited in 1900 by Emma's sister, Margaret Wilkinson.

This strong reaction by Emma Hardinge may be considered as rather confusing, given her previous experiences as a member of an occult society where she served as a teenager—as an entranced clairvoyant and a mesmeric subject for an English occult society called “The Orphic Circle” (see Pioneer: “Emma—Floyd—Hardinge—Britten”).³⁰

After her experience at Conklin’s séance, which she looked upon as unchristian and blasphemous, Emma was again, shortly after, persuaded to go to another test medium also having a lodging-house in Canal Street, New York. The medium was a *very young* lady called Mrs Ada Foye; she told Emma via the alphabet system of raps that she would become a great medium and Emma received a communication from her brother Tom, who had died ten years earlier, aged 16. When she got home her mother confirmed the details of the message from her brother Tom.

Emma Hardinge’s life would soon change to that of a Spiritualist medium like John Conklin, whom she had run away from. Emma was further helped by Mrs Kellogg to awaken her spiritual powers of magnetism. The following year, 1856, Emma was giving public séances as a ‘test medium,’ also giving music lessons in the rooms of the ‘Society for the Diffusion of Christian Spiritualism’.³¹

Emma Moves Way from Her Orthodox Faith !³²

“... even up to my first great trial lectures at Troy, on July 5th, 1857, I had clung religiously, as I had termed it, to the orthodox faith in which I had been brought up, nor had my experiences as a test Medium contributed to shake that faith. Indeed I had sometimes listened with equal horror and indignation to what I designated as the *unchristian* and infidel talk of many of my Spiritual associates.

“Thus, then, when the New York Spiritualists, stimulated by the glowing accounts of my *début* as given by Troy friends, invited me to occupy their platform on the succeeding Sunday, July 12th, I accepted the offer, confident that I, through my Spirit inspirers, could so severely rebuke the infidel spirit which I felt was existing amongst my New York associates, that in all probability I might convert many of them to the true Christian faith.

“The Spirits had promised me that on that special occasion I should hear every word I spoke, and so I did, but the result of those same two New York lectures was, that instead of converting any of my audience to orthodoxy, I converted myself entirely away from it,

³⁰ Pioneer, Vol. 8, No. 3.

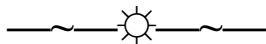
³¹ Emma notes in her Autobiography, page 39: “One of my warmest and kindest patrons in the Spiritual ranks was a wealthy merchant—a Mr. Horace H. Day, well known in New York as the founder of large india-rubber works.

“Mr. Day had hired an entire building right in the business centre of New York, namely, 553, Broadway. On the steps of this building was placed a large board inscribed with the words SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALISM. Though Mr. Day was the entire of “the Society,” and the Spiritualism diffused there was not in the slightest degree related to the term “Christian,” it had pleased him to adopt that phrase, and to carry it still further by publishing in that very building a weekly newspaper entitled “The Christian Spiritualist.”

“A certain portion of this house was devoted to the sale of the paper and the Spiritual books and pamphlets that, as early as 1850, had then been published. The upper floors were occupied by the printers of the paper, and in the large back drawing-room of the building the generous lessee had placed Miss Kate Fox, who, at a salary of twelve hundred dollars a year, was engaged to sit *free* for the public every morning. When Mr. Day heard of my intention to *give* my services to the public without pay, he kindly placed two handsome rooms, well furnished by his liberality, at my disposal for my séances. Being still too proud to accept of this generous arrangement rent free, I offered to edit his paper, and I continued to do so during the time that I occupied the apartments in question.”

³² Autobiography of Emma Hardinge Britten, page 52.

nor has my incessant study of ancient history, science, and God's Bible of Creation ever suffered me to relapse again into the mists of superstition invented by Priestcraft, or shaken my assurance of my own personal responsibility both here and hereafter, for all the good or evil I have ever done on earth."



***John B. Conklin to be continued in the
next issue ...***

MORE ON DIRECT VOICE

Leslie Flint séances:

Direct voice (or independent voice, as it is also referred to) is an impressive form of physical phenomena; in this issue Susanna Harris is featured both in the positive and negative. Different mediums' presentation of the direct / independent voice naturally differs by their development and presentation.

We can note with Harris that she used up to three trumpets, whereas Leslie Flint did not usually use a trumpet, as noted in *Pioneer* (quote below);³³ her demonstrations were generally kept from twenty to twenty-five sitters per séance. Some reports suggest that she worked in a trancelike state, others report that she was fully conscious of the proceedings.

Flint was able to demonstrate the direct voice while he was fully conscious, seldom going into a trance state. Flint did not speak in trance; he worked in total darkness and, unlike most mediums, he did not use a trumpet or any other physical devices to help produce the spirit voices. His ectoplasmic larynx was formed on his left side and located some two feet away from the medium, where the spirit voices would speak into the manufactured replica voice box. The communicating spirit would concentrate its thoughts into the ectoplasmic voice box by lowering its frequency/vibration to produce objective speech.



Unlike Harris, Flint would hold large public demonstrations of audiences, sometimes well in excess of 2,000; this I believe was started and encouraged by the opportunities given by Noah Zerdin and Harold Chibbett in the formation of the "Link Association of Home Circles" in 1931, leading to large mass meetings for physical phenomena. Flint was a close friend of Zerdin. Mrs A.E. Perriman was the first voice medium for "The Link" in 1934 at the Æolian Hall; a year later Leslie Flint gave a large direct-voice séance at Bloomsbury's Victoria Hall.³⁴

There is today an abundance of recordings made in Leslie Flint's home circle; however, these are mostly talks by well-known people like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge, other less-known personalities and, of course, Micky, Flint's boy control. The public demonstrations brought about personal communications, giving comfort and evidence of the survival of death.

Published below are two articles:

Sometimes a person who has little interest in what is taking place in a séance gives off negative thoughts disturbing the harmonious vibrations that have been put in place; or, more serious, a verbal outburst during a séance is nothing more than an ignorant person thinking that perhaps they are being clever—but in their total ignorance of the proceedings they destroy or disturb the very sensitive fabric which physical phenomena require to function in producing the necessary psychic fluids required to produce structures for the said phenomena. The article below, published in *Psychic News*, February 18, 1950, gives a good example of a public meeting being terminated by the sheer ignorance of the sitters' conduct:

³³ *Pioneer*, Vol. 3, No. 3: "Looking at the Independent Direct Voice".

³⁴ *Pioneer*, Vol. 7, No. 3: "A Question of Fraud! – Editor's Note".

Spirit Voice Fills Hall Without Microphone

GUIDE ACCEPTED CHALLENGE FROM INTERRUPTER

LESLIE FLINT'S PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OF DIRECT VOICE AT THE CORN EXCHANGE, BEDFORD, ON WEDNESDAY WAS MARRED BY THE THOUGHTLESS BEHAVIOUR OF TWO PEOPLE, A MAN AND A WOMAN, IN THE AUDIENCE.

The woman was the first to start the decline. She infuriated the audience by her lack of response to a message being relayed by Micky.

Even when she was addressed in her own name by her mother in spirit she still displayed no interest.

That she was capable of answering properly was demonstrated by the bright way she replied when Micky, Flint's boy guide, first indicated her. His remark that he wanted "the lady who is sitting knitting," brought a ready response from her and a gust of laughter from the audience.

R.A.F. DROPS A "BOMB"

The spirit lad made gargantuan endeavours to get the message across, but his efforts were blasted by a young Air Force sergeant who interrupted and demanded that the microphone be moved from the front of the cabinet.



Mr. Abdy Collins, who was chairman,³⁵ asked what difference this would make, and the young man replied that for all he knew Micky might be speaking over another microphone concealed somewhere about the hall.

In the midst of this argument Micky's voice suddenly shouted out that the microphone could be moved if necessary.

It was placed well away to one side of the cabinet and Micky called loudly, asking if he could be heard at the back of the hall.

He was assured that he could and the microphone was replaced.

Mr. Collins then asked the sergeant if he was satisfied.

"PLANTS"

The young man agreed that the voice was obviously coming from the cabinet, but would not agree that it was necessarily the voice of a spirit.

As the normal sceptical outlook of the newcomer this attitude was understandable, but the sergeant finally ruined any hope of the meeting recovering its poise by suggesting that the two people who had so far received messages were planted in the audience.

³⁵ See Pioneer, Vol. 8, No. 3: "B. Abdy Collins – Psychical Researcher, Spiritualist and Author", "Jack Webber on the removal of the medium's coat", "The Explanation of Ghosts", & "Judge Converted Him to Spiritualism: Discussions on Golf Course – J. Arthur Findlay".

The audience, now thoroughly fed up, raised a wrathful protest, and Mr. Collins asked if the two recipients would stand and deny the accusation.

This they readily did, the woman obviously furious at such an outrageous suggestion, the man replying with such vigour that he silenced the sergeant once and for all.

But the damage was done. The conditions had deteriorated so much that although one of Flint's controls spoke a few words of encouragement, pointing out that it sometimes takes years to become convinced of survival, the meeting had to be terminated.

The one good message of the evening was the first to be delivered and went to the woman who was indignant at being accused of collusion.

She was Mrs. Bonning, of 3 Avenue Lodge, Avenue Road, Ramsgate, and she explained, during her testimony, that she had been on a visit to her daughter at Luton and had seen Flint's meeting advertised. Out of interest she had attended.

Her message began by Micky introducing a man named Punter, who, he declared, used to own a factory at Luton and was involved in a disaster.

Mrs. Bonning said she knew Mr. Punter and then the communicator himself spoke.

In a clear distinct voice he declared that he came from Luton where he had owned a hat factory.

Mrs. Bonning acknowledged this to be true and the communicator continued:

"We had a fire there and I tried to save some of the girls who were trapped."

Mrs. Bonning recalled the fire and added, "You were attached to the Luton Spiritualist Church."

"No, that was my brother," replied Mr. Punter.

A few inconsequential greetings were exchanged, and after wishing to be remembered to his old associates and friends Mr. Punter took his departure.

MESSAGE FROM KITTY

But the communication did not end there for Micky went on to speak of a young woman named Kitty who was connected with the disaster, the inference being that she perished in the fire.

Mrs. Bonning acknowledged the name, and Kitty, in a hushed, breathless voice addressed her.

"You know I have been trying to get in touch with my people," she said. "Will you pass on a message telling them that I am happy, and send my love to them."

Mrs. Bonning told *Psychic News* that to her knowledge Flint would not have been aware of these facts.

The male recipient was addressed by a Jack Reid in spirit, the communication being placed.

Mr. A. H. L. Vigurs, past president of the Spiritualists' National Union, who addressed the meeting, spoke of the value of psychic research.

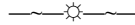
ARE WE OPEN-MINDED?

Its purpose, he said, was to bring home to man the knowledge of his own make up, but in people's investigations he advised caution.

"We approach this subject with what we think is an open mind," he declared, "but our minds are conditioned with all the inherited experiences of the world in which we live."

Psychic research was invaluable to this day and generation, but the tragedy was that one person's experiences were no good to another.

"At best," he said, "all they can do is to arouse interest and you will say, 'If that fellow is honest and sincere then there is something here which should be investigated.'"



The second article is in the Home Circle where the sitters received more than the expected direct-voice and the rare entrancement of the medium (taken from *Psychic News*, April 22nd, 1950):

Father Shone Torch On Materialisation

"IT WAS UNDOUBTEDLY MY BOY!"

SITTERS AT A RECENT HOME CIRCLE HELD BY LESLIE FLINT, THE WELL-KNOWN DIRECT-VOICE MEDIUM, WITNESSED A SOMEWHAT RARE EXTENSION OF HIS PSYCHIC POWERS WHEN A YOUNG BOY IN SPIRIT PARTIALLY MATERIALISED TO HIS PARENTS.

While unable to fully materialise, the boy's head and face were clearly observed by the sitters and, more important still, by his parents. In fact, to obviate any possible error of identification the father shone a red light upon the materialised face.

"The moment I saw him side-face I knew it was him !" the father, Mr. H. J. MacDonald, told *Psychic News*, adding: "Then he turned his face full towards me and I shone the torch upon him. It was undoubtedly my boy."

SHAFTS OF LIGHT

Indication of phenomena other than the direct voice usually experienced at Flint's seances came when Micky, his child control, asked the sitters on either side of the medium to hold his hands. To ensure the full flow of power the entire circle linked hands.

Materialisation then began. Several shafts of light were seen close to the medium. These floated from the left to the right and were the prelude to the materialisation of a face that turned towards Mrs. MacDonald.

Simultaneously a voice spoke and declared itself to be Angus, Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald's son. He eagerly inquired whether his face was recognisable.

As Angus was recognised by his parents, his sister, Joan, was seen to be also attempting materialisation.

"HE KISSED ME!"

At one period they were observed together but not with sufficient clarity to ensure definite recognition. However, Angus, the more successful of the two, materialised again and this time his parents saw him by the light of the torch.

For his parents it was a memorable event: "He spoke to me and kissed me—it was wonderful," declared Mrs. MacDonald.

During the seance a girl was heard singing in the direct-voice and, returning again, continued to sing, her voice moving round the circle. As the girl appeared to be singing in a foreign tongue one of the sitters inquired of Micky who she was. Micky stated that she was a Javanese girl who had once been a temple dancer.

Further evidence of survival was received by Mr. MacDonald when he again attended the medium's home circle last week.

“LAGOS, 1902”

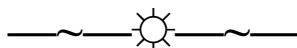
An unusual feature of this particular seance was the entrancement of Flint, who is usually conscious during manifestations.

Through the medium a voice addressed Mr. MacDonald and repeatedly called the name “. . . Saku ! . . . Saku !” and ‘then—“Lagos, 1902.”

Saku, Mr. MacDonald told *Psychic News*, was the name of a coloured boy who had worked with him during 1902-3 when he was employed by the Eastern Telegraph Company on one of their ships.

“I was a cable repairer and moved up and down the Gold Coast during that time on the Company's ship. I knew Saku very well and had a great liking for him,” Mr. MacDonald later explained.

Transfiguration of the medium was effected by a number of spirit entities, several of the sitters declaring that the changes were definite and apparent. An illuminated plaque was also levitated during the seance.



In the next issue Pioneer will publish a public demonstration of Leslie Flint at Kingsway Hall before a two-thousand-strong audience, this time without interruption from any members of the audience.