The PIONEER

The Pioneer is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.



SNU History

the PIONEER

The Pioneer is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses. Please reference: "Pioneer, volume, issue and page numbers"

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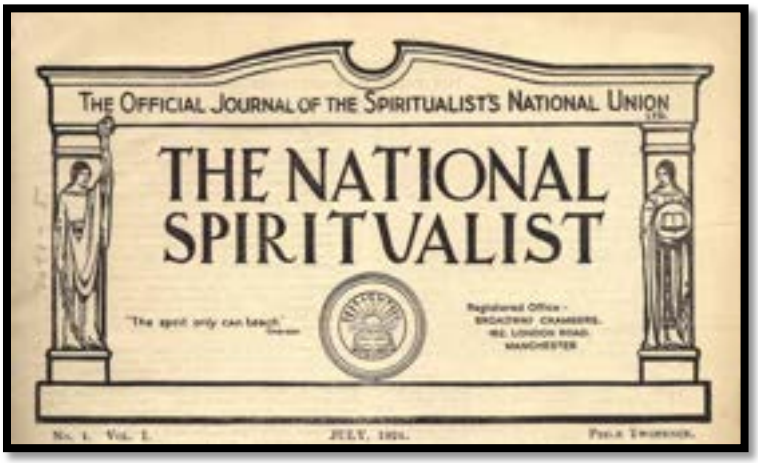
All references to Psypioneer in these issues are archived at http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/

Special thanks to Charles Coulston for his work in sub-editing these issues – also acknowledged to Minister David Hopkins and Leslie Price for their past work in sub-editing the issues

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THE FIRST SNU JOURNAL

July 1924 – December 1932



The first official journal of the Spiritualists' National Union came into being under the presidency of the first female President, Jessy Greenwood, in July 1924. Greenwood was President from 1923 until 1925. Only one other woman has held this position in the Union, Minister Judith Seaman, presiding from 1996 until 2000.

In the opening paragraph of 'The National Spiritualist', dubbed "Our S.N.U. Journal!", Greenwood commented:

> "I want to stress the word *Our* and at once secure the interest of every member of the Union to give it their blessing and a send-off worthy the Cause that gives it birth and as each birthday comes round to continue many happy returns.
>
> "It is intended as an open door to all whom it may concern. District Councils will here find a means of ventilating those matters which call for united action in strengthening the means of Government in the Churches, Lyceums, District Committees or Subsidiary Groups; to the S.N.U. it will provide a means of discussing how best to carry on collective propaganda; and also of knowing the personnel of such bodies."

She further states:

> "The need for such a journal has been felt for many years, and no one stronger in his claims for articulate expression in the Movement of Spiritualism than the late Hanson G. Hey.[2] "We must have our own paper if we mean to reach our people," and the need is more clamant to-day."

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[2].—The first Annual General Meeting and Consultative Conference of the Spiritualists' National Union, Ltd., was held on Saturday and Sunday, July 4th and 5th, 1903 at the Spiritual Temple, Heber Street, Keighley. At this meeting under the new constitution of the SNU the first SNU officers were elected under the presidency of William Johnson. The then serving officers were co-opted on from the formerly known Spiritualists' National Federation. Hanson Gledhill Hey (August 30th, 1866 – February 28th, 1921) was elected Vice-President. William Greenwood (Jessy's husband) was elected Treasurer. A year later, at the Conference held at Laisterdyke, Bradford, Hanson Hey was elected Secretary; his tobacconist's shop in Crown Street, Halifax became the first SNU registered office. For more on Hanson Hey see: Psypioneer, Volume 6, No 10: October 2010: *Hanson Gledhill Hey – Paul J. Gaunt;* & *The Passing of Mr. Hanson G. Hey – The Two Worlds*. All Psypioneer issues are archived at:—http://www.woodlandway.org

The SNU monthly journal was printed by Wadsworth and Co., Rydal Press, Keighley and firstly published from the SNU's registered office of Broadway Chambers, 162, London Road, Manchester, and continued after their move.[3] A two-volume bound set is held at the Britten Memorial Library at Redwoods and holds a wealth of material, some of which will be republished in this new journal. Throughout the journal's existence it struggled due to financial pressures but kept the price at twopence until its final issue, eight and a half years later, in December 1932. From the early days of the Spiritualists' National Federation (SNF) in 1890, the *Two Worlds* weekly journal had been closely linked. The foundations of the SNF which formulated the SNU were significantly made up with the directors of the *Two Worlds*. On the closing of *The National Spiritualist* the directors of the *Two Worlds* offered "space in their journal for Union matter and views" amounting to one page per week. The editor of the *National Spiritualist* was the SNU General Secretary and former President (1929-1922) George Berry. It is noted in the journals final pages of thanks: "Particularly to Mr. George H. Lethem, who for a considerable period read the proofs of each issue …"[4]

During its existence it had reported on nine AGMs and four newly-elected Presidents: Jessy Greenwood 1923-1925, Robert A. Owen 1925-1928, Ernest Keeling 1928-1930 and John McIndoe 1930-1938.

Below are brief early biographies of these four Presidents. All the Presidents from the formation of the SNU in 1890, then called the Spiritualists' National Federation,[5] will be covered in this journal; we will also include the Lyceum Union, which was so closely involved in the growth of the Union:

[3].—In July 1931 the SNU's registered office moved to Hollins Chambers, 64a Bridge Street, Deansgate, Manchester. Later in 1948 it would again move, but this time into its first property purchased (mortgaged) by the Britten Memorial Trust, at Britten House, 12 Tib Lane, Manchester. The final move was made to the grounds of Stansted Hall in 1971, firstly to what is today called the Annex (now accommodation for the College), retaining its name, "Britten House"; the plaque at the entrance still remains. Later the Union moved a few yards down the path and the building is now known as "Redwoods".

[4] .—George Henderson Lethem was the editor of the weekly journal, *Light*, who took up the position in 1931 at the age of sixty-three and continued until 1941.

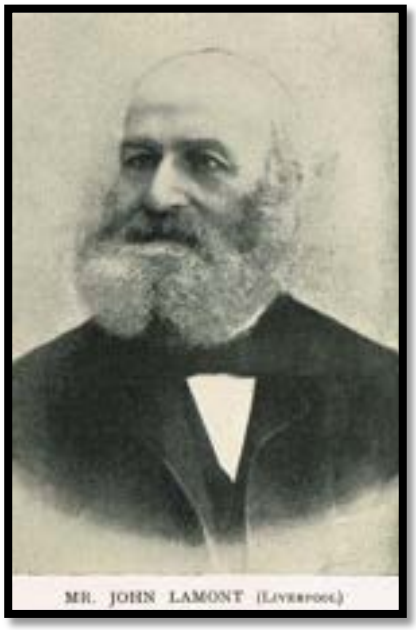
[5].—Spiritualists' National Federation—Spiritualists' National Union:—A note of general explanation for the various names. On July 6th, 1890 the first Conference (Manchester) was called "The National Conference of British Spiritualists", sometimes referred to as the "National Conference of Spiritualists". On July 4th, 1891, at the second Conference held at Bradford, it was named the "Spiritualists' National Federation" (sometimes reports called it the "National Federation of Spiritualists"). As today the SNU is often referred to as the "Union", its earlier name was referred to as the "National Federation". At the thirteenth Annual Conference on Saturday and Sunday, 5th & 6th July, 1902 at Stanley Hall, Stanley Road, Bootle under the presidency of Mr W. Johnson began the title "Spiritualists' National Union".

The formation of the Spiritualists' National Union

Shortly after the laying of the Oldham Spiritual Temple Corner Stones, a new weekly journal called *The Two Worlds* was founded, with Emma Hardinge Britten as its editor and E. W. Wallis as sub-editor and General Manager; the first issue was put on sale on Friday November 18, 1887, priced at 1½D. From issue No. 7 (Dec 30) it was reduced to one penny, so becoming known as *The People's popular Penny Spiritual Paper*. Numerous people mentioned in Oldham reports would become the first Directors of *The Two Worlds*.

Later, in 1890, as previously mentioned, a Conference would form the Spiritualists' National Federation (SNF). *The Two Worlds* would play a significant part; a *pro tem* committee was formed to arrange the inaugural Conference[29] and consisted of sixteen Spiritualists:

> Dr and Mrs Britten, Mr and Mrs Edward W. Wallis, Mrs Margaret Wilkinson, (Emma's sister), James J. Morse, William Johnson, J. B. Tetlow (Secretary), H. Boardman, Peter Lee, Mr Rayner, Mr J. Gibson, Richard Fitton, Mr Thomas Brown, Mr [J]. Simkin (the original report has the incorrect initial and should read [T] (Thomas) Simkin and Mr F. Tomlinson (Treasurer).[30]


MR. JOHN LAMONT (Liverpool)

This *pro tem* committee was significantly made up with the Officers and Directors of "*The Two Worlds*" Publishing Company Ltd, Manchester, including its Chairman /President Dr William Britten, Treasurer Thomas Brown, Secretary Edward Wallis, and its editor Emma Hardinge Britten (not a director). Emma had significantly supported a national organisation for a number of years. The *pro tem* committee's work was to agree the agenda for the forthcoming Conference; they formed sub-committees within the group for various tasks, e.g. printing, announcements, instructions for travelling delegates, train times and accommodation.[31] They nominated the veteran Spiritualist, John Lamont, of Liverpool as their first Conference President/Chairman.[32] John Lamont and William Johnson had worked since the 1870s to bring about organisation; they were leading figures in the

[29].—"For many weeks past, a party of some sixteen spiritualists have met together at the earnest request of Mrs. Hardinge Britten, to consider a plan given to her by the spiritual guides and friends of the higher life, who have directed her world-wide travels and protected her through the unnumbered trials and experiences of her past thirty years of public spiritual propagandism". Taken from:—The Two Worlds, Friday July 18th, 1890, page 422:—National Conference of British Spiritualists. [No.140.-Vol. III.]

[30].—It should be noted that in "100 Years of National Spiritualism," by Jean Bassett, 1990, Jean publishes the sixteen members of the pro tem committee but the name Williamson has been misprinted and should read Wilkinson. In addition, the name Raynor is incorrect: it should read Rayner.

[31].—The agenda was published in numerous issues of the *Two Worlds*, for example Friday June 6th, 1890, page 350:—*National Conference of Spiritualists*.

[32].—The position of President – Chairman was used interchangeably in different reports to mean the same position.

"Lancashire District Committee" (the title varied over its existence) who had in many ways helped to lay the foundations of the Spiritualists' National Federation.

The *pro tem* committee and the Chairman, John Lamont, were co-opted as the Executive Committee for the next year's Conference to be held over the weekend of July 4th and 5th 1891.[33] After a meeting at the Temperance Hall on the Saturday evening, the Conference commenced on Sunday the 5th at the Prince's Theatre, Bradford, Yorkshire with around 2,000 people present. It should be noted that Emma Hardinge Britten was never the President of the National Federation, as is often assumed. After the 1891 Conference Emma seems not to have attended any other meeting or Conferences of the Spiritualists' National Federation and in February 1892 she resigned as editor of *The Two Worlds*.[34]

The thirteenth and last Conference of the Spiritualists' National Federation met in Bootle on 5th and 6th of July 1902. At this Conference the newly legally constituted "Spiritualists' National Union Ltd" took over the property, rights and obligations of the Spiritualists' National Federation. It was decided at the meeting that the Officers of the Federation would be the first Officers of the Union[35] with the exception of James J. Morse, who had been engaged by the Victorian Association of Spiritualists of Melbourne to lecture upon Spiritualism in Australia and then to continue on to New Zealand.[36]

In July 1903 we see the first elected President and Council of the Spiritualists' National Union Ltd. Below is a brief overview of the proceedings published in *Light*, July 11th 1903. A fuller report was published in the *Two Worlds* but would occupy too much space; if any reader wants a copy, please contact the editor. The photograph (below) shows the first elected SNU Council and President Mr. John J. Parr (1903-1905). This brief overview gives us an informed idea of the Union's position in its first year:

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[33].—"… a resolution was put and carried at the close of the second session, with long and loud acclamations, to the effect that the Chairman, Mr. John Lamont, and the sixteen volunteers who had organized themselves into a *pro tem* committee, should continue in office, and, in consequent effort during the ensuing year, labouring as effectively as heretofore, to carry forward the succeeding deliberations concerning the resolutions of the past, and the prospects of the ensuing year's Conference. Such, however, was the unanimous vote of the assembled members, friends, and delegates, and the workers had no option but to assume the high responsibility put upon them." Taken from:—*The Two Worlds*, Friday August 1st 1890, page 447.

John Lamont was unable to fulfil his commitment owing to illness, so the Executive and Bradford Committees appointed Samuel Chiswell (1852-1910) as President. Later he served again as SNF President in 1895; in addition, for that year he was the second President of the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union (BSLU). Chiswell was a former chairman on the Two Worlds Board of Directors.

[34].—**Special Announcement—**"AT the meeting, of the Board of Directors on Monday, Feb. 8th, the following resolution was passed unanimously: We, the Directors of *The Two Worlds Publishing* Company, Limited, expressed our regret that circumstances have arisen which have occasioned Mrs. Britten's resignation as Editor of *The Two Worlds*, and that we, in accepting the same, desire to tender our best wishes for her future welfare". Taken from:—*The Two Worlds*, Friday February 12th, 1892, page 78.

[35].—*The Two Worlds* July 11, 1902 page 357:—Thirteenth Annual Conference at Bootle.

[36].—His trip is covered in Psypioneer, starting in issue Volume 2, No 6, June 2006: *Farewell to Mr J.J. Morse and Tien & Australian Letters from J.J. Morse*. For more information on Morse and details of the painting of his control which hangs in the Britten Memorial Museum at Stansted Hall see Psypioneer Volume 8, No 10: October 2012 *James Johnson Morse – Paul J. Gaunt, & J. J. Morse – Julia Schlesinger*.

SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION, LTD.

The first annual general business meeting and consultative Conference of the Spiritualists' National Union, Ltd. (really the fourteenth annual conference of the organisation formerly known as the Spiritualists' National Federation), were held on Saturday and Sunday, July 4th and 5th, at the Spiritual Temple, Heber-street, Keighley, under the presidency of Mr. William Johnson, of Hyde.

Owing to the fact that the Conference was the first under the new constitution and that the date of the close of the financial year had been altered, the statement of accounts and the reports of the several committees could not be compared with those of former years.

The general business of the Union was relegated to, and transacted on Saturday, while the Conference meetings on Sunday were devoted to the consideration of questions of a more generally interesting nature, a change which is likely to be beneficial and add to the utility and success of these gatherings.

For several years past the time of the Conference has been taken up largely with the consideration of various plans and propositions whereby 'legal status' could be secured, and it was eventually found necessary to register the Union under the Companies Act as a 'company limited by guarantee and not having a capital divided into shares.' Membership in this Union is of two kinds—'ordinary' and 'representative'; the fee being 5s. per annum in all cases. Some misapprehension exists in regard to the position of Spiritualist societies in relation to the new Union, and it will, therefore, be well, perhaps, to explain that Spiritualist societies may nominate one, or more, of their members to represent them in the proportion of one representative to every fifty members up to two hundred, and such representatives, when duly nominated, must be accepted by the Council as a matter of course; but the membership of a representative ceases as soon as his appointment by the local society shall have expired or been terminated. Representatives have equal voting power with ordinary members, and when ten representative members shall claim that a resolution is one that solely concerns societies, the chairman must decide that the said resolution shall be voted upon 'by representative members *only*,' so that the interests of societies are carefully safeguarded. How to secure their property to the local societies was a problem which bristled with difficulties, but a way out of the awkward situation was found by giving to the Council powers to appoint trustees to hold and manage in trust property belonging beneficially to any society represented in the Union.

Before the National Federation was extinguished last year there were about eighty societies affiliated with that body, and nearly one hundred associate members, but at the present time there are about fifty societies represented in the Union and eighty ordinary members. It is hoped, however, that there will be a large increase in this direction during the coming year now that the situation is better understood.

There were between seventy and eighty members at the annual business meeting on Saturday evening, who had travelled from London, Liverpool, Bootle, Manchester, Salford, Leicester, Belper, Smethwick (Birmingham), Wolverhampton, Crewe, Leeds, Bradford, Blackpool, Southport, Sheffield, Attercliffe, Blackburn, Darwen, Burnley,

Colne, Nelson, Bury, Bolton, Armley, Sowerby Bridge, Stalybridge and Stockport, so that the gathering was a fairly representative one.

The President, in his opening address, expressed his pleasure at meeting the friends of Spiritualism under the auspices of the now legally constituted National body, and hoped that societies and individuals alike would heartily support the Union and increase its usefulness in every possible way. Referring to the work of the 'Exponents Committee,' he said that it was generally recognised that our advocates should be men and women of good moral character, and that exponents might be acceptable on some platforms who would not be qualified to occupy others, and the committee would deal fairly with all; but it was necessary, if the movement was to be made strong and win respect, that its work should be done by worthy and capable representatives.

After the minutes of the last Conference had been read and confirmed, the general report, the propaganda committee's report, and the Fund of Benevolence report were passed, and the accounts were adopted.

Comparatively little 'propaganda work' had been accomplished owing to lack of funds, but it is anticipated that this branch of the work of the Union will be vigorously taken up during the coming year.

The Fund of Benevolence report, of which fund Mrs. M. H. Wallis is the hon. sec., showed that during the seven months from June 1st to December 31st, 1902, £38 5s. 6d. had been disbursed in sixty-three grants, varying in amount from 2s. 6d.to 30s.; working expenses had been only 12s. 4d., and the recipients of these grants resided in all parts of the Kingdom.

Mr. John Ainsworth, of Blackpool, stated that it had long been his desire to do something to help the Lyceum children, and he now proposed, subject to the decision of the Conference and its legal adviser, to hand over to the Union his house in Blackpool, and the furniture it contained, to be used as a convalescent home for Lyceum children and indigent Spiritualists. He had a strong impression that he would not long remain on this side of life, and he wished to see the transfer accomplished during his lifetime. If possible he would do something also towards its endowment.

Mr. Ainsworth's kind and generous offer was heartily applauded, and it was decided that it should be referred to the Council, 'with full power to accept a conveyance or deed of gift to the Union of the property referred to, if, after consultation with the solicitor, it should be deemed advisable.'[37]

The following officers were elected: Mr. J. J. Parr, president; Mr. H. G. Hey, vice-president; Mr. W. Greenwood, treasurer; Mr. W. Harrison, secretary. Mrs. Stair and Mrs. M. H. Wallis and Messrs. J. C. Macdonald, D. Gavin, W. Johnson, J. Pemberton, J. Whitaker, A. Kitson, W. Phillips, H. Holgate, W. Stansfield, A. Wilkinson, S. Featherstone, A. E. Button and C. E. Sibson were elected to the Council. Messrs. J. Briggs and T. H. Wright were reappointed auditors.[38]

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[37].—More on John Ainsworth in the next issue.

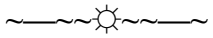
[38].—"The election of officers was then proceeded with. Mr. Macdonald withdrew in favour of Mr. J. J. Parr, and Mr. A. Smedley, the other nominee, felt unable to stand owing to the serious state of his good wife's health. The

The usual votes of thanks to the President, retiring officers and Council, and to the local friends for hospitality, concluded the proceedings.



THE FIRST ELECTED COUNCIL OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION, LTD.

Back Row—W. Stansfield, J. Pemberton, H. Holgate, J. C. Macdonald, T. H. Wright (Aud.), Jos. Briggs (Aud.), Will Phillips, D. Gavin, A. E. Button.
Front Row—J. Whitaker, Hanson Hey, Mrs. M. H. Wallis, W. Johnson, J. J. Parr (President), Mrs. Stair, W. Greenwood (Treas.), W. Harrison (Sec.)
Messrs. Kitson, Wilkinson, Featherstone, and Sibson were the members not present in the group.



President (William Johnson) then declared Mr. Parr, elected. … Mr. Hanson Hey was declared elected Vice President, there being no other nomination. Mr. Wm. Greenwood was re-elected as treasurer. The Secretary (Mr. Wm. Harrison) was re-elected, as were the Auditors for the past year, Messrs J. Briggs and T. H. Wright. Mr. D. Gavin then pointed out that while it had been stated that only 15 members of the Executive were to be elected, the bye-laws stated that 30 should be elected. The President said that Mr. Bateman (the solicitor) had stated that it would be to order to elect only 15. There was a long discussion upon this point, it being very clear that the articles should be adhered to. Mr. Hanson Hey pointed out that only 20 nominations had been handed in, and that as only those were eligible for election, and as it was illegal to appoint less, they might as well appoint only 15, as suggested by the Council. The voting was proceeded with for 15 councillors, as ruled by the Chairman, with the following result: Mr. J. C. Macdonald, 69; Mr. D. Gavin, 66; Mr. W. Johnson, 64; Mr. Star, 62; Mr. J. Pemberton, 62; Mrs. Wallis, 61; Mr. J. Whitaker, 61; Mr. A. Kitson, 61; Mr. Will Phillips, 55; Mr. H. Holgate, 51; Mr. W. Stansfield, 49; Mr. A. Wilkinson, 49; Mr. S. Featherstone, 47; Mr. A. E. Button, 47; Mr. S. Sibson, 46. 74 good papers were returned. Taken from the *Two Worlds*, "First Annual General Meeting at Keighley" issue July 10th 1903, page 349.



James Johnson Morse (October 1st 1848 – February 19th 1919)[39] played an important role in so many areas in promoting Spiritualism from 1870 until his death in 1919; at the time of his death he was the Vice-President of the SNU and editor of the *Two Worlds*. He was involved in the parliamentary campaign for the legal recognition of Spiritualism in 1916, instituted by the Union under its President, Ernest Oaten, and provided space for its promotion in the pages of the *Two Worlds* (Oaten took over the editorship upon the death of Morse).

Morse's role under the auspices of the Spiritualists' National Federation and the Spiritualists' National Union has in many avenues gone unnoticed. Morse was a fine lecturer by all accounts and a correspondent giving important historic accounts of Spiritualism abroad and at home for London and the provinces. He worked tirelessly for many years towards a national organisation and was President of the National Federation for 1899 and 1900. He was closely involved with the formation of The Britten Memorial, founded shortly after Emma's death on October 2nd 1899. He was prominent in many of the early developments and growth of the Union, including its educational scheme. In the early years of the Union it was intended that a hall should be named 'Morse Hall'.

To conclude this first issue, it is fitting to publish an overview of Spiritualism in Great Britain in 1896; the slight drawback is that this was intended for the American readers, so the prices quoted are in US dollars. Below is Morse's paper published over two issues of the *Two Worlds*, October 30th and November 6th 1896. It was written from Hotel Bella Vista, San Francisco, Cal., September 22nd 1896:

SPIRITUALISM IN GREAT BRITAIN

Harrison D. Barrett, President, American National Spiritualists' Association, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,—Very much to my regret, I could not reach Washington in time to attend the Annual Convention of the American National Spiritualists' Association in October, 1895, on my journey *en route* from London to San Francisco, and it is again a matter of keen disappointment to me that circumstances will not permit my reaching Washington until after the Convention of 1896 has been held.

I should have greatly enjoyed being present, not only for the opportunity of meeting many old friends once more, but, also, that I might have seen how the business of so great,

[39].—See Psypioneer: Volume 8, No 10: October 2012 – *James Johnson Morse – Paul J. Gaunt*, & *J. J. Morse – Julia Schlesinger*.

important and representative a gathering of the Spiritualists of the United States was conducted. I could then have reported to your friends in Great Britain what transpired, and given them my impressions of the proceedings, based upon actual observation.

Also, I regret my inability to be with you all the more, because I discover, on examination of the published report of your gathering for 1895, supplied to me by the courtesy of your secretary, that it contains no report from Great Britain, and my excuse for addressing this communication to you is that I may be permitted to prevent a like omission this year. To which end allow me to make this letter into the nature of a communication to the impending Convention, and to ask that you be so good as to submit it to that body while in session, with the fraternal congratulations and respects of the contributor?

As human progress ignores territorial boundaries and ocean wastes, and as the Spiritualists of the two great divisions of the Angle-Saxon race are largely of one common blood-stock, as well as being closely united in purposes common to both, in either country, all that concerns the growth and consolidation of our holy Cause into one united whole, either under the starry banner of the United States, or the Union Jack of Great Britain, is, and must always remain, of deepest interest to all Spiritualists, no matter on which side of the broad Atlantic their homes may be. If the United States is the pioneer of Modern Spiritualism, the United Kingdom has proved itself no unworthy co-partner in spreading the gospel she has received from this land, nor has she played any less important part in its upbuilding than you, who first received it from the angels at Hydesville, in 1848. I am proud of our share in this work, and am bold to say that the two foremost nations of the world to-day are the leaders in a cause which has for its object the spiritual redemption of the world from ignorance, superstition and mental darkness where ever existing, and against which we wage an unceasing strife. I am confident that we shall succeed, and feel sure that in this case, we may yet live to see, in the words of the poet:

"That peace hath her conquests
No less renowned than war."

If, then, I may thus be permitted to greet you, in Convention assembled, brother and sister Spiritualists of this great Republic, as one from across the seas, a British brother and co-worker and well-wisher, as one who for twenty-seven years has borne his part in the good fight as best he could, under the guidance of the angels, whose message he has been proud to bear up and down his own land, and on three several occasions now, across this broad Continent, I shall esteem your permission an honour to be proud of. I feel assured that you will accept the greetings I send you in the same spirit of fraternal affection which prompts me write you, so let me add thereto the greetings of my brethren at home, and say, as I am sure I may, for them, that we in Britain join hands with you, rejoice at your success, admire your devotion, esteem your labours, and wish you God-speed in all your present and future undertakings for the welfare of our Cause within its own ranks, and for the extension of its operations and influence on the community at large. May the fraternal bonds that now unite us never be sundered. So much by way of greeting; now for matters of more general importance.

Having referred to the fact that your last year's report contained no statement of the condition and position of Spiritualists in Great Britain, it may be acceptable to the Convention that I endeavour to supply that material for the report of your proceedings for 1896. To that end, "I will a round unvarnished tale deliver," trusting that it will prove alike

useful and interesting, as well as serving to show that we are steadily making progress along the lines that lead to success, and we hope, to the ultimate triumph of our facts and principles.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE CAUSE IN GREAT BRITAIN.

My first consideration shall be directed to offering you a bird's-eye-view of the present condition of the Cause in Great Britain. To afford you a clear idea of the matter, let me point out that 30 years ago the number of organised societies could have almost been counted on the fingers of one hand! Now we have 190 meeting places in active work. Of that number 69 societies are affiliated with our National Federation. At a rough computation, it may be safely said that for rents, speakers' fees and travelling expenses, advertising, etc., not less than 1,500 dollars are expended by these bodies every Sunday. I do not think I at all over estimate when I put our total working expenditure in these directions at 20,000 dollars a year. An army of at least 200 mediums and speakers engage our platforms, and in nearly all cases our meetings partake of a quasi-religious nature. The meetings use a National Hymn Book, which contains 747 selections. Most of the meetings are hold twice each Sunday, and the aggregate attendances cannot be far short of 40,000 persons every Sunday. This estimate by no means represents the total number of Spiritualists in the United Kingdom, which may be safely placed at 150,000 and then be well within the limits. As in this country, so in my own, many of our people, from various reasons, still hide their light under the proverbial bushel!

The orbit of British Spiritualism, to use an astronomical simile, may be described as an ellipse, of which London and Manchester are the foci. As London is the Metropolis, I may be excused for dealing with it first.

The leading Society in the capital city is the London Spiritualist Alliance, Limited—it has recently been Incorporated by the Board of Trade. It is, socially, the premier organisation of the country. It possesses the most complete Library of Spiritualist literature in the Kingdom, and, I am inclined to think, in the world. The Alliance does not hold Sunday services, nor does it enter actively into propaganda work. But during each winter it holds a series of Fortnightly Meetings. During the season it gives several Public Receptions, which are largely attended by our best people. Its president, Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, is a gentleman of culture, leisure, and means, who is, in all respects, an honour to the position he so worthily fills. The Alliance has a lengthy roll of members, is financially strong, and socially notable. Mr. B. D. Godfrey is the courteous secretary, which post he has held with credit for a number of years.

The next prominent Metropolitan body is the Marylebone Association of Spiritualists, the oldest existing organisation in the metropolis. After innumerable struggles and vicissitudes it has now become the most active London Society. It has a membership exceeding 300, and supports the best Sunday meeting in the city, for which it engages the very best and highest talent available. It holds occasional social meetings, and ever extends a cordial welcome to all worthy and well recommended workers from other lands. Its president, Mr. Thomas Everitt, is one of our oldest Spiritualists, and the husband of one of our most remarkable private mediums, a lady who has generously devoted her marvellous gifts to the service of the cause, literally, "without money and without price," for over thirty years. The Vice-president, Mr. T. W. Cooper, is a most amiable and courteous gentleman, who holds an important position under our Poor-Law Administration. He is devoted heart and soul to our work, and his labours, therefore, are truly indefatigable and unselfish. The Honorary Secretary, Mr. Leigh Hunt, completes the trio of Executive officers, and justly enjoys the confidence and esteem of his *confreres* in the Society, and on its directorate alike. The Sunday services of this Society

are held in a handsome meeting place known as the Cavendish Rooms, the finest place of assembly used by our people in London, and only equalled by that used by one other Society, the Spiritualists' Union, of Birmingham.

Another important effort is the Spiritualists' International Corresponding Society, which also has its home in the Metropolis. This society was formed by Mr. J. Allen, who has succeeded in establishing correspondents in nearly all parts of the world, among whom is your present vice-president, Mrs. C. L. V. Richmond.

A fourth establishment of note in London, is what is known as "Morse's Library and Reading Rooms," the proprietor of which is the present writer. The active librarian is Miss Florence Morse, who has in her care some 600 volumes of our literature, with a regular supply of all our periodicals in the English language for the use of the members. During the winter season, regular public meetings are held every Friday evening, at which various mediums attend, and the writer also gives courses of lectures under control. Several social receptions are also held during the winter, and welcomes are given to visitors from afar, as occasion may arise. Connected with this undertaking is Morse's Spiritualists' Hotel, the only establishment of its kind in the United Kingdom, if not in the world. It is under the management of Mrs. Morse, and is frequently patronised by visitors from this country. Indeed, as a social centre, these undertakings have proved a marked success.

While last, but by no means least, it must be noted that London is the home of that excellent periodical *Light,* so admirably edited by Mr. E. D. Rogers, whose name has been previously mentioned. This journal is one that is a credit to our Cause, and is thoroughly high class in every particular.

There are numerous other efforts in full and useful operation in the Metropolis, including that of Mr. Long at Camberwell, and the Society at Stratford, but considerations of space forbid a detailed enumeration of them. But enough has been said to show that London is a vigorous and healthy centre of activity, and that it stands well to the front in our work.

The City of Manchester is the other focus of our Spiritual orbit, and most worthily it fulfils the duties of its position. Within the Mancunian territory there are no less than fourteen active societies, the oldest being the Manchester Society of Spiritualists, one of the oldest, if not the oldest of the existing societies in the Kingdom, if I mistake not. Within a radius of a dozen miles of this important city some twenty other societies exist in the densely populated area named. Manchester has always been known as a centre of progressive thought, from and before the great Chartist agitation of fifty years ago, right down to the present time. Indeed, it has passed into a proverb: that what Manchester thinks to-day, England does to-morrow! Hence, it is quite in the natural order of things that this city should afford fertile soil for our great and progressive gospel.

It is in this city that the second of our papers has its home, second in age only, for in all other respects it is fully abreast of the times. It is some years younger than its metropolitan contemporary, but it exceeds it in circulation, while it exercises a great and constantly-increasing influence upon the growth and importance of our Cause, as its tenour is always in harmony with the needs of our work, within and without our ranks. It is ably edited by my old and valued friend and co-worker, Mr. E. W. Wallis, who is a speaker of proved ability and power, and a man of most excellent repute. Since his occupancy of the editorial chair, which was previously filled by Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten, he has almost succeeded in placing the

paper on a sound financial basis, and is making it a thoroughly representative journal. This paper, THE TWO WORLDS, is the property of a Joint Stock Limited Liability Company, composed entirely of Spiritualists, and is managed by a Board of Directors, under the efficient presidency of Mr. S. S. Chiswell, an eminent worker in the neighbouring city of Liverpool, where he occupies the responsible position of manager to a large business Corporation. As a matter of fact this paper and the National Federation owe their existence largely to the initiative and enthusiasm of Mr. E. W. Wallis, so it can be readily surmised that he is highly esteemed, and possesses the confidence of the Cause at large, while Mrs. M. H. Wallis, his wife, a very able and cultured speaker and estimable lady, proves an admirable co-partner with him in all he does for the Cause they both have so much at heart.

There are numerous media practicing in the city, with satisfactory results to the Cause. But last year the experience of Philadelphia was that of Manchester, in the matter of police prosecutions. But the "fortune telling" cry was the peg the authorities based their action upon.

Among the various towns where Spiritualism flourishes with ever increasing vigour may be mentioned Leicester, Nottingham, Belper, Liverpool, Huddersfield, Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Keighley, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Macclesfield, Oldham, Sowerby Bridge, Burnley, Accrington, Sunderland, North and South Shields, and Rochdale in England, Cardiff and Newport in Wales, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen in Scotland are the places that are most noticeable. The foregoing are all large centres of population, but in many smaller towns and villages the Cause has a firm root and flourishes well. From this, which is, as premised, but a bird's-eye-view, you can judge that the Cause generally is doing well. It is a curious fact, upon which I make no comment, that we have not a single society in Ireland!

SOME SPECIAL FEATURES OF OUR WORK.

It may prove of interest and value if I now present you with an account of some of the special features of our work in the United Kingdom. By so doing you may be able to get an even clearer idea of the position we have reached in the matters of effective effort for the sustaining of the Cause within its own ranks. As to my mind the question of organisation is ever paramount in this connection, I will first deal with our National Federation. Various efforts to form a National body have been made, from 1864 downwards. Nothing of particular value to the Cause resulted until 1872, when, at Liverpool, was formed a body called the 'British Spiritualists' National Federation." The promise of that attempt did not realise the expectations of its friends, so, after a few years of more or less useful life, the organisation changed its name, character, and original purposes, and entered upon a more modest phase of existence as the London "Central Association of Spiritualists." It was not until 1890 that the hope of national unity reappeared, when, on Mrs Britten's initiative, a "call" was issued for a General Conference of British Spiritualists to meet in Manchester. In response thereto a large and representative gathering assembled in the above named city. A Committee was appointed and instructed to act in drafting a constitution, and in any other way that would assist in forming a National body, and to report at the next meeting in the following year at Bradford. This was done, the Constitution was submitted and adopted, but it was not until the following year's Conference, at Burnley, that the Constitution assumed its present formal and accepted shape, in which it now governs the Federation, the full title of which is: The Spiritualists' National Federation.

The objects of the Federation are succinctly set forth in the introduction to the published Constitution, which reads as follows: "This organisation consists of affiliated Spiritualists' Societies and Associate members, Its objects are to unite Spiritualists and strengthen the movement by annual movable Conferences, by propaganda work in new districts, by cooperation with existing Societies to spread the truth, by the distribution of literature, by public and semi-public meetings, and by such other methods as may be found necessary." The *per capita*tax for Societies is two cents per member, and the fee for Associates is 60 cents per year as dues. The annual assembly is composed of delegates and Associates, all of whom have one vote on every question. This year the Conference met at Liverpool, and was attended by 28 Associates and 55 Delegates, representing 3,500 people.

In 1895 the Conference appointed an Organising Secretary, which position was most admirably filled by Mr. James Swindlehurst. During the nine months covered by his labours he held 183 public meetings, addressing, it is estimated, over 23,000 people. His work was very nearly self-supporting from the collections taken up. He also strengthened the Federation by obtaining 51 new Associates, forming four new societies, restoring several to the National roll, and he travelled over 4,300 miles. When the limited area of Great Britain is considered, I venture to aver that the foregoing results will compare most favourably with the work done in this country.

Financially, too, our Federation is doing well. Its income for the past year was 365 dollars—a dollar a day,—and there was a credit balance of 30 dollars when the accounts were audited. Not a large income, it is true, but it maintains no office, does not yet pay its president, gives its secretary but a more honorarium, for its officials are not required to give their whole time to the duties of their offices.

Among the pressing questions discussed at the late conference was a proposal to establish a Board of Examination for aspirants to the Speakerate, and the possibility of what is known to us as the "Legal Hundred" question, *i.e.*, the obtaining of an Act of Parliament to incorporate the Federation as a legally constituted body, so that it can become the National Trustee of the entire movement, as regards property, donations, bequests, etc. The Conference appointed committees to consider and report on those matters next year. As our laws are, a Spiritualist Society, as such, cannot hold property, nor can it be incorporated. It must declare itself as a religious body, with definite religious principles, before the law will recognise it. When we are incorporated it will then be impossible for our buildings or funds to be diverted from the purposes for which they have been obtained.

The Federation, in conjunction with the TWO WORLDS Publishing Company, has this year issued a National Spiritualists' Hymn Book, for use at our meetings. This is a very fine collection of about 750 selections, suitable for all kinds of gatherings. In addition, it contains a very admirable short service Suitable for interments. The book is neatly and substantially bound in cloth, and sells at the remarkably low price of 25 cents, a better bound copy coating a trifle more.Mr. E. W. Wallis was again the moving spirit in securing this valuable addition to our literature.

SOME OF OUR WORKERS

A word or two may now be in order as to the workers engaged in furthering the cause in Great Britain, truly servants of the angels, and evangels of human progress. While, of course, their numbers are not as great as those of this land, yet, in zeal and earnest devotion, I am

sure they are unequalled by any personally known to you here. We may not have an Edgar Emerson, a John Slater, an E. K Earle, a Maud Frietag, a Joseph D. Stiles, or a Mrs. J. J. Whitney, or an Ada Foye, but we have, nevertheless, many excellent platform mediums for tests, psychometry, clairvoyance, etc., who are well fitted to grace any platform. I may mention Mrs. M. H. Wallis, Mrs. Groom, Mrs. E. Green, Mrs. J. S. Stansfield, Mrs. V. A. Bliss, Miss A, Rowan Vincent, Miss McCreadie, Mr. J. J, Vango, and Mr. James B. Tetlow, as each being eminent in the above-named phases of mediumship, and who have each afforded conviction to innumerable sceptics, and consolation to hosts of the bereaved. While, as speakers of proven ability and long-tried service, there are Mrs. E. H. Britten, Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, Mr. James Swindlehurst, Mr. W. E. Long, Mr. J. Veitch, Mr. H. Hunt, Mr. Wm. Johnson, Mr. G. Featherstone and others, whose names are literally "as familiar as household words" all over the country. The writer has also done his part during the past twenty-six years. It may also be mentioned that Mr. W. J. Colville, Mr. J. Clegg Wright, Mr. Walter Howell, and Mr. T. Grimshaw are each products of English Spiritualism, though now residents of this country.

THE CHILDREN'S LYCEUM.

The next item of our special work is that of the Children's Progressive Lyceum. Of the importance of this branch of our effort, there can be no two opinions, nor is there in Great Britain, which as doubtless you are all aware, is the birthplace of the "Sunday School" movement in connection with our brethren of the orthodox churches. Thirty years ago there was but one Lyceum in Great Britain, meeting in the town of Nottingham. To maintain it was more than difficult. Spiritualists in those days were not awake to its importance, and money to support it was hard to get. It was only by the dogged perseverance of the early workers, and their undaunted enthusiasm, that the effort was kept alive. Now all that is changed. Lyceums dot the land, as do the stars the sky. Indifference has given place to interest, the work is enthusiastically supported, means are readily obtainable, and ultimate and great success is well in sight.

In a line with the course now pursued by the Societies, the Lyceum work has been consolidated, and has its "British Lyceum Union," the formation of which preceded that of the National Federation, holds its annual Convention, and possesses its monthly official organ. These satisfactory results have largely been attained through the indefatigable zeal and unstinted devotion of Mr. Alfred Kitson, the Secretary of the Union, who, though a man of humble circumstances, was undoubtedly selected by the angels for the important work he has accomplished. Once again we find the old truth re-emphasised, that all reforms spring from the people, are born in suffering, nurtured by tears and trials, and only grow strong on the unselfish devotion of their original evangels.

At the present time there are 84 Lyceums in full operation in the United Kingdom, while as a proof of the fact that they appreciate the benefits of organisation, I rejoice to say that 74 of these bodies are in affiliation with the Union, and that the Union is in affiliation with the National Federation. The Lyceum in San Francisco is a member of our Lyceum Union, and I hope that example will be emulated by other Lyceums in the United States before very long. In conducting our Lyceums there are over 800 officers engaged every Sunday, and there is an average of 5,000 members enrolled on the registers. It is no small tribute to the workers to say that, in all cases, their services are given without other reward than the consciousness of doing good can confer upon them.

The development of our Lyceum work has been most markedly assisted by the publication of four invaluable works, first in order being the "British Lyceum Manual," issued by Mr. H. A. Kersey, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, in the compilation of which he was assisted by Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten and Mr. Alfred Kitson. Though issued at the price of 23 cents, it is supplied to Lyceums in quantities at a merely nominal rate. It is now in its fourth edition, of which 3,379 copies have been sold. The second work is "The Spiritual Songster," also issued by Mr. Kersey. This is a handsome book of words and music, and is sold for 1 dollar, but lower prices to Lyceums. Since its appearance 955 copies have gone into circulation. The third work is "The Book of Words," which contains all the pieces in the "Songster." It is sold at 6 cents per copy, and is also published by the before-mentioned gentleman, and of which 3,385 copies have been sold. Mr. Kersey generously donates a moiety of the profits of these works to the Union's funds. The fourth work is the "Outlines of Spiritualism," written by M. Alfred Kitson, but now issued by the Union. The price of this book, handsomely bound in cloth, is 30 cents, and over 780 copies of the present edition have been sold. The "Manual" and the "Songster" have entirely displaced all the earlier works in our Lyceum teaching, since they are better adapted to our needs.

As already mentioned, the Lyceums possess their official organ, *The Lyceum Banner,* which periodical was founded under Spirit impulsion by the present writer six years ago, and who, in conjunction with his daughter, Miss Florence Morse, as assistant editor, has been editor and publisher down to the present time. During my absence the paper is in the able care of Mr. Thomas Olman Todd, of Sunderland. It was made the official organ of the Lyceum Union in 1891. Since its establishment over 150,000 copies have been sold. It is the only journal devoted to Lyceum work in the world, and as is usual with most Spiritualist papers, it has been issued at the personal loss of its proprietor, though there is evidence that the proverbial corner has now been almost turned! All the labour involved has been entirely gratuitous.

One special feature of the paper is deserving of notice. Each month it contains a tabulated Lesson Plan, accompanied by a Synoptical Syllabus of all the lessons in the schedule. This feature has proved invaluable to the Conductors and Leaders, as it provides them with a lesson plan for every Sunday. This plan is almost generally in use.

Another feature of a special nature is a department called "The Golden Group," conducted by Aunt Editha," the object of which isto unite the children of Spiritualists in a society for the promotion of "Kindness, Temperance, and Purity." There are upwards of 1,000 names now enrolled upon the "big book," as the register is called, each member receiving a pretty certificate. The young people of the United States are invited to join; some 30 recently did so in San Francisco.

The journal has a circulation in the United States, and is taken in the last-named city as well as at Boston and New Bedford, Mass. We are greatly indebted to Mr. Alonzo Danforth, of Boston, Mass., for a valuable series of "Golden Chain" recitations, which he has supplied us for many months, and which regularly appear in the paper. We also send a copy for file to the Library of the National Association, at Washington, D.C. Many of our friends desire that we make this an International organ, and there is no valid reason why such a result should not be achieved.

A SPIRITUALISTS' BENEFIT SOCIETY.

The last special feature pertaining to our cause in Great Britain that I will call your attention to is "The Order of Progressive Spiritualists' Sick Benefit and Pension Fund," an association originated by Mrs. M. H. Wallis, and to which she is the honorary secretary. This effort has its headquarters in Manchester. For the past year it has disbursed over 200 dollars in sick relief and pensions. It is the first and only Society of the kind ever established for our people in Great Britain, and is in every way well deserving of support, and its promoter deserves every praise for her endeavours.

From what has been stated in the preceding pages, it will be seen that, all in all, as a movement, Modern Spiritualism is in a healthy, vigorous, active, and growing condition in its Island home across the Atlantic. While as to its organisations, its platforms, its press, its mediums and speakers, we have every reason to congratulate ourselves upon the stability, service, efficiency, and ability displayed in each and all of those departments. A state of affairs that, I venture to think, will excite your cordial congratulations? So with this I leave my review, or really bird's-eye-view, of Spiritualism in Great Britain in your hands, trusting it may receive a place in the proceedings of your Convention.



A number of questions have been asked:

Who were the first Ministers of the Union?



The SNU has sometimes stated our *first* Ministers were appointed in 1939, but questions have been asked relating to Ernest Oaten who is described in various publications as being a Spiritualist Minister as early as the First World War. We can also note that Frank Blake was the resident minister of the Spiritualists' National Church, Bournemouth prior to 1939.

A paper was read to the London District Council's May meeting at South Place, Finsbury, May 19th 1921, by SNU President George Berry, entitled "The Seven Principles of Spiritualism. Considered as the Basis of S.N.U. Membership". The quote below is taken from the *Two Worlds*, Friday May 27th 1921:

> In reply to those who desire to assert the non-religious character of Spiritualism I must emphasise the fact that the S.N.U. claims to be a religious organisation. The S.N.U. is definitely and deliberately seeking recognition as a religious denomination so as to secure the same liberty to proclaim its message, and the same freedom from persecution for its public exponents and demonstrators as is accorded the ministers of other denominations. To secure that end it may be recalled that the Parliamentary Fund was established,[25] and measures taken to present a petition to Parliament as a preliminary to a Charter, and to bring before Parliament an amending Bill to alter certain obsolete laws under which some of our mediums have been prosecuted.[26]
>
> With the same object in view it will be remembered that our late President, Mr. E. W. Oaten, Editor of The Two Worlds, consented to claim exemption from military service on the grounds that he was a minister of a religious denomination. The case was fought through the lower to the High Courts of Justice.[27] The courts

[25].– Oaten addressed this issue at the fourteenth S.N.U. AGM, held at Glasgow on Saturday July 1st, 1916: — After a free and representative expression of views upon this important matter, chiefly drawing attention to the injustice and indignity suffered by mediums at the hands of the common law, due to the application of all but obsolete Acts of Parliament, the following resolution was carried: "That the E.C. be instructed to open a fund (amount named, £1,000) for the purpose of securing the amendment of the Witchcraft Acts and the Vagrancy Act, the adequate protection of mediums, and the creation of all necessary machinery." Moved by Mr. Keeling [S.N.U., President 1928-1930], seconded by Mr. F. T. Blake [S.N.U., President 1938-1941]. Mr. Morse [S.N.U., Vice President] promised to help in this matter by utilising space in the columns of the Two Worlds for the furtherance of the object.

[26].–On Tuesday July 1st 1930 an official deputation to the Right Honourable J.R. Clynes, M.P. (Home Secretary) at Home Office, Whitehall, S.W.1 by united Spiritualist Organisations. A major contribution was made by Ernest Oaten and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. This was Doyle's last of his many services to the Movement, as he passed on July 7th. The official printed minutes of the deputation, seeking a change in the law in England, are published in Psypioneer Volume 8, No 7. July 2012.

[27].–Ernest Oaten was charged on July 6th 1918 for failing to accept military service. The case was heard at Sheffield West Riding Police Court on October 15th 1918. A verbatim report of the full Police Court

granted that he was a qualified minister, but questioned our status as a religious body. That we did not win the case was not due to any lack of justice in our claim, but to the prejudice and opposition of religious bigotry.

During the course of the hearing in the lower courts, it was laid down that in order to fulfil the character of a denomination the community in question must stand separate and apart from other religious organisations. Mr. Justice Darling was quoted as declaring on some similar issue that to be entitled to call itself a denomination an organisation must "have a common denominator, some special features of its own which make it distinctive and give it a distinctive position among religious bodies."

To establish our claim, the first step taken was to exhibit some likenesses in the exercise of functions common to most denominations. Thus, we possess church buildings devoted exclusively to the propagation of our Cause. We have Lyceums, or Sunday Schools, for the training of our children in the elements of our beliefs and practice. We exercise the right of ceremonial for marriages, burials, and for the naming or baptism of infants. Not least in this category of likenesses, church membership is restricted to such as conform to the regulations contained in our Articles of Association, and who subscribe to the seven principles or tenets upon which the S.N.U. is founded.

The second step taken was to exhibit our differences, to throw into clear relief those special features which, in the words of Mr. Justice Darling, "give it a distinctive position among religious bodies." Taking the order of our services, the distinguishing feature is undoubtedly the introduction of the psychic element, whether by way of trance speaking or the clairvoyant description of arisen spirit friends. In the exposition of our principles equally clear differences appear, especially in the cutting across the creeds and theology of the older denominations. In the face of the old-time demand for a faith resting on the authority of the past, or in a priesthood, we begin by an appeal to facts which can be verified by the ordinary intelligent investigator. An essential part of our work is the provision of opportunities for the study of the facts and phenomena from which alone personal conviction is assured to the diligent student. There is also provision made for the development and training in the manifestation of the psychic powers.

The facts of science and the teachings of philosophy are laid under contribution to illustrate our phenomena or elucidate our themes. We proclaim the inherently spiritual nature of man; the government of the universe by spiritual laws; and the eternal progression of man towards complete unison with the great Father of all. We assert that such teachings and practice are truly religious, and at the same time it is thoroughly distinctive from the position taken up by other denominations.

The seven principles were first given through the mediumship of Mrs. Hardinge Britten, an apostle and early pioneer whose activities in the Cause of Spiritualism were truly world-wide. They are the first clear statements of principles around which the Movement has grown. From the first moment when the scattered individuals and

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proceedings was published by the SNU in 1918 – "On the Side of Angels the Law v. Spiritualism." This will soon be published on the Presidents page (under Oaten):—http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/presidents

small churches sought organic unity, these principles were adopted as the binding link. They have thus descended to us from the very early days and are consecrated through the labours of those who laid the foundation of our Spiritualist Movement.

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However, these early ministers were not appointed officially by the Union, although they no doubt enjoyed SNU interest and support, as can be noted in the Union's 1918 publication, "On the Side of Angels the Law v. Spiritualism."



LIST OF SPIRITUALIST NATIONAL UNION MINISTERS QUALIFIED TO SIGN AND CERTIFY PASSPORT APPLICATIONS.

Maurice Barbanell, 144 High Holborn, London, W.C.1.
George F. Berry, 13 Balmoral Drive, Denton, Manchester.
Frank T. Blake, 123 Richmond Park Road, Bournemouth.
Richard Boddington, 90 Loughborough Park, Brixton, S.W.9.
I. H. Davies, 13 Gwladys Street, Penydarren, Merthyr.
H. J. Everett, 137 Hollingdean Terrace, Brighton.
W. G. Gush, 127 Blackmoorfoot Road, Huddersfield.
Frank Hepworth, 312 Hornby Street, Bury, Lancs.
George Harris, "Lyndale," Glaes Dyfrig (off College Rd.) Whitchurch, Glam.
J. H. Humphries, 53 Bonner Hill Road, Kingston-on-Thames.
Jessy Greenwood, J.P., "Ashleigh," Fairfield, Hebden Bridge, Yorks.
John B. McIndoe, 157 Invergyle Drive, Cardonald, Glasgow.
Ernest A. Keeling, 8 Knockaid Road, Tue Brook, Liverpool, 13.
A. G. Newton, "Dinador," Welbeck Avenue, Southampton.
Ernest W Oaten, 20 Marshall Road, Levenshulme, Manchester.
Eleanor Paling, "Lucknow," Muriel Road, Beeston, Notts.
John M. Stewart, 51 Silverleigh Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey.
John G. Wood, 116 Old Oak Road, King's Norton, Birmingham.

List of Spiritualist National Union Ministers—*Continued.*

J. Woodland, 23 Ty Mawr Avenue, Rumney, Cardiff.
Thomas Hoole Wright, 10 Victoria Avenue, Sowerby Bridge, Yorks.
Ernest Vickers, 7 The Meads, Letchworth, Herts.
Bertram P. Membery, 936 Pershore Road, Selly Park, Birmingham.

On what actual date the first Ministers were appointed is presently unclear as within the s published SNU Minutes and Annual reports there is no direct information. In 1938 there is no mention of the appointments. However, in the diary for 1939 which was sent to the printers around July/August and was available to members from mid-September 1938 at 1s. 6d. is a list of the SNU appointed Ministers so the selections would have been at some time prior to the above dates, as shown.

The Minutes and Annual report of the AGM held at Cardiff on July 1st 1939, under the presidency of Frank Blake tell us little, with just one reference. Shortly afterwards came the outbreak of war on September 3rd which would seriously affect all public gatherings and cause wide-spread dislocation of Church arrangements. The SNU Council appointed an Emergency Committee to conduct their business, pending further satisfactory arrangements:

"**Spiritualists Marriages in Scotland**.

"It was reported that as the result of efforts by Messrs. J. B. McIndoe and J. G. Findlay arrangements had been made by which marriages in Scotland performed by Spiritualist Ministers, will be registered as regular marriages."[28]

The following 1940 AGM reports that the Union warned:[29] "Our position can only be maintained by increased support from the more prosperous Churches and subscribing members, failing which it will be difficult, if not impossible, to continue efficiently the various services and functions of the Union. In the month of December the office suffered slight damage through enemy action and our thanks are due to the staff for the manner in which they carried

[28].–J. B. McIndoe is John Brown McIndoe, former SNU President (1930-1938). J. G. Findlay is John Galloway Findlay, who was Area Representative for Scotland and the brother of James Arthur Findlay.

[29].–The thirty-eighth AGM is advertised for July 6th 1940 at the Spiritualists' National Church at Reading, but the published official Minutes shows, no doubt due to the war, it was actually held at Brixton Church on August 31st 1940.

on with the work in difficult conditions."[30] There is no reference of the appointment of Union Ministers for 1940.

The following year the AGM was at the Spiritualist Church, Charnwood Street, Derby on July 5th 1941.[31] For the first time in the history of the Union its President died while holding office, Frank Thomas Blake passed on March 1st, and his position was filled by John Stewart. We reference SNU appointed Ministers in the published Minutes:

> "In reply to a question by Mr. Barbanell, the Secretary stated it was not intended to confine the appointment of Ministers of the S.N.U. to actual platform workers. It was desirable that Ministers should be able to conduct Church services if called upon, but their duties included those usually associated with a Minister of Religion."

Further mention in the Annual Report:

> "SPIRITUALIST MINISTERS. Following upon the regaining of the right for Spiritualist Ministers to conduct marriages in Scotland, the Council decided to appoint Ministers throughout the Movement. The matter was delegated to the Exponents' Committee, who, after inviting suggestions from District Councils and satisfying themselves as to the qualifications of the candidates, subsequently submitted recommendations to the Council, who appointed some 50 Ministers, bringing the total, including Scotland, to 60."

It was further stated:

> "MILITARY SERVICE. The Council approached the Ministry of Labour and National Service and requested that Spiritualist Ministers should be granted exemption from Military Service the same as Ministers of other religions. A deputation waited upon the Ministry and presented our case, which was later supplemented by a comprehensive written statement.
>
> "We regret to report that our efforts were unsuccessful, as our request was refused, and when pressed for the grounds on which it was declined, the reply was that it is not customary for the Minister to give reasons for his decisions."

The 1942 AGM was held at Parkside Spiritualists' National Church at Coventry on July 4th.[32] The Minutes report under Annual and Interim Reports:

> "Mr. S. Ingham (Northern D.C.) was informed that Ministers of the Union were entitled to sign Pension and similar Government forms.

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[30].–The number of Churches on the register for 1940 were 401, with a membership of 13,863. This showed a decrease of 73 Churches and 1,137 members. During the year 13 Churches with an aggregate membership of 434 were affiliated.

[31].– The number of Churches on the register for 1941 were 414, with a membership of 12,457. This showed an increase of 13 Churches but a decrease of 1,406 members.

[32].–The number of Churches on the register for 1942 were 413, with a membership of 12,354. This showed a decrease of 1 Church and 103 members.

"Mr. N. E. Ainley (Northern D.C.) asked about the proposed form of ordination service for the installation of Ministers.

"Replying for the Council, Mr. E. W. Oaten said he had undertaken the compilation of a "Ministers' Handbook," which would contain services for Naming, Marriages, Funerals, Ministers' Ordinations, Induction of new Church members, etc., together with other information useful to Ministers and Church Officers, and was doing his best to finish these as soon as possible.

"Mrs. R. C. Johnson (East Midland D.C.) asked who the Ministers were and how they were appointed. The Secretary stated the list of Ministers appeared in the Union's Diary. They were appointed by the Council of the Union."

The 1943 AGM was held at Brixton, London on July 3rd. President John Stewart handed over his Presidential badge to his successor Mr. A. H. L. [Harold] Vigurs.[33] The following year's 1944 AGM was held at the Causeway Lane, Spiritualists' Church, Leicester on the July 1st under the presidency of Vigurs.[34]

The 1944 Annual Report stated the Exponents and Education Committee had appointed fifteen Ministers of the Union, they were:—

Mrs. I. Atmore (Fulham)
Mr. J. A. Baker (Sutton)
Mrs. A. Calway (Eltham)
Mrs. D. Hart (Southampton)
Mr. H. Metcalfe (Leamington)
R. A. Owen (Dublin)
Mr. E. E. Phillips (Stratford)
Mrs. E. F. Rayner (Palmers G'n)
Mr. H. Sharp, (Hampstead)
Mr. A. Taylor (Birmingham)
Mr. A. E. Taylor (Wembley)
Mrs. F. Tyler (Battersea)
Mrs. E. Winters (Wallasey)
Mrs. Mabel Wood (S. Shields)
Mr. H. Woodhouse (Worthing).

Some of these names will be familiar, notably Robert Owen, former S.N.U., President 1925-1928 who was profiled in the first issue of Pioneer. We can also note Harold Sharp the well-known medium for his Auragraphs, of which the Britten Memorial Museum holds two of his albums. At this time you did not have to be a member of the Union e.g., a Class B member, to be awarded an S.N.U., Diploma or Certificate.

The following year's AGM 1945 was held at Paignton Spiritualist Church, Manor Corner, Paignton, on July 7th. Harold Vigurs remained in office, three more ministers were appointed and the Ministers' Handbook was now in draft form.[35] 1946's AGM was held on July 6th at Matlock Town Hall, Harold Vigurs remained in office;[36] the Ministers Handbook was edited

[33].–The number of Churches on the register for 1943 were 437, with a membership of 13,006. This showed an increase of 24 Churches and 652 members.

[34].–The number of Churches on the register for 1944 were 400, with a membership of 13225 – Class B members 1021.

[35].–The number of Churches on the register for 1945 were 460, with a total membership of 14,924. This showed an increase of 60 Churches and 1669 members (an increase of 407 Class B members).

[36].–The number of Churches on the register for 1946 were 486, with a membership of 16,446. This showed an increase of 26 Churches and 1,522 members.

and would be printed as soon as paper supplies were available. Four more Ministers were appointed, including Mr. J. C. Hopkins D.S.N.U., of Barry Dock. John Clifford Hopkins is the father of Minister David Hopkins, to my knowledge this is the only case of father and son holders of that position! It was reported two S.N.U., Ministers were refused exemption from Jury service, which is granted to ministers of other denominations; an appeal by the Union was disallowed.

In 1947, the AGM was held on July 5th and 6th at the National Spiritualists Church, Bath Road, Bournemouth; this would be Harold Vigurs' last year of office.[37] The Ministers Handbook of 400-450 pages containing selected readings, and Questions and Answers was done, but Oaten stressed the great difficulty was the shortage of paper. A new Spiritualist Emblem was displayed, and Percy Wilson (National Council) explained the figures and symbols which surrounded the inscription of the Seven Principles.[38] During this year four more Ministers were appointed including Dr. John Winning D.S.N.U., who would become S.N.U., President in 1965-1969 overseeing the opening of the Arthur Finlay College in 1966 and serving as its first Principal.

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[37].–The number of Churches on the register for 1947 were 473, with a membership of 16,980.

[38].–See Psypioneer Volume 7. No 4. April 2011:—*Emblems of the Seven Principles – Paul J. Gaunt*.

SNU Wartime problems & Spiritualism's Contribution to the war effort

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At the start of the WWI the SNU President George Tayler Gwinn was serving his last term ending July 1915; supported by his Vice-President Ernest Oaten, the Union was soon to pass on its message of comfort to the men at the front. The following is taken from the *Two Worlds* February 26th 1915:

Spiritualist Literature at the Front

THE S.N.U. SEND 7,000 PAMPHLETS.

THE Spiritualists' National Union has found in the present war an outlet for a special form of propaganda work. Not by sending its members to the front to preach our gospel, but to despatch the living and burning thoughts of some of our foremost and ablest thinkers to carry the glad tidings of the Spiritualists' gospel to the men who are bearing the heat and burden of the ghastly conflict now being waged upon the European Continent. The project was the outcome of the deliberations of the Publications Committee, at a meeting thereof on Saturday, December 12th, 1914, and after consultation with the President of the Union the effort was carried out in due course. The purpose in question was to send Spiritualist literature to the men at the front. It was decided to send forward 7,000 copies of the S.N.U. propaganda pamphlets, and so supply comforts for the mind as others have for the body. The consignment has been sent through the War Office arrangements to the Military Base at Boulogne, where a somewhat over-zealous officer has taken upon himself to become mildly obstructive because of the character of the literature! However, it is quite expected that by the time these lines are read all difficulties will have been overcome, and the pamphlets will be doing their good work.

The question of expense naturally arises. So far as the transmission to the front is concerned the War Office officials attend to that matter. But there is another point, which it is only fair to the S.N.U. to bring out, and which is that in making this donation of its literature the Union is sacrificing a considerable sum that would ultimately be derived from the selling of the pamphlets. Roughly speaking, the loss to the Union is about £10 and it is not unreasonably suggested that the friends of Spiritualism throughout the country should be asked to contribute towards that amount. Not large donations are asked for, though, of course, the largest will not be refused. But, as the action is really a national effort, small donations from all over the United Kingdom are earnestly solicited. Remember that, in this case at least, he who gives quickly gives doubly.

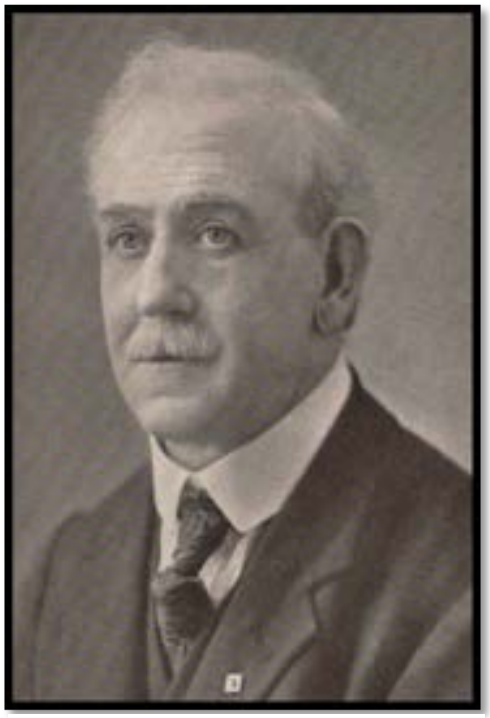
When we think how much the great majority of those who are enduring the dangers and hardship of the war to enable us to sleep securely; when we think of the weary hours in hospital after being disabled; when we consider the hundreds who would be cheered and inspired by such a gospel as Spiritualism presents; when one thinks of these and other points, it can be felt that the National Union has done a wise

and good thing in sending this literature out, for our people will be missioners to those who have not the knowledge and consolation possessed by the Spiritualist. By a perusal of the literature many a mind will be freed from perplexity regarding the future, many an hour of pain may be eased of its sting. While after the discord of the battlefield, it will come as balm to the spirit to realise that in the happy Summerland men shall live in unbroken amity, and be able to translate the doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God into the enduring terms of eternal progress, the pathway of which is strewn with the roses of eternal peace.

All contributions can be sent to Hanson G. Hey. Secretary, the S.N.U. Ltd., 30, Glen Terrace, Clover Hill, Halifax, and they will be duly acknowledged in these columns.

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In the last issue of Pioneer it was noted that SNU President Ernest Oaten consented to claim exemption from military service on the grounds that he was a minister of a religious denomination. The case was fought through the lower, then to the High Courts of Justice. The courts granted that he was a qualified minister, but questioned Spiritualism's status as a religious body. Oaten was charged on July 6th 1918 for failing to accept military service. The case was heard at Sheffield West Riding Police Court on October 15th 1918. A verbatim report of the full Police Court proceedings was published by the SNU in 1918 – "On the Side of Angels the Law v. Spiritualism" now available on the Presidents page.[1]



Ernest Walter Oaten
1875-1952

Other problems were pointed out in Ernest Oaten's post- war presidential address, delivered at the SNU Annual Conference held at the Mechanics' Hall, Nottingham, on July 5th 1919, highlighting for example the ongoing difficulties Spiritualist mediums faced under the Vagrancy Act.[2]

Parliament had been lobbied since the arrest of Henry Slade, shortly after seeing the first imprisonment of a Spiritualist medium, Francis Monck, under the 1824 Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act.[3] The British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS) 'Spiritualists' Defence Committee' was the first to challenge the Conservative government's Right

[1].–"On the Side of Angels the Law v. Spiritualism" See the Presidents page under Ernest Oaten 1915:— http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/presidents

[2].–The address is published in Psypioneer Volume 7. No 6. June 2011.

[3].–Monck styled himself Dr. Monck, and sometime previous he was a minister at a Baptist Chapel at Totterdown, a suburb of Bristol.

Honourable R. A. Cross, Secretary of State for the Home Department, as to the rights of Spiritualist mediums in November 1876.[4]

Under our war time President, Ernest Oaten (1915-1920), the Union's campaign for legal recognition was instituted in 1916. This was called: "The Spiritualists' National Union Ltd. Parliamentary Fund (Witchcraft Acts Amendment)".

Published below is the official SNU statement outlining the problem of the Acts. The Union's long fight to secure the desired amendments to these Acts would not be fully achieved until 1951; 75 years in the making![5] The statement below was published in the *Two Worlds* November 10th 1916 page 461:

THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION, LTD.

A NATIONAL APPEAL

The S.N.U. Parliamentary Fund (Witchcraft Acts amendment).

TO THE SPIRITUALISTS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,—

The incidence of the penalties expressed in certain Acts of Parliament, passed in other and quite different times to those of to-day, has for long been an oppressive burden upon the legitimate practice, professionally, of mediumship as understood by Spiritualists. Such Acts were placed on the Statute Book of the realm at a time when the world knew little of the orderly and scientific examination of evidences afforded by the use of psychic faculties, which prove that man can hold a perfectly natural communication with the world of discarnate humanity. At a time, indeed, when such communion was ascribed to the Devil, and its practice was bitterly denounced as necromancy or witchcraft of the most reprehensible kind.

The action of the law has been supported by appeals to the Old and New Testaments, from which it has been sought to gather religious sanction for the persecution of all who are mediums by denouncing them as witches, and as such to be put under pains and penalties cited in the Jewish law of the past, or to-day dealt with as rogues and vagabonds by the civil power instead of the ecclesiastical courts.

A number of prosecutions have taken place during the past sixty years, and not a few mediums have been sent to jail, for, as the courts hold, pretending to hold communion with familiar spirits, for, as the Acts put it, it is only a pretence, as it is not admitted that men can possibly hold communion with the spirit world, the assumption in law always being that it is a mere pretence. The law, or its administration or interpretation, is faulty, because it does not consider so much the taking of payment for mediumistic service is a cause of indictment, but it is the

[4].–A copy of the petition addressed to Cross is in the College of Psychic Studies, 16 Queensberry Place, London archives.

[5].–For more information see Psypioneer Volume 7. No 9. September 2011: *Tom Brooks & "M.P. for Spiritualism" passes on*. See also Volume 8. No 7. July 2012: *Deputation to the Right Honourable J.R. Clynes, M.P. by the United Spiritualist Organisations (July 1930)*.

assumed fraudulent assertion of communion with spirits which is the foundation of the charge and the reason for conviction.

To raise the question of a reform in the administration of the Witchcraft Acts, and to obtain their amendment, the Spiritualists' National Union, at its Annual General Meeting, held in Glasgow, on July 3rd, 1916, passed the following resolution:—

> "That the Council be instructed to open a fund (amount named, £1,000) for the purpose of securing the amendment of the Witchcraft Acts and the Vagrancy Act, the adequate protection of mediums, and all necessary machinery."

As showing that Spiritualists have been alive to this matter, it may be recorded that the matter was officially referred to at the first meeting of the Spiritualists' National Federation, held in the co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester, on Sunday, July 6th, 1890, when Mr. Wm. Johnson moved the following resolution:—

> "It is now felt that the time has arrived in which some definite steps shall be made in the name of the Spiritualists of the United Kingdom to see what action can be taken so that the Cause can be relieved from the pressure of these really obsolete enactments."

Admittedly, the possession of mediumship presents peculiar difficulties, not the least being its practice professionally, which has opened the door to the adventurer and the charlatan, who simulate mediumship with no other end in view than personal gain. This fact has rendered it difficult to cleanse the Movement and to secure our right to practise communion with the spirit world, because the law classes all alike, and makes no distinction between the genuine medium and the impostor. Therefore, the desire of the Spiritualists' National Union is not to obtain the REPEAL of the various Acts, but to secure their AMENDMENT in the light of present-day experience and knowledge relative to all phases of psychic investigation.

The Spiritualists' National Union is fully aware of the immense amount of labour, time, energy, and money that will be required to bring about the desired result. Indeed, regarding the latter point, at a modest estimate the minimum amount that will be required will reach £2,500.

Therefore, that the needed steps shall be taken, legal advice procured, and a campaign on the platform, in the press, the circularisation of Members of Parliament, the drafting of a Petition, and all the costs incidental to the undertaking, this appeal is now made public. It is directed to all Churches, Societies, to all public working mediums, as, if we succeed, all our Demonstrators will reap the full benefit. Remember, this is not only a question of protection for the legitimate practice of psychic faculty within the law, it is also a necessary step towards securing the uninterrupted conduct of our religious services, which necessarily call for the exercise of various forms of mediumship, as communion with the spirit world through the agency of human psychic faculty is the basis of Modern Spiritualism.

We, as Spiritualists, like others, have had to face persecution for our Cause; therefore, we appeal to all liberalists and advocates of religious freedom and

intellectual equality before the law, to help us in our fight for freedom. We stand for freedom and progress, and only desire to enjoy the freedom which progressive men and women have won.

The Spiritualists' National Union has therefore, opened a fund under the style and title of "The Spiritualists' National Union Ltd. Parliamentary Fund (Witchcraft Acts Amendment)," and the Council have appointed the undersigned to receive all donations subscribed thereto. All donations will be publicly acknowledged in the columns of the Spiritualist Press, and when a special receipt is desired donors must send a stamped self-addressed envelope (postage one halfpenny) for the attention.

To assure the donors of the certainty of the fund being used for the specified purpose, it has been decided to open a special backing account with the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank Sowerby Bridge, and all cheques and money orders should be crossed thereto, and made payable to Mr. THOS. H. WRIGHT, Hon. Treasurer, S. N.U., Victoria Avenue, Sowerby Bridge.

Signed on behalf of the Council of the Union:—

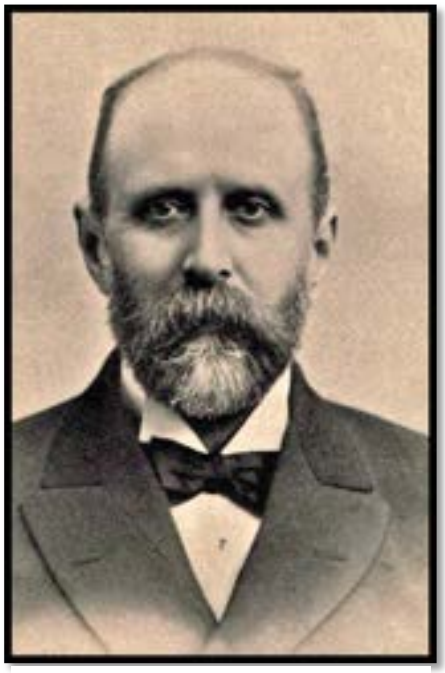
ERNEST W. OATEN, PRESIDENT.
J. J. MORSE, VICE-PRESIDENT.
THOS. H. WRIGHT, HON. TREASURER.
HANSON G. HEY, GENERAL SECRETARY.

OCTOBER 28th, 1916.

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The fund would help the numerous mediums charged under the Vagrancy Act, and in 1944 Helen Duncan, who became the first Spiritualist medium to be charged under the Witchcraft Act of 1735 and the *only* Spiritualist medium to have been imprisoned under this Act. The fund paid for her defence. Her trial was held at the Old Bailey where she received a punishment of nine months imprisonment as against the maximum of three months under the Vagrancy Act.[6] Readers who are interested in researching Duncan's mediumship, and general information about her as well as her Old Bailey 1944 trial and her previous Edinburgh trial of 1933, should consult Psypioneer which contains a rich collection of original researched materials, and which also covers some of the erroneous reports which have developed over the years.

[6].–*Light* May 1944:—"AT the Old Bailey, on Friday, March 31st, after a trial lasting seven days, Mrs. Helen Duncan, with three others, was convicted of conspiring to contravene Section 4 of the Witchcraft Act of 1735, and of pretending to exercise conjuration. There were also other charges of causing money to be paid by false pretences and creating a public mischief, but after finding the defendants guilty of the conspiracy the jury were discharged from giving verdicts on the other counts. On the following Monday the Recorder, Sir Gerald Dodson, sentenced Mrs. Duncan to nine months' imprisonment, Mrs. Brown to four months, while Mr. Homer and Mrs. Jones, who had engaged Mrs. Duncan for the seances on which the prosecution was based, were bound over for two years."



James Johnson Morse
1848-1919

Spiritualisms contribution to the war effort is today mostly forgotten

In 1915 James J. Morse was elected SNU Vice-President, an office he held until his death in 1919. Within the history of the National Federation leading to the SNU, there are few positions Morse did not hold in his twenty-nine years' devoted service to the Union. During the war years he was Secretary of the "Exponents Committee" (education), President of the Manchester and District Union and editor of the *Two Worlds* journal for which he secured space in the columns of the *Two Worlds* for the Parliamentary Fund. We can note in the last issue of Pioneer that upon his death, Ernest Oaten took over as the paper's editor – under the spirit guidance of the paper's first editor, Emma Hardinge Britten![7]

In 1915, Morse was the Hon. Treasurer, for the Spiritualist Motor Ambulances Fund, and below Morse relates the story as published in the *Two Worlds* issue February 4th 1916:

THE STORY OF THE MOTOR AMBULANCES.

A LANDMARK IN THE HISTORY OF OUR CAUSE.

IN THE issue of THE TWO WORLDS dated November 12th, 1915, the following was printed, and it may be useful to reproduce it upon this occasion:—

"In THE TWO WORLDS of September 10th a letter appeared from Mr. W. H. Evans suggesting that the Movement should provide a motor ambulance for service at the Front.[8] He mentioned the Editor as being no doubt willing to conduct the proposed fund. In our following issue, in a letter from Mr. James Lawrence,[9] both suggestions were warmly supported, and the hope was expressed that we should be willing to accept subscriptions. In 'Current Topics' of the same week it was announced that the Editor would willingly act as desired. In THE TWO WORLDS of October 1st the first list of subscriptions appeared, with the modest total of £27 6s. 6d. The fund has now been open exactly seven weeks, and the receipts now amount to the handsome total of £232 4s. 6½d., which is a magnificent testimony to the

[7].–Volume 1. No.2 January 2014:—http://www.snu.org.uk/documents/pdf/SNU%20PIONEER%2001_02.pdf

[8].–Mr. W. H. Evans, known as Willie, had been a household name in the major British Spiritualist journals as a prominent contributor, writing week after week, for decades, often having his own column and covering a wide range of spiritualistic topics. He also contributed to the Spiritualists' National Union (SNU), and the British Spiritualist Lyceum Union (BSLU) educational courses. He authored a number of books, including *Spiritualism a philosophy of life* 1912, *How to be a medium* circa 1920, *Twelve lectures on the Harmonial Philosophy of Andrew Jackson Davis* 1925, and *A New Heaven – A Study of the Life Beyond* 1950. He worked as both a trance and inspirational speaker. For more information on Evans see Psypioneer Volume 9. No 08. August 2013.

[9].–James Lawrence (Newcastle-on-Tyne) was a well-known contributor of articles, reports etc in the pages of the *Two Worlds* for many years.

generous instincts of our readers and of the sympathy with the object in view on the part of the readers of 'Light,' who have read the announcements that the Editor of that journal spontaneously and so kindly printed. The slight interval between the publication of the original suggestion and the receipt of subscriptions arose from some little reluctance on our part to accept the treasurership of the fund, which, under the advice of the spirit friends, we ultimately decided to undertake. Our trust in their wisdom has been fully justified.

"Will all friends who have not yet sent in their remittances do so at once? It is necessary to close the fund at the earliest possible date, for obvious reasons. Indeed, it is decided to close it, if possible, with the collections taken on Sunday, the 28th inst., after which date we feel confident the amount required will be in the bank.

"So much, then, for practical details. Now to other matters. There have been not a few surprises! Some have been disappointing, others have been unexpectedly gratifying. Each may rest until the time comes to review the work of the effort now being made. But the one soul-satisfying fact is that this plea for funds has touched the hearts of our people as no other non-personal matter has done hitherto. Even the children have done their part, and the loving sympathy of a child sanctifies and sweetens our lives. In days to come, when once 'again the fields are decked in smiling corn,' the children and youths of that future time will re-read the history of these distressful days. Mayhap they will listen to the narratives of some grizzled, grey, and battle-scarred hero of to-day, and learn from him the blessing the ambulance services proved on the field. Perhaps 'our' ambulance may have succoured him; if so there will be a glow of pride in recalling the fact that *I* put in my mite. The joy of service is a delight to the loving heart and aspiring soul.

"Let us help the brave doctors and hard-working nurses, tireless workers both. Let us help in the aid of ambulance work for the wounded, who are often so sorely stricken. Let us provide something to assist in the rapid transit of the wounded from the firing line to the base. Let us help to save life, for that cannot offend any who claim that all war is murder. This fund should appeal to militant and pacifist alike. Let us, as Spiritualists, remember that if we desire to attract to us the loving and wise of the spheres we can best do so by living wisely and lovingly. Such life is neither a sentiment nor an abstraction. It is a concrete life made up of the actual doing of the things that matter to a world in sorrow. Of things that matter to the victims of soul-less brutality and a barbarous arrogance. Help this fund according to your disposition, and you will put into effect at least one of our seven principles: The Brotherhood of Man."

Now mark what follows: It took seven weeks, as mentioned above, to raise virtually one-fourth of the sum ultimately obtained. The balance, £931 11s. 2d. was subscribed in the ten following weeks! Comment is needless. Our readers nobly responded to the appeal, and so made a triumphant success of this really representative undertaking.



In the early days of the subscription list the hope was expressed by one good friend that "you will have a strong committee to help you." Well, I had one. It was the best, for it was composed of those loyal spirit helpers who have aided me in my public work for the past 46 years. At their advice I accepted the position of Honorary Treasurer, acted as Honorary Secretary, and was the Honorary Committee! In fact, became a veritable "Pooh Bah" for this occasion. A long experience of committees has satisfied me that under certain circumstances a committee of one is the best. It is a great and peculiar satisfaction to me personally that the entire Movement acquiesced in the plan I pursued, and so testified its confidence in my judgment and capacity. As it was found that subscriptions came in so freely the original plan of two cars was amplified to include four cars, and, finally, to obtain five cars! That number was offered the War Office and accepted by them, as per the official letter published in THE TWO WORLDS of Jan. 7th, this year. The five cars were duly inscribed, and on Jan. 8th they were despatched to Kempton Park, the depot for all transport supplies. That the cars have arrived in good order is testified to by the smaller illustration on page 55, made from a photographic snapshot taken at Kempton Park. The picture was taken by a friend of the man seated at the wheel, who is a former Lyceumist, Private Hugo Smyth, of the A.S.C., Motor Transport, who is the son of Mr. Percy Smyth, of the, Battersea (London) Spiritualist Lyceum Church. The other illustration shows the full fleet of five cars, while that on the front page shows one of the cars so that the inscriptions upon them all maybe shown. Owing to war conditions the paper used for printing THE TWO WORLDS is now of a somewhat inferior texture, consequently the prints will not appear to the best advantage. Arrangements are being made, however, to issue postcards showing the cars as they appear this week. The cards will be of superior character, and the illustrations will be printed from new blocks specially made for the purpose.[10]

What now remains in connection with the above is the receipt of the account from the War Office and the forwarding a cheque in settlement. Then will follow the auditing of the accounts and the publishing of the balance sheet after it has been audited and signed by the chartered accountant, in accordance with my original promise. The whole of the business has been transacted with the War Office direct, thereby securing the purchasing of the cars at the Government contract price. All extraneous costs were thus entirely eliminated. The cars selected met with official approval as being handier, and therefore more useful in districts where the roads are bad. The workmanship and fittings are of the best. Each car will accommodate two stretcher cases, or three sitting cases, with the ambulance attendant in each case. The

[10].–As stated, the print quality is very poor unfortunately the image shown is the best of the ones published in the *Two Worlds*. If any readers who has any of the postcards issued, a copy would be most welcome, to display in the Britten Memorial Museum at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall.

engines are unequalled for working, and the fleet of five represents one of the most useful gifts contributed by any denomination. It was deemed more prudent to obtain a fleet of light cars than to invest in one large and costly car. A too attentive "Jack Johnson" could scatter the one car, and there would be nothing left, but if he attended to one of ours, there would be four others remaining for service. Thus the best return on the price expended was secured all round. The Ford Company were considered as the one maker who met the requirements. They work under the Munitions Acts, and they give good value for money.

Now let me turn to other matters, especially to the subscribers. The lists published each week have been most illuminating, and have shed a flood of light upon many things. First of all, it is evident that the appeal struck home to hundreds of our readers as a proposition they could honestly support on humane grounds. The appeal was to Spiritualists, without considerations of sect, party, or prejudice. It was an appeal that included our national, local, county, or other Unions. It concerned us all, and was thus a test of brotherhood and solidarity. In that sense it was not quite a success. Nothing human is entirely so. But it is noticeable that the merest recognition came from one quarter, none at all from another, and a somewhat patronising recognition in a third quarter, and the noticeablility is not exactly accordant with our oft-professed teaching of human brotherhood. Still the spirit-guided work went on, succeeded, and the end aimed at was more than accomplished.

But the list—the list is the thing that really matters. In it will be seen the few coppers of devoted souls who literally gave their heart in their giving. The gold and silver of others was welcome, as were the good words of the senders. Bank notes and cheques were often visitors, and there are some cases where the prosperous in our ranks rose to the occasion and liberally contributed. Many a Society contributed—yes, and many a Society made a brave effort to raise a donation under circumstances that might well have daunted enthusiasm, The list shows how, from South, North, East and West, in Scotland and in Wales, the money was sent, and also from overseas. To specify any would be unjust to the rest, for all did their utmost. Noticeably the names of Lyceums and Lyceumists appeared quite frequently, moved to do so without any official hint or suggestion. Truly an instructive list in not a few directions.

There is no question that we all rose to Mr. Evans' injunction, "Be Practical," with a very practical result, as gratifying to him as to all concerned. In response to my request that he should say a few words in this closing account of the work of the fund, he sends me the following note:—

THE TASK ACCOMPLISHED.

"There is a great deal of satisfaction in the Movement over the success of the Motor Ambulance Fund. It is a joy to know that the Movement has done something to alleviate the suffering entailed in this terrible calamity which has overtaken mankind. The effort which we have put forward to render concrete our belief in human brotherhood is one the significance of which should not be lost sight of. It should be our desire to keep alive the spirit which has been manifest, and so draw the bonds between the various sections of our Movement closer together. The ambulances are now an accomplished fact. They stand as a witness of our desire to help mankind, and every Spiritualist will feel glad that there goes forth to the field of battle a living witness of our glorious gospel. I have no desire to preach or to point

the moral of our action. That, I think, should be sufficiently obvious. We have emerged from a scattered crowd to a condition which promises well for the future. We hope that the ambulances now sent forth will prove a blessing to many a man in distress, and their mission to save will be accomplished, so that many will bless those who have so generously subscribed to the fund. The call has gone forth and from overseas there will be a further response, so that we are looking forward to our colonial friends participating in the effort.

"So far as this country is concerned, the work is finished. Our genial Editor will rest quiet o' nights without having his dreams haunted with cheques and postal orders, though we all know that he would be willing to undertake such a task again. But I must draw to a close. I only wish to thank those who have in so many ways helped to make the fund a success. I shall never again hesitate to put forward suggestions for good of mankind now that the Movement had demonstrated its willingess to respond. May those who have given be blessed, as will those who receive the ministrations from those who have charge of the ambulances.

W. H. EVANS."

We all owe very many thanks to the Directors of THE TWO WORLDS Publishing Co. Ltd. for the generous allowance of space devoted to the publication of the weekly lists of subscriptions. Just how many columns have been used it is not easy to say, certainly over twenty. Their sympathy has been with the purpose all the way through the progress of the work. Their generous assistance did much towards ensuring success, as without the requisite publicity it would have been impossible to do what has been done. Thus THE TWO WORLDS has again rendered substantial service to the Cause, and quite independently of any limits, for the work was done for all.

So far as my part of the work went it was far too much to undertake in office hours, consequently it was done in my own time at home. The cash book shows considerably over 800 entries. These had to be written out over again for the printers. Nearly 1,000 letters passed through my hands; the monies were checked and verified, and paying slips to the bank prepared. A multitude of little details were involved, of which one can only form an idea by actual experience. I must publicly acknowledge my indebtedness to Miss Florence Morse for her valuable assistance.[11] Often we were at the work until midnight, and on three occasions until after 1 a.m. the next morning. But devoted enthusiasm enabled us to carry everything through to a successful conclusion.

My task and its story are done. I heartily thank everybody who has in any way helped this effort, an effort the results of which will ever redound to the lasting credit of the Spiritualists of the United Kingdom and their brethren overseas.

J. J. MORSE, Hon. Treasurer,
The Spiritualist Motor Ambulances Fund.

—~—☼—~—

[11].–Florence Morse (1871-1934) was the only child of the Morses like her father she was a well-known trance medium and speaker. After her death Florence willed some of her father processions to the SNU. This included one of James Morse's prized possessions, a large drawing in pencil by Wella Anderson done in September 1875 of Chief control "Tien Sien Tie" a Chinese Mandarin. This is displayed in the Britten Memorial Museum housed at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall.

Six months later a further report and another Ambulance acquired! Reported in the *Two Worlds*, August 4th 1916:

THE SPIRITUALIST MOTOR AMBULANCE FUND.

THE CLOSING RESUME AND FINAL STATEMENT.

GREAT EFFORT ACCOMPLISHED.

SPIRITUALISTS everywhere will rejoice to know that the Ambulance Fund effort has now accomplished its purpose. Six cars have been subscribed for and purchased, and each is now on active service with the British forces in the field. The work commenced in October of last year, and the completion of the first portion was effected in March of this year, as per the statement issued in THE TWO WORLDS of the 31st of that month, a suitable addendum to the 68th Anniversary of Modern Spiritualism. No more fitting occasion could have occurred for such a stupendous achievement by Spiritualists here and overseas. The initiative was that of Mr. W. H. Evans, and it was our pleasant duty to follow it up. It meant weeks of hard work, for the printing of the weekly lists was the smallest part of the labour. Sustained by an invincible conviction of success, the work was carried on without the least faltering. The assistance of Miss Florence Morse must be fully recognised, for she zealously seconded the work of the Honorary Treasurer, each working without expecting other reward than the consciousness they were helping to carry out the wishes of their spirit friends.



As previously announced would be the case, the illustration of the sixth car is now published. By the inscription, which reads as follows: "Jointly subscribed for by the Spiritualists of the Dominion of New Zealand and Great Britain," it will be seen that this car is a joint offering from the Spiritualists of the Dominion of New Zealand and the United Kingdom. This picture will, therefore, be an historical memento of an event in our Cause that will have a special value attached to it for Spiritualists in the future as well as in the present.

The appended statement of account tells its own story. It will, however, be noticed that our generous friend, "Sympathiser," nobly carried out his promise to meet any deficiency that should occur, and sent £20 to that end. Many subtle means and devices have been tried to obtain the name of our generous friend, but each proved abortive. Conscientious modesty must be respected.

Subjoined is a letter from the Army Council, thanking "all concerned," which will be read with interest and satisfaction by all subscribers:—

"War Office,
"121/Medical/1699 (Q.M.G. 3). "London, S.W.,
"25th July, 1916.

"SIR,—I am commanded by the Army Council to express their warm thanks to all concerned in the generous and patriotic gift of a 'Ford' motor ambulance for service with the British Armies in the Field, making a total of six 'Ford' ambulances presented by the Spiritualist Motor Ambulance Fund.

"I am to say that this additional vehicle will materially assist in the alleviation of the suffering of the sick and wounded in the field.

"I am to enclose herewith a photograph of the car.

"I am, Sir,
"Your obedient servant,

"J. J. MORSE Esq., Manchester." "W. W. CURTIS."

Last week it was reported that two of the cars had been seen in service in France. This week the report is to hand that another of the first five cars has been seen in service, this time in Egypt. The following letter from Pte. A. Bamford supplies the additional information. It is given just as received:—

"MR. J. J. MORSE,—DEAR SIR,—While resting in a distant part of Egypt, I saw a sight that brought me back to home. It was an ambulance van, one of five presented by the Spiritualists of the United Kingdom, subscribed by readers of THE TWO WORLDS. I was glad of the sight, and as it stopped a distance away I journeyed to it to read it over again. I was pleased to see the Spiritualists were not behind. I am proud to say I am one myself. For some time I was the corresponding secretary of the Openshaw (Manchester), Beulah-street, Society, Vice-President and Lyceum Conductor. I was also personally acquainted with Mr. Searle, of Hyde, and I have had the pleasure of attending a few seances at his home.[12] I have been out here some time. Coming in touch with all classes and creeds, I have seen some very strange sights. But you know there is the Censor. I wish you and all friends at home good luck. For myself, I don't care how soon I get away from this beautiful but terrible country. Nothing but sand for miles, in some directions hundreds of miles. I am beginning to long for a sight of home, sweet home and the loved ones I have left there. I am proud of the knowledge I possess. It helps me along my journey. Many times while on duty at night, when the stars are shining, I hold my sweet communion. I must now close—I remain, faithfully yours, Pte. A. BAMFORD, 301, B. Co., 7th Platoon, 19th Rifle Brigade, E.E.F., Egypt.—P.S.—I wish to be remembered to the members of the Barrow, Bournemouth, and Openshaw Societies, where I have left many friends behind.—A.B."

[12].–Searle was a professional photographer: "Mr and Mrs Searle were well-known spiritualists and he was very anxious to obtain a photograph similar to one taken of Sir Wm Crookes with the form of Katie King; and therefore when Mrs Corner (née Florence Cook) came to Manchester (about 1902), he invited her to his house and give sittings with a view to accomplishing his desire …" The photograph and details are published in Psypioneer Volume 8. No 3. March 2012.

Many complimentary and kindly letters have reached me; and one or two that were criticisms of helping in any way the war work. Yet even these recognised the honourable intentions of the effort. One letter, anonymous, of course, signed "Conscientious Objector," really exceeded the limits of honest difference of opinion, closing with the assertion, "I will never shoulder a gun, whatever happens."

Again, my thanks to "Light" and "The International Psychic Gazette" for valuable co-operation, which, in each case, produced most acceptable support for the Fund.

Another gratifying incident to be recorded is that the Union Bank of Manchester Ltd. (in which the account was kept) made no charge for its services, which were given free out of sympathy with the object in view.

The following statement of account exactly details the receipts and expenditure of the monies entrusted to me, and now closes this chronicle of an effort that the Movement may well feel pride in having shared. With my most appreciative thanks for the help and the confidence reposed in me, I now say adieu.

J. J. MORSE,

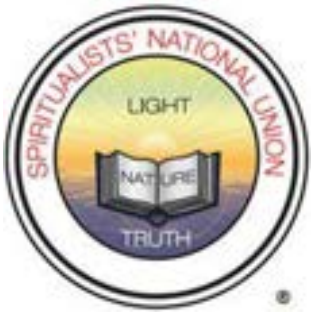
Hon. Treasurer, The Spiritualist Motor Ambulance Fund.

Manchester, July 28th, 1916.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT.

RECEIPTS.	£	s.	d.
Balance in hand	68	7	11
Subscriptions for Sixth Car	116	18	7
Souvenir Cards (Half Proceeds of Sales by THE TWO WORLDS Publishing Co. Ltd.)	8	6	1½
	£193	12	7½
EXPENDITURE.			
War Office—Cost of Sixth Car	173	18	11
Cost of Illustration of Sixth Car	0	10	6
Postages and Sundries	0	7	3
	£174	16	8
Balance of "Sympathiser's" donation, to be used as he may hereafter instruct	18	15	11½
E. & O.E.	£193	12	7½

BADGES, SYMBOLS AND EMBLEMS of the Spiritualists' National Union



Today the Union and its affiliated churches are easily recognised by its symbol. We can see from its original design it has undergone some subtle changes from its original black and white format almost a century ago.



Badges, Symbols, and Emblems held an important role in the early Spiritualist movement, for example in the Lyceum. In Manchester, on Sunday May 12th 1889, Emma Hardinge Britten addressed the 'Spiritual Lyceum Conference.' She stated, "As to the badges and banners, they are all symbolical of deep inner and spiritual meanings."[13]

The first proposal of a suitable means of recognition in the National Federation came at the third Annual Conference held in Burnley on July 2nd 1892:—[14]

> "Mr. R. White, late of Australia, who was received with applause, in moving the following resolution—"That it is desirable some suitable means of recognition should be adopted by Spiritualists, which might be nationally and internationally applicable and acknowledged by them," said he was requested by the Sydney friends in New South Wales to ascertain when he reached England if some suitable means of recognition could not be adopted—universally. It was difficult sometimes to ask a person point blank, Are you a Spiritualist? Some people are offended if you ask them. In the estimation of some non-Spiritualists it is tantamount to asking, Are you partially insane? Some external means of recognition are of great advantage on a long journey or sea voyage, for it sometimes happens that you travel together a long distance and finally get into conversation and find that both are Spiritualists and regret you did not know it before. He would just say that the Spiritualists of Australia, and especially the Sydney Society of Psychic Culture, delegated him to convey their sympathy and good wishes to their brethren in the old country.
>
> "Mr. Tetlow seconded the motion.
>
> "Mr. Swindlehurst proposed that it lie on the table for twelve months. He objected to wearing any badge or ribbon, and thought the best ribbon was the life we lived.
>
> "Mr. P. Lee would not like Brother White to feel that his proposal and the suggestion from our Australian brothers had been received harshly, and thought that its consideration had better be deferred till another year, as the time was so short, at the same time we extended fraternal good wishes to our friends across the sea.

[13].—Taken from *The Two Worlds* May 24th 1889

[14].—Taken from the Supplement to – *The Two Worlds*, July 8th 1892

"The amendment was carried."

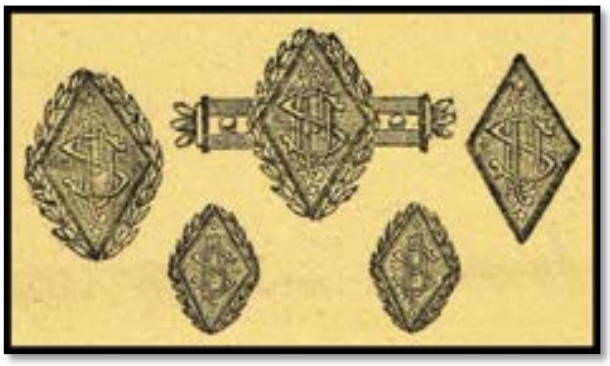
There appears to be no published mention at the following Conference held at the Town Hall, Sowerby Bridge on Saturday and Sunday July 1st and 2nd 1893 under the presidency of Mr. James (Jas) Robertson, of a "recognition badge." However, on May 14th 1895, National Federation President Samuel Chiswell in an address entitled "Organisation for Combined Action" before the Conference of Spiritualists, noted that "Recently a badge of recognition has been adopted in the North; an effort has been made to commence a sick and benefit fund for aged and indigent workers; and a national hymn-book is in process of compilation." It appears no badge, symbol, or emblem was officially introduced into the National Federation during its lifetime – their motto was "Unity and Liberty".

When the resolution was first proposed for a "recognition badge" at the 1892 Conference, Mrs M. H. Wallis was present;[15] she was also a member of the Propaganda Committee. If we look at the penultimate paragraph of the first issue of Pioneer, at the reprinted statement by James J. Morse originally written September 22nd 1896, we note:

A SPIRITUALISTS' BENEFIT SOCIETY.

> "The last special feature pertaining to our cause in Great Britain that I will call your attention to is "The Order of Progressive Spiritualists' Sick Benefit and Pension Fund," an association originated by Mrs. M. H. Wallis, and to which she is the honorary secretary. This effort has its headquarters in Manchester. For the past year it has disbursed over 200 dollars in sick relief and pensions.[16] It is the first and only Society of the kind ever established for our people in Great Britain, and is in every way well deserving of support, and its promoter deserves every praise for her endeavours."

The Order of Progressive Spiritualists would work alongside the National Federation and be supported by the *Two Worlds* journal.[17] The O.P.S. would introduce the first 'Spiritualist Recognition Symbol' in this country. Published below is a brief history, their principles, and objects. Taken from the *Two Worlds* November 10th 1893 and December 15th 1893 respectively:



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

[16].–This was intended for the American readers, so the prices quoted are in US dollars.

[17].—In 1892 as noted in the first issue of Pioneer, Emma Hardinge Britten resigned her editorship of the *Two Worlds*; her Sub-Editor and the paper's General Manager Edward Wallis took up her position. The *Two Worlds* was closely involved with the National Federation, and acted as its mouthpiece and published its meetings etc.

RE THE PROPOSED SYMBOL.
BY E. W. WALLIS.



THE latest design for the purposes of recognition and union among Spiritualists seems to be one that meets with more favour than any proposal yet made. We give the design, actual size.

We have obtained an estimate of the cost of production, and find that pins, or pendants, or a badge to fasten upon the coat or dress can be made in silver, the monogram raised and polished bright, the background to be of dead silver, for 1s. 9d. each, post free 2s. If we can get orders for more than 50 we can sell them at 1s. 6d. each, post free 1s. 9d. Bar-brooches, two bars, with this design as a centre ornament, could cost 2s. 6d. or 3s. each.

The design is distinctive and sufficiently striking to be easily noticed, and is, as far as we know, unlike anything else in the market. The letters O.P.S. signify Order of Progressive Spiritualists.

It has been suggested that every person who purchases and wears one should agree to have their name and address entered on the roll of the "Order," whose principles might be expressed thus:—

Name: Order of Progressive Spiritualists.

Principles: We the members of the Order of Progressive Spiritualists affirm that we know there is no death. That intercourse between the two worlds has been established. That spirit-return has demonstrated continuity of individual conscious existence. That consequences, good or, evil, of motives and deeds of mortal life affect the status of each spirit after death and constitute the heaven or hell into which they enter. That evolution is not only the law of *this* life but characterises the realm of the hereafter; hence eternal progress is open to every one who endeavours to advance. That we are responsible by Divine Love and Wisdom *to ourselves* for the use we make of our powers and the opportunities of life, and *to others* for the influence we exert by our own conduct; and by the psychic emanations we cast off which affect others for good or ill. We therefore RESOLVE to endeavour to improve our minds, to cultivate our moral powers, to exercise our spiritual gifts, to sympathise with sorrow and suffering, to encourage and assist the weak and ignorant, to co-operate in all endeavours of a reformatory character whose aim is for humanity and the truth. Believing that *character* is more important than *creed*; that deeds, not words, are needed, we will, with charity to all and malice towards none, strive to exert a salutary influence for liberty, right, justice and love in every possible direction.

Objects: To unite spiritually minded and progressive men and women in a fraternal order for mutual encouragement and support. To inaugurate a sick and benefit fund, to assist the suffering, the needy and the aged, such fund to be raised by voluntary effort, in which every member is expected to join. To afford a means of recognition and a link of fellowship between Spiritualists, the outward and visible sign being the diamond shaped symbol bearing the monogram O.P.S.

We are of opinion that the above suggestions are practical and calculated to be of benefit to all members, and will, if adopted, tend to foster good-will and fraternity among Spiritualists. We are prepared to book orders at once which will be executed in turn as received. Friends will oblige, when writing, by stating, if the above suggestions meet with their approval, their willingness to have their name and address enrolled. All communications should be addressed to Miss Grace, 73A, Corporation Street, Manchester.

VOICES FROM THE PEOPLE.

RE THE PROPOSED SYMBOL.



IT is now more than six months since this matter was first broached, and at last we have been able to definitely decide what to do.

The sketch here given represents the brooch, and if you simply cover up two bars at each side you will have the pendant, the scarf pin, and badge; the pendant will, of course, have a ring at the top, and the badges will be really small brooches to pin on to a dress or coat.

As will be seen, we have adopted part of Mr. Chadwick's design, the laurel wreath around the diamond, which is certainly an improvement, and renders the symbol one which will be recognised at a glance by any person familiar with it. This alteration will modify the prices somewhat, and therefore the following scale of charges is now finally decided upon: Scarf pins, in silver, solid back, 2s.; badges for dress or coat (really small brooches), 2s.; strong pendants for watch chains, 3s.; two-barred brooches with symbol as a centre ornament, 3s. 6d. Postage, 3d. extra (registered letter). Where a number can be sent together per parcel post, postage will be but a small item, hence friends should combine their orders where possible. We will offer special terms to societies or agents who sell *The Two Worlds* for quantities.

In response to a number of friends, special articles can be made with enamelled letters, or with more metal, or pendants can be engraved at the back. We have ascertained, as suggested by Mr. J. J. Morse and other friends, that the cost for bar brooches in nine-carat gold would be about 21s., pendants 17s. 6d., scarf pins and badges, 14s. Gold pendants with Mr. Chadwick's design of the globe and Latin inscription *on the back* would probably cost a sovereign.

These symbols are now ready for customers, so that they may be useful for Christmas presents and prizes. Samples can be seen at 73A, Corporation Street, Manchester.[18] Friends, send your orders at once and enclose portals.

—~—☼—~—

[18].—The address was the registered office of *The Two Worlds*.

"To inaugurate a sick and benefit fund, to assist the suffering, the needy and the aged, such fund to be raised by voluntary effort…"



Minnie Harriet Wallis
1854-1939

Report of Tenth Annual Conference of the National Federation, held in Blackpool on July 1st and 2nd 1899, as published in the *Two Worlds* July 7th 1899, (as quoted below):

"The work of benevolence is, in the nature of things, a matter we shall sooner or later be compelled to recognise as a duty to our workers who may be sick, incapacitated through illness or accident, or otherwise in temporary or permanent distress, is to come before you in a resolution to be submitted by Mrs. M. H. Wallis, the founder and organiser of a fund known as the Order of Progressive Spiritualists' Sick, Benefit, and Pension fund, and it seems that the time has arrived for putting the question on a National basis, with consequent advantage to all

As the proceedings continued:

> "Mrs. Wallis then introduced her motion that the O.P.S. Sick and Benefit Fund should be taken over by the Federation. She thought the time had come when the movement should take the responsibility of providing for its sick and aged workers, and so, although she should always retain interest in the work, she asked them to take the fund into their hands as the National body of Spiritualists.
>
> "Mr. H. Lucas seconded, and Mr. Chiswell asked whether the name should be taken over also. Mrs. Wallis explained that it was quite optional, but suggested it would be wise. Messrs. Howes, Chiswell, Nuttall, and Johnson joined the discussion, and Mr. Hanson Hey said they as a movement should face their responsibilities.
>
> "After Mr. Bibbings, Mrs. Wallis, and Mr. Chiswell had spoken, the motion was carried."

During the year the transfer of the O.P.S. Sick, Benefit and Pension Funds to the control of the Federation was carried out, the funds to be administered under the title of 'The Spiritualists' National Federation Fund of Benevolence.' The fund has grown and continued to the present day, and over the past hundred and twenty years it has collected thousands of pounds.[19] It appears the 'Recognition Symbol' ended with the transfer of the Sick, Benefit,

[19].—From the modest beginnings, I note published in the *Two Worlds* for May 18th 1894: "That the Committee were pleased to report an income of £7 19s. 6d. and an expenditure of £2 14s. in relieving sickness and need."

and Pension Funds to the control of the Federation in 1899. This would continue within the SNU, as it does today.[20]

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Around the time the O.P.S. 'Recognition Symbol' came into being in this country, another Symbol in America was introduced. This can be noted at the Ninth Spiritualists' National Federation Annual Conference on July 2nd and 3rd 1898, held at the Heber Street Spiritual Temple, home of the Keighley Spiritualists' Society, who celebrated their 45th Anniversary, in conjunction with the National Conference under the presidency of Edward Walter Wallis. Below is taken from the *Two Worlds* July 15th, from the final part of the Conference at the evening service on Sunday July 3rd:

> "The Chairman now introduced Mrs. Cadwallader,[21] and said she had an interesting ceremony to perform.
>
> "Mrs. Cadwallader, who was received vociferously, said there are times when a word of unsought appreciation came like a heavenly messenger to cheer and comfort. She was pleased to present to the veteran Lyceum worker, Mr. A, Kitson, the 'Sunflower' badge, the American national Spiritualistic symbol, on which was inscribed 'A token of love from across the sea to Alfred Kitson, in recognition of his long and unselfish labours for our young people.' "



It is described as the symbol of Spiritualism

"*As the Sunflower turns its face to the light of the sun-so let Spiritualism turn the face of humanity to the Light of Truth*"

It appears in some reports the Association of Spiritualists at the Cassadaga Lake Free Association [Lily Dale] adopted the Sunflower as its seal, which is shown in its Constitution and by-laws; developed in 1892 and adopted in 1893. William P. Bach published the Sunflower, a newspaper published in Lily

[20].—Fund of Benevolence (FOB):—http://www.snu.org.uk/community/support/fob.html – the information on this link incorrectly states that it was founded by Mr E. W. Wallis.

[21].—Mrs. Mercy E. Cadwallader was a well-known American Spiritualist; she died on December 24th 1935. She was closely involved with the National Spiritualist Association (N.S.A) organised in September 1893. In 1894, she was elected honorary Vice-President, which she accepted and then resigned in favour of being appointed "Missionary." Cadwallader was a prominent Lyceumist and it was through her efforts that the Andrew Jackson Davis Lyceum building was built in 1928 at Lily Dale, New York. An acre assigned for the children's playground is known as Cadwallader Park. Cadwallader was the editor and publisher of *The Progressive Thinker*, Chicago, which she took control of in 1910, purchasing the paper at the death of its founder J. R. Francis who originally founded the paper in 1889.

She wrote "Hydesville in History," The Progressive Thinker Publishing House, Chicago in 1917. Now re-published, it should be noted that this book carries some inaccurate information on the Hydesville story. For the original Hydesville story see: "A Report of the Mysterious Noises, Heard in The House of Mr. John D. Fox …" Britten Memorial Museum, SNU Publications 2013:—http://www.shop.snu.org.uk/new.html

Dale, NY from 1898 through until 1906. In 1900, Bach continued the manufacture of the lapel pins at his offices in Lily Dale, NY bearing the Sunflower emblem. The history of the Sunflower badge can be read in Psypioneer Volume 9. No. 11. November 2013.

It would not be until the Spiritualists' National Union's Twelfth Annual General Meeting held in the Co-Operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester, on July 4th, 5th and 6th 1914, that we would see the first Union emblem.[22] The President was George Tayler Gwinn (re-elected); reference is made to Richard Boddington (Executive Council). The two quotes below are taken from the Sunday morning session, published in the *Two Worlds* issue July 17th 1914:

THE NATIONAL EMBLEM.

> "Mr. R. Boddington drew attention to the completion of the design to be accepted as our National Union Emblem. He went into details regarding the method adopted by the sub-committee appointed to select, and in the name of the sub-committee on emblem he now moved that the artistic production signed "Inspiration" be adopted by the A.G.M., and that the drawing signed "Cosmos" be accorded second prize.
>
> "Mrs. Jessy Greenwood (Hebden Bridge) seconded.
>
> "Mr. Morse supported, expressing his pleasure at the knowledge that the successful artist is a Manchester man and a Spiritualist.[23] The resolution was carried unanimously."

Later in the proceedings (same session):

A BADGE.

> "Mr. W. Dowell Todd next introduced the subject of the adoption of a badge by the Northern Counties Union, and sought the approval of the Conference on the project.
>
> "The President explained that the Council had decided not to adopt a national badge for personal adornment, partly on the ground that for Spiritualists generally one badge was already in existence, namely, the Lyceum badge, and instanced the fact that already the Council had been approached from the South in reference to the adoption of a badge, but that the Council had declined to proceed with the matter. The subject was then allowed to drop."

At a council meeting in Manchester on the 30th January 1915: "The tenders for the production of the emblem having been submitted and discussed, it was resolved to accept the tender of Mr. Ingham, £33 10s."[24] At a meeting on June 19th: "Mr. Boddington was

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[22].—Earlier at this venue on July 6th, 1890, the Spiritualists' National Federation was established at the National Conference of British Spiritualists, leading to the Spiritualists' National Union twelve years later in 1902 – a fitting venue for its first National Emblem!

[23].—Morse was the President of the Manchester and District Union.

[24].—Taken from the *Two Worlds*, February 26th 1915:—"Precis of Proceedings of Meeting of the Executive Council, held at Manchester on Saturday, January 30th, 1915."

authorised to copyright the Emblem. Mr. Morse was given the permission he asked to reproduce the Emblem in THE TWO WORLDS."[25] Following the Thirteenth Annual General meeting held in Hull on July 3rd and 4th 1915, now under the presidency of Ernest Oaten (first term), this was published in the Two Worlds July 16th:

> "The "emblem," a copy of which was on view, was next introduced to the meeting. The cost of the "emblem" and conditions was made clear to the meeting by resolution, and particulars concerning renunciation of right to hold or claim were also clearly stated by Mr. R. Boddington in a written resolution, which was carried."



National Union, Limited – Reduced Facsimile of the Emblem Issued to Societies Affiliated with the S.N.U." At the bottom of the Emblem, "F. H. Ingram. Del – June 1915 – Manchester" is written. As previously noted, Ingram was the producer of the emblem and supplied Morse with the photographic block for his front page as produced in this article.

Further, at a meeting of the E.C.,[26] on July 3rd it is noted:

> "Mr. Boddington reported re the copyrighting of Emblem "That there had been a change in method, three copies being required, and two forms to be signed under seal" Stamps cost 5s. Resolved that the seal of the Union be affixed to forms."

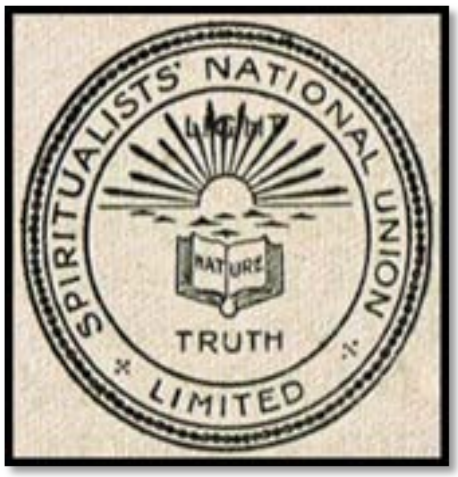
Finally at a meeting in Huddersfield on October 30th 1915,[27] in the Council Proceedings it states: Resolved that "the words 'Copyright, 1915' be printed on the Emblem." The Editor of the *Two Worlds* James J. Morse published the Emblem on the front page on Friday June 25th 1915. Under the heading: "The Charter of the Spiritualists'



[25].—Precis of Minutes of E.C. Meeting held at Princess Hall, Manchester, June 19th, 1915.

[26].—Taken from the *Two Worlds* July 30th 1915: Summary of the Minutes of the E.C. Meetings held at Hull on July 3rd 1915.

[27].—Taken from the *Two Worlds* November 26th 1915: Precis of Proceedings of Council meeting held at Ramsden Street Spiritualists' Church, Huddersfield, October 30th.



The actual SNU symbol we know today seems to appear first on Union publications circa 1914; from the SNU Propaganda Publications published at the SNU registered office at 30, Glen Terrace, Clover Hill, Halifax.[28] The image design may possibly have resulted from the competition for the National Emblem as detailed above. Hanson Hey informed the quarterly meeting of the SNU Council on January 31st 1914 held at the *Two Worlds* office at Manchester: "… the receipt of eleven designs sent in answer to the advertisement for competition …" We note above that the Union's National Emblem launched was the result of the competition. By 1914 the SNU round symbol was being used in the Propaganda Publications (possibly before) but there appears to be no mention of this symbol being adopted at the AGM or previous AGM reports.



It therefore suggests that the public life of our symbol started in the Propaganda Publications and only over the years has it become adopted as our official symbol of today, possibly designed by an unsuccessful candidate of the competition for the emblem or simply as a publication design for the Propaganda Publications. We can note today on our Yearbook covers etc the original black and white image has undergone little change in its basic structure. It can also be noted in the 1914c image the book is open and angled upright. When the Union's first official journal started in July 1924 (see the first issue of Pioneer) the book is flat and open as the image shows; this continued on our Yearbook's front cover until 2011; the 2012 Yearbook shows that the book image has reverted to the original 1914c design. Recently the symbol has been enhanced by the Union as shown at the head of this article.

Later at the International Federation of Spiritualists (ISF) Congress in 1925 the Council adopted the Sunflower Badge as an "International Spiritualists' Badge;" the badges could be purchased at the *Two Worlds* office in 1926 for 2/-.



> "The SUNFLOWER (which always turns its face towards the light) forms the centre of the design, and is engraved with a human face, and is superimposed on a white banner and surrounded with a deckle border signifying the human race."

The early years of the ISF were closely linked to the Spiritualists' National Union who significantly helped in its formation in 1922-23. SNU Presidents George F. Berry, Ernest Oaten etc were also the early ISF presidents. Therefore, it is easy to see the Sunflower Badge becoming integrated in some degree within

[28].–The first SNU registered office was 68 Crown Street, Halifax the home (a tobacconist shop) the Unions General Secretary Hanson Hey. Just before the war he moved to 30 Glen Terrace, Clover Hill, Halifax.

the Union. In recent years the Union has severed links with the ISF but holds active links with the World Congress of Spiritualists.[29]

Presentation of a new Presidential badge, received by SNU President Robert A. Owen at the Twenty-Fifth Annual General Meeting of the Union held at Caxton Hall, Westminster and the Artworkers' Guild, Queens Square, Southampton Row, London on July 2nd and 3rd 1927 respectively.

The report below is taken from the first official journal of the SNU, the *National Spiritualist*, August 1927:

PRESENTATION OF A NEW PRESIDENTIAL BADGE.

One of the most interesting events of the Conference took place on Sunday morning, July 3rd, when Mr. and Mrs. Richardson, of the York Spiritualist Church, presented the Union with a gold Presidential Badge. The Badge is in blue enamel on gold, with the name of the Union round the edge, the centre design showing the Setting Sun over the Book of Nature, with the words Light and Truth standing in relief. The back is suitably inscribed to commemorate the gift. It has a bar above on which is inscribed the word President.

Mrs. Richardson, in making the presentation, said that two farthings were once found in the collection at an annual meeting. She had discovered that one of them was put in by a resident of York. Whether the actual coin, which had served as a President's Badge for many years, was the York coin, she did not know, but it was appropriate that since the humblest coin of the realm had come from her city, a gift of the pure metal, gold, should also come from that ancient city, so closely identified with the introduction of Christianity into England. Mr. Richardson took up the thread and expressed the pleasure it gave him to have the honour of bestowing upon the Union some token of adornment to mark the growing honour and dignity of the great Movement of Spiritualism.

By the unanimous desire of the Conference Mrs. Richardson pinned the badge on the coat of Mr. Owen, who had been elected the previous day to the office of President for the third year in succession.

Mr. Owen returned thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Richardson for their generous gift; Mrs. Raymond and Mrs. Greenwood heartily supporting.

G.F.B.[30]

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[29].—World Congress of Spiritualists - June 26th to 28th 2014: Hosted by Lily Dale Assembly Lily Dale Assembly Spiritualist Camp, Lily Dale, New York, An invitation to all Spiritualists to join delegates from Spiritualist organisations including the Spiritualists' National Union, National Association of Spiritualist Churches, Lily Dale Assembly & delegates from Australia, Canada, England & Sweden. See SNU Events:— http://www.snu.org.uk/newsevents/events/congress2014.html

[30].–George Berry former SNU President 1920-1922. In 1922, the Union's General Secretary Mr Yates, was taken ill and the Union asked Berry to take up his position. He resigned as President to take up the position of SNU General Secretary, which he held from 1922 to 1932. He then continued as Organising Secretary and was the first President of the International Federation of Spiritualists (ISF). Under his presidency in 1925 the Council adopted the Sunflower Badge as an "International Spiritualists' Badge.

We can note in the AGM minutes in the September issue:

> "38. *President's Badge*. Mrs. Richardson, of the York Spiritualist Church, presented to the Union a new Presidential Badge, the gift of herself and her husband as a thank offering for spiritual benefits received. The new badge was a very handsome gold ornament, and was greatly admired. Mrs. Richardson invested the President with it, with a few appropriate words. The President accepted the badge, on behalf of the Union and his thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Richardson. He trusted that the spirit which prompted its presentation would long remain in the Union. The badge was inscribed with the name of the Union, and the circumstances of its presentation, and bore a device showing the open book of truth.
>
> "The badge hitherto worn by the President was bestowed on the Vice-President. Mr. Owen moved a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Richardson. This was seconded by Mrs. Raymond and supported by Mrs. J. Greenwood. Mr. Keeling suggested that a chain for the badge should be provided, friends providing a link in the chain in memory of some pioneer in their Church, the name to be inscribed on the link."[31]

Various badges and emblems etc are displayed in the Britten Memorial Museum at the Arthur Findlay College. For example, Minister's Regalia, L.S.S.N.U (long service) Badge and an SNU badge belonging to William (Bill) Henry Redmond. Redmond was born in Gateshead on June 17th 1908. He was an outstanding medium of his generation, with the aid of his spirit guide, an Egyptian called Abdullah.[32] He was discovered by Mrs St. Clair Stobart and began his work at the age of nineteen, appearing numerous times at the Royal Albert Hall. He undertook the SNU education courses and, in 1959, he was appointed a Minister of the Union. As noted, the SNU Emblem was initially issued to Societies Affiliated with the SNU, as can be found on the declaration on the Emblem, but it was also used for other Union official recognition: for example the issuance of an SNU Diploma which Redmond was awarded in 1944 and ratified at the AGM held in Leicester as shown.[33]



[31].–Daulby Hall Church (Liverpool) made an offer to provide a link in memory of their first President, John Lamont. He was also the first National Federation President; also at the wish of Emma Hardinge Britten he conducted her funeral (with James J. Morse), as Lamont had previously for her mother and husband. However, at an SNU Quarterly meeting in January 1928 it recommended the scheme be dropped due to the financial position of the movement etc.

[32].—On various websites Chloris Morgan's book is available: Two Worlds of William Redmond: the Trail Blazing Medium, published by The Headquarters Publishing Co. Ltd, London, 1985.



Shown is Bill Redmond's L.S.S.N.U (long service) Badge, with which he was presented in 1980. We can see the image is a Sunflower, and we can further note the President's badge and bars of the SNU Manchester District Council, is of a similar Sunflower design.



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To summarise:

1892:—Proposal for a suitable means of recognition in the National Federation came at the third Annual Conference held in Burnley on July 2nd 1892.

1893:—Mrs Wallis founded The Order of Progressive Spiritualists' (O.P.S.), and in 1893 introduced the first 'Spiritualist Recognition Symbol' in this country. At around the same time, the Sunflower Badge was introduced into Association of Spiritualists, America.

1914:—Spiritualists' National Union's Twelfth Annual General Meeting, under the presidency of George Tayler Gwinn (1912-1915), decided on a National Emblem.

1914 circa:—Introduction of the original SNU symbol but appears not to have been adopted officially by the SNU at this period (research is ongoing).

1915:—The National Emblem was produced by Mr F. H. Ingram, Manchester, dated June 1915.

1925:—International Federation of Spiritualists (ISF) Congress the Council adopted the Sunflower Badge as an "International Spiritualists' Badge".

1927:—Presentation of a new President's badge, received by SNU President Robert Owen.

In conclusion:

There were other badges that were part of the Union, for example the Guild of Healers, as are displayed in the Britten Memorial Museum, at Stansted. The introduction of the Sunflower image on some of the Union badges most probably resulted from the ISF International Spiritualists' Badge. With regard to the Long Service badge, Jane Heatley at the SNU office informed me "I have records starting July 1955 which means they would have evolved at least from 1930." The International Spiritualists' Badge appears to have been available from December 1926, so fits in date-wise – although the Sunflower was previously accepted as the symbol of Spiritualism from the 1890's. Minister Steven Upton further informs me, "With the updating and registration of the logo a year back we changed the long service award badge from the sunflower to the new logo. The sunflower is now no longer in use"

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[33].—Re the signatures: Chairman of Examiners: Percy Wilson. – Secretary Examining Board: Mrs. D. J. Wilson. – President of the SNU: Harold Vigurs. – Secretary of the SNU: Ernest Keeling.

As a point of interest: In 1943 a new scheme was put in place by the Exponents' Committee for a National Register, approved by the National Council. Percy Wilson exhibited to the Conference the following AGM at Leicester (July 1944) a printed copy of the Exponents' Certificate, which had been approved by the Exponents' Committee. During 1944 applications for inclusion in the National Register were 365 certificates being granted, bringing a total register, including Diploma Holders, up to 514. There were no Educational examinations held during this year, as the whole educational process was being revised.



It is interesting to note how this article came about. Over the last couple of years, I have received various questions about the origin of our symbol. Most of these questions were raised from the museum exhibit shown. The museum records only state: "White and Gold Wall Plaque depicting an early form of the Spiritualists' National Union Logo," which is clearly a Sunflower design.

During the writing and research of this article, and while also researching another article, I coincidently came across the story of this emblem! Published on the front page of *Psychic News*, May 21st 1955, this is quoted below. Please let me know if any reader would like a scan of the full article.

Metal Craftsman Dreamt of Emblem before Spiritualists Commissioned it for New Church.

"COWES National Spiritualist Church, which was rededicated in May by Percy Wilson,[34] has as its emblem a design based upon the international emblem of Spiritualism, the Sunflower.

"Cowes is believed to be the only church to display such an emblem over the entrance. There is a copy over the rostrum.

"The design was submitted to a local craftsman named Simmonds, an ironworker, who accepted the task with some trepidation.

Inspired

"While he was making a wooden mould based on the design given him by Mr. Phelps, one of the officials of the church, Simmonds remembered a dream he had had 18 months earlier.

"He had dreamt that he would be called upon to do something *he* had never even attempted before; something which had no connection with crucifixes or the type of work he was normally employed on.

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[34].—The article also states:—"Cowes church, which was bombed during the war, has been rebuilt on a prominent main-road site in the town.

"The rebuilding was made possible through the instrumentality of Percy Wilson. With his wide experience of dealing with war damage claims on behalf of Spiritualist churches, he was able to secure the grants necessary for reconstructing the premises.

"The imposing new structure, with its sweeping modern lines, cost about £7,000 to build of which a little more than £6,000 has been contributed by the War Damage Commission."

"Among those present were Harry Dawson, president of the Spiritualists' National Union; Mr. T. E. Keen, area representative for the South; Mr. B. Phelps, of Shanklin, the architect, Mr. Ball, of Cowes, the builder; and Mrs. Hart, president of the Southern District Council of the S.N.U."

"When he looked at the design he knew it was the special work he had felt himself destined to carry out.

"The cost of the emblem was met by Mrs. Bostock, in memory of her husband—first president of Cowes Spiritualist Church—and of her son.

Cost Over £300

"The original estimate was for £105. The final cost was over £300, so Mr. Simmonds was almost £200 out of pocket.

"But if other churches are prepared to purchase models of the emblem Mr. Simmonds' losses incurred in making the mould, and other incidental outlay on the prototype, can be largely recouped.

"It is hoped to make replicas in sizes down to one foot diameter."

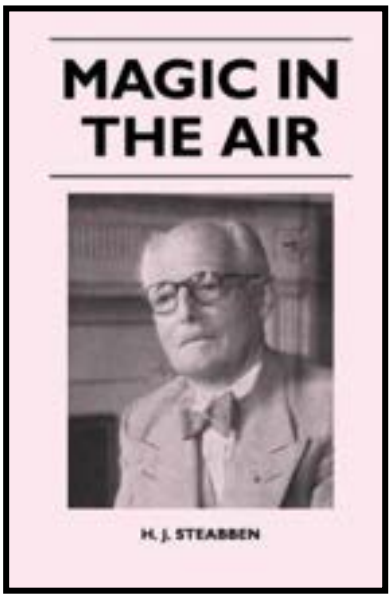
This offer was no doubt taken up by some – one of these beautiful replicas found its way to the Britten Memorial Museum. It can be noted on the church's facebook page that the emblem is still a prominent feature to the church.[35]

Below is the William (Bill) Henry Redmond's Minister's badge. He was appointed a Minister of the Spiritualists' National Union in 1959



[35].—Cowes Spiritualist Church, Newport Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight:—
http://www.snu.org.uk/community/churches/cowes.html

SOME HEALING HISTORY



Early healers in Britain worked singularly or in their healing groups from home or in their church/societies; a good example would be Herbert John Steabben, by trade a combination of farmer and draper. He was born in Islington, North London, circa 1881. He worked as a professional medium and was well known for demonstrating clairvoyance and psychometry across the country. He ran a centre at 44, Baker Street, London W.1. for seances,[44] developing circles, and healing etc. Steabben was one of the movement's most successful and respected healers. In or around 1946 Steabben incorporated healing at his centre, "The Healing Brotherhood of the Spiritualist Centre". By 1950 the brotherhood consisted of five healers including Steabben. The centre was still flourishing as late as 1958 at the same address. In 1957 Steabben wrote "Magic in the Air" published by his wife Katherine; this was possibly the first book ever published solely on absent healing; it is now reprinted and available from various outlets, for example Amazon.

There were other well-known centres; on Saturday at 3 p.m., October 27th 1934 the House of Red Cloud, situated in Wimbledon, was opened by Mrs Gordon Moore in the presence of King George of Greece, with an address given by Red Clould through Estelle Roberts. The centre was dedicated to healing the sick and for demonstrations of mediumship. This would continue until 1941when the House of Red Cloud was bombed.

Also in 1934 at one of our oldest and most respected societies, the London Spiritualist Alliance, (today known as The College of Psychic Studies),[45] a department of Spiritual Healing was started by Brig. General G. C. Kemp. Numerous independent groups continued to emerge throughout the country but were generally isolated as there were no guidelines or

[44].–At the Master Temple Psychic Centre, Portsmouth, Helen Duncan was seized during a séance on Wednesday January 19th, 1944. She was arrested under section 4 of the 1824 Vagrancy Act and was initially refused bail. Duncan was re-arrested under a more serious charge of conspiracy to defraud. The prosecution needed to prove beyond reasonable doubt that monies had been paid to see materialised spirits. At a meeting between prosecutors, John Maude, Henry Elam and the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) a single clause was found in an obsolete statute: Section 4 of the 1735 Witchcraft Act. Duncan would be the first 'Spiritualist Medium' to be charged under this Act and the first to be tried by a jury and eligible for a sentence exceeding three months, as would have been the maximum penalty under the lesser charge of the 1824 Vagrancy Act, section 4. The trial began in Court 4 of the Old Bailey, London on Thursday, March 23, 1944 and lasted more than seven full days. Duncan was charged along with her associates on seven counts.

Herbert Steabben estimated he had witnessed around one hundred and fifty séances with Duncan. He had held around seventy-five of these séances over a ten year period at his centre at 44, Baker Street. On day six of the trial, Thursday 30th, March 1944, the defence lawyer Mr. Simpson Pedler, assistant to Charles E. Loseby (both fellow members of Gray's Inn), who were appointed to defend Duncan by the Spiritualists' National Union called Steabben to the stand.

[45].–The College of Psychic Studies, 16 Queensberry Place, London:—
http://www.collegeofpsychicstudies.co.uk/index.html

Some noted healers had worked on occasion at the LSA, such as George Spriggs and Robert J. Lees.

national co-ordination. It would not be until the late 1940's that a group of healers under the leadership of John Britnell formed the Essex Healers Association. Around five years later, in 1954 at the initiative of Britnell "The National Federation of Spiritual Healers" was formed – this would be carried forward by Henry (Harry) James Edwards (1893-1976).

Healing within the Spiritualists' National Union

Organisation within the Union was a slow process, and healing groups and individuals were governed by the individual church committees It would not be until October 1924 that the Council appointed its first Healing Committee. An official report, given in the February 1932 issue of the Union's Journal *The National Spiritualist* by its editor George Berry (General Secretary) provides a nice overview of these early days:

S.N.U. Committees

THE HEALING COMMITTEE

This Committee represents one of the more recent activities of the National Council. Like other activities which have in them the elements of potential usefulness and permanence, its early years are characterised by slow progress rather than by large and immediate results. For many years Healing Circles have abounded both amongst the organised and the unaffiliated Churches. There has likewise been a relatively large number, of Spiritual Healers working through these Circles or independently, yet using the Church association as convenient centres for attracting clients.

It follows that much excellent work has been accomplished, with not a few outstanding, cures. Unfortunately little of it has been properly recorded and made available for later investigators, or retained as a permanent testimony of the valuable work accomplished through these channels. There has also been a number of other Healers of small gifts, and little knowledge, attached to the Movement for purposes of exploiting physical suffering, as other types of mediums have exploited the bereaved and sorrowing. Part of the work of the Healing Committee is to protect the genuine workers from the ill repute that attaches to abuses of Spiritual powers.

Late in 1924 and early 1925, Great Britain was roused by the wonderful Reports of Healing Missions at Bradford and London conducted by a Mr. Hickson. The Bishops of the Established Church felt compelled to voice their opinions, not only on the work of Mr. Hickson, but on the possibilities of Spiritual Healing. While very anxious to defend the Medical profession, they could do no other than affirm "that God may effect what science cannot effect." The Bishop of Manchester was moved to say "This Spiritual Healing is an attempt to revive what we believe to have been Christ's own method, which surely aimed at Spiritual results." As was to be expected there was plenty of criticism directed against Christian Science and all Psychic and Mental Healers working outside the Established Church.

The agitation, however, may be regarded as marking a turning point in the public recognition of the value of Spiritual Healing, and the intervening years have witnessed a great expansion of Spiritual Healing Guilds and Associations, particularly in London. These Associations are not attached to the National Union; but the record of their work as a definitely Spiritual activity has won for them a high regard among Spiritualists everywhere. Believing that equally valuable work is being

accomplished by the Healing Circles and through the ministration of Healers attached to the affiliated Churches, the Healing Committee have set themselves the task of rescuing these Healing Circles and their workers from the obscurity that now envelops them, and securing for them the recognition they deserve. The Committee are further actuated by the consideration that Spiritual Healing, depending so largely on the co-operation of Guides and Helpers in Spirit life, should become one of the most outstanding features of the work of every affiliated Church, and a distinguishing mark of the religious and spiritual nature of their Church activity.

The first Healing Committee was appointed by the Council in October, 1924, with instructions to prepare a Constitution, and to outline methods of work. A tentative Scheme was presented to the A. G. M. of 1925. It was accepted in principle and referred back to the Council for more detailed attention, and with authority to put a modified scheme into operation as soon as practicable.

In 1928 a new Committee was formed and the present simplified Scheme was adopted. Meanwhile the Exponent's Committee Regulations were revised and expanded to include the Healing Diploma, and at the 1929 A.G.M the first Healing Diploma was awarded to Mrs. Hare, Cardiff. A Healing Case Book for the use of Healing Circles and individual Healers has been published. It is slowly being taken up by Churches. To date 5 Diplomas have been awarded, and a number of other applications are under review. The need for very careful investigation into the bonafides of all applicants is one reason for hastening slowly. The whole of the affiliated Churches have been circularised for information of the work performed under their auspices. In view of the great importance to the religious appeal of organised Spiritualism, the Council seek the co-operation of the District Councils in speeding up the compilation of needed records, and inspiring the Churches to an appreciation of the value of permanent records of their most successful cases.

G.F.B.

It appears that in the ensuing years the Union's progress was hampered by the poor response from their affiliated churches, "…the Council seek the co-operation of the District Councils in speeding up the compilation of needed records, and inspiring the Churches to an appreciation of the value of permanent records of their most successful cases." Frank Blake in the *National Spiritualist* for June 1931 reinforces the importance of co-operation:

HEALING
BY F. T. BLAKE

Few of our churches appear to be aware of the serious attempt being made by the Union to regularize and officially record the healing work being done throughout the British Isles under the auspices of its affiliated bodies. That a record of this important work should be compiled and kept for present and future reference will be at once apparent to all who recognise the growing national importance of our movement. It would not only be an incentive to those at present engaged in the art of healing but would be a most valuable and instructive guide for future development.

It must be remembered that, as in all other branches of psychic activity, no person or group possesses all the knowledge necessary for the continuing usefulness of the service offered. Whatever may be the attainments of the individual or group, this

may be added to when all acquired knowledge is pooled and disseminated. It is hoped that through the machinery set up by the Union this collecting and disseminating of data pertaining to healing may be accomplished.

Where healing treatments are given under the auspices of a church it should form part of the church activity under the direction of its officers and council. A record should be kept of the patients attending, stating disease or infirmity, the number of treatments given and by whom, also the progress made by the patient towards recovery. A case book for this purpose may be obtained at small cost from the S.N.U. office.

It is also desired to compile a national register of our healers. An appeal is made to church councils to recommend their qualified healers for the national certificate and in his way help the Union to make an historical record of the healing work done by the movement as a whole.

Full particulars and all necessary information may be obtained from Mrs. Eleanor Paling, "Lucknow," Muriel Road, Beeston, Notts.



Frank Thomas Blake

In November 1931 the *National Spiritualist* reprints a paper read to the healing section of the International Spiritualist Federation Congress titled "Healing by Magnetism," by Frank T. Blake of Bournemouth. Blake confined his paper to the work done, and the methods employed by the Healing Guild in connection with the National Spiritualist Church, Bournemouth. He explains the work is done under the direction of a control who is known as the "Doctor," who is assisted by a number of his fellow discarnate companions. He explains the different methods of the healing used at the Guild, and how it runs under their own strict rules. At the 30th SNU Annual General Meeting, held in Glasgow in July 1932, the Exponents Committee recommended Blake for the Healing Diploma.

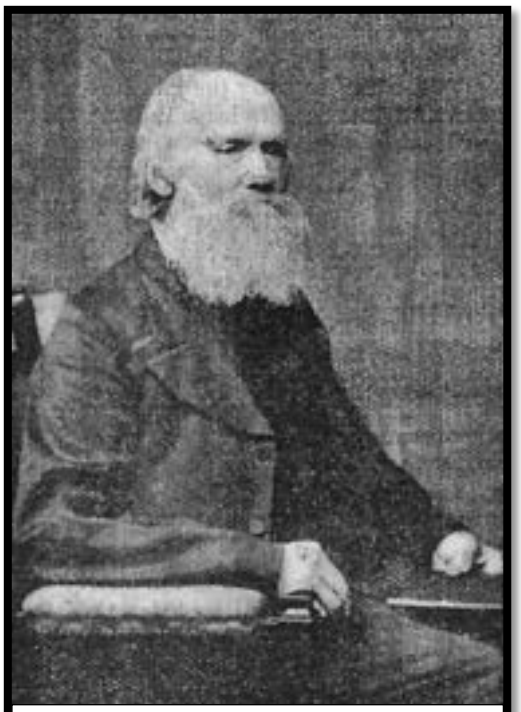
What Blake did not mention in his paper to the ISF Congress was that he himself was the trance medium for the control known as the "Doctor." Blake gave many years of dedicated service to the Union, he was President of the SNU's Southern District Council (SDC) for many years. He was one of the founder members of Bournemouth National Spiritualist Church,[46] he was a vice-President of the Union and President 1938-1941 and sadly died while in office.

To be continued in the next issue with a substantial report on the early healing work at Bournemouth National Church written by another former SNU President, John McIndoe.

[46].–There was another church which opened in 1926 at Charminster Road, Bournemouth. This was not affiliated to the Union – but did sell the SNU National Spiritualist! It was co-founded by some of the members of Blake's church. Today the church is one of the oldest independent Spiritualist Churches in the South. See Charminster Spiritualist Church:—http://www.charminsterspiritualistchurch.org.uk/index.htm

RICHMOND & WEATHERHEAD

An account of the introduction of Spiritualism at Keighley



David Richmond

David Richmond was born in Darlington on January 31st 1816 (date varies slightly in obituaries). He died in the same town on the 15th of February, 1891, and his gravestone reads:

"*In Loving Memory of David Richmond Native of Darlington Social Reformer and First Missionary Spiritualist Medium in Great Britain, Who Introduced the Subject of Modern Spiritualism, or the Phenomenal Labour of the Divine Spirit, to Public Notice in Darlington and Keighley Yorkshire in 1853 Died February 15th 1891, Age 75 Years*"

In recent years, some erroneous claims have surrounded the introduction of Spiritualism to Keighley: that Maria Hayden gave her first public demonstration/address at Keighley circa 1852, and then, in 1853, the first Spiritualist church was established by David Richmond.

Richmond spent many years pioneering Spiritualism and in a future article "Pioneer" will cover his long labours; at present however, I will focus on the foundation of Spiritualism in Keighley.

David Richmond introduced Spiritualism to Keighley in 1853. This introduction would later result in the development of the first Spiritualist Society, and due mainly to the efforts of David Weatherhead the society was called "The Spiritual Brotherhood." There are numerous early accounts. In 1874 David Richmond wrote a letter to the founder editor of the *Medium and Daybreak,* James Burns, which he published on August 14th 1874. The letter is republished in Psypioneer Volume 1. No 3. July 2004.

An account of the introduction of Spiritualism at Keighley was also given in *Light* dated July 15th 1882, which reported on the thirtieth anniversary of the introduction of Spiritualism into this country. The celebration was organised by the committee and friends of the "Spiritual Brotherhood," who held a public tea and meeting on Saturday July 8th 1882.[16] The meeting was opened by the society's chairman, Mr. J. Clapham, who said:

> "Ladies and gentlemen, we are met here to-night to show our gratitude to the late Mr. Weatherhead, and also to Mr. Shackleton and Mr. Wright, for their past services. Keighley was the place where Spiritualism was first promulgated in this country, being introduced to us by Mr. David Richmond, of Darlington, who, with the assistance of Mr. Weatherhead, was enabled to deliver three lectures upon the subject in the Working Men's Hall, in June, 1853. The issues were, that Mr. Weatherhead

[16].–The full *Light* report is published in Psypioneer Volume 2. No 5. May 2006. An edited version of this account can be found in Emma Hardinge Britten's "Nineteenth Century Miracles" on pages 198-199.

took steps which resulted in the formation of the Society which exists at the present time; and soon afterwards the mediums named were developed, and they are still serving us to-day.

These gentlemen, with Mr. Weatherhead, were the main stays of the cause, and Mr. Weatherhead, during his life here, spared neither time nor means in spreading abroad this grand truth. It was he who established the first printing press, and distributed tracts, pamphlets, and other literature broadcast, the materials for which were largely obtained through mediumship. He it was who bore the entire expense of the erection of the Lyceum buildings, and in many other ways testified his earnestness and devotion to the cause. The outcome of his labours has been that to-day we have here a society in a flourishing condition, having one hundred and fifty members on the roll, some five or six active mediums constantly ministering to us, and a Sunday-school, composed of upwards of a hundred members. As, therefore, a slight mark of esteem and appreciation to these our pioneer workers, we are to-night to present to them the portraits before us, and all will join with me in saying they are most heartily deserved."

"The portraits, in oils, which are excellent specimens of the painter's art, were then presented. That to Mr. Wright was presented by Mr. John Scott, of Belfast; that to Mr. Shackleton by Mr. D. Richmond, of Darlington; and that of Mr. Weatherhead to his family, by Mr. J. J. Morse, of London; and suitable acknowledgments were made in each case. The proceedings were varied by some excellent singing and reciting by a glee party and several friends, and altogether the event was marked by a hearty enthusiasm which evidenced the full sympathy of all present in the event of the day."

Keighley Spiritualists' Society celebrated their forty-fifth anniversary in conjunction with the ninth Spiritualists' National Federation Annual Conference at their Heber Street Spiritual Temple on July 2nd and 3rd 1898.[17] Keighley hosted the first Spiritualists' National Union AGM on July 4th and 5th 1903. The Union's first elected presidential vote was between: J. C. Macdonald, John Parr and Alfred Smedley – Macdonald withdrew in favour of Parr, and Smedley felt unable to stand owing to his wife being seriously ill; Parr, therefore, was duly elected. Both Macdonald and Smedley were well known within the National Federation: Smedley was a well-respected researcher especially in the mediumship of Catherine (Kate) Wood.[18]

[17].–The Spiritualists' National Federation's president Edward W. Wallis opened his presidential address:—"FRIENDS AND COMRADES,—Eight years ago, in Manchester, at a preliminary Conference, the National Federation of Spiritualists was begun, and it is fitting that in this year of Jubilee the National Conference should meet in the birthplace of the movement in England. During the past eight years the public work of the Cause has practically doubled. Undoubtedly the Federation has given an impetus to that growth by the propaganda work which has been undertaken through its agency, and by the unity and stability which the movement has acquired as a result of its existence. There are to-day 89 Societies affiliated with the Federation, including the Yorkshire Union, the Lyceum Union, and the International Corresponding Society; and 160 Associates."

[18].–See Psypioneer: Volume 7. No 9. September 2011:—*The Beginnings of Full Form Materialisations in England Catherine (Kate) Elizabeth Wood 1854-1884 continued* ... Smedley also wrote "Some Reminiscences An Account of Startling Spiritual Manifestations," published by Light, London, and British Lyceum Union Depot, Dewsbury, Yorkshire, 1900.

As the SNU education courses and Yearbook etc celebrate Keighley as the birthplace of Modern Spiritualism in this country, below is reprinted an article by Horace Leaf, first published on November 21st 1913 (front page -578) from his series "Historical Records" which he ran in the *Two Worlds*:[19]

KEIGHLEY (HEBER STREET) SPIRITUAL TEMPLE,

THE MOTHER TOWN OF BRITISH SPIRITUALISM.

KEIGHLEY is the birthplace of Modern Spiritualism in England. About five years after the famous Rochester knockings, which ushered Modern Spiritualism into the world, Mr. David Richmond arrived in England from America, and delivered for the first time a lecture on spirit-return in the Working Men's Hall, Sun-street, Keighley.

It seems to be quite in order that this Yorkshire town should be the place from whence the teaching of Spiritualism has radiated throughout the British Isles, and even far beyond. Situated in beautiful surroundings, the town nestles peacefully in the midst of hills of the Pennine Chain, which commence not far off. From these hills is produced a dark sand-stone, with which the houses and buildings of Keighley, and some neighbouring places, are almost entirely constructed.

The chief industries of the town are stuffs, machinery, tools, and iron founding. Most of the members of the Temple are employed at one or other of these occupations. There is little noise and no great motion here. The peculiar insulated condition, due to high hills surrounding, tends to keep the town separate from the greater world in certain important respects. One is almost compelled to think, as they view the prospect of the place, that the introduction of Spiritualism in this town was no accidental affair, for sixty years ago matters must have been very propitious for spirit-communication. Keighley, then, as now, but to a greater extent, enjoyed its isolation, and yet through its industries, constant and effective connection with the country in general.

As with Mr. David Richmond rests the honour of bringing Spiritualism to England, so with Mr. David Weatherhead the honour rests for having founded the first Society in the country, and thus commencing organisation. How deeply the movement, and even the nation, is indebted to Mr. Weatherhead we can only imagine, for Spiritualism has brought hope and comfort to many who through bereavement were lost in hopeless mourning.[20]

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[19].–Horace Leaf F.R.G.S. (1886c – 1971) was a well-known British propagandist, who lectured widely at home and abroad on psychic subjects. His interest in the psychic field was aroused in 1904; he was mediumistic and practiced clairvoyance, psychometry and healing. Leaf authored a number of books including 'What is this Spiritualism'1918 (1919 U.S.A.), 'Under the Southern Cross' 1923, and 'The Psychology and Development of Mediumship' c1926.

[20].–David Wilkinson Weatherhead born January 27th 1803, died September 3rd 1875. He worked as a wholesale and retail grocer in Keighley.



David Wilkinson Weatherhead

Mr. Weatherhead's enthusiasm and sincerity were such that, entirely at his own expense, he placed, for many years, the best hall, capable of seating 500 persons, in the Working Men's Hall, at the disposal of the Movement. This was the scene of many fine meetings, for interest in Spiritualism was at the time intense, so much so that people would journey many miles to attend the services. It was even found necessary to establish a newspaper, so that the public demand for information could be met, and here again Mr. David Weatherhead is much in evidence.

About two years after the lecture of Mr. Richmond, namely, in the Spring of 1855, "The Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph," the first Spiritualist newspaper in England, was committed to the care of the public. A small sheet of 14 pages, replete with engrossingly interesting matter, including accounts of remarkable communications from the "other side," it could not fail to find support.

The entire expense of the production of this paper, we have said, was borne by the father of our organisation. Mr. Weatherhead bought a printing press, established an office, and placed in charge Mr. Benjamin Morell, who was compositor and everything else in connection with the paper. A curious thing was, this gentleman at first knew practically nothing of any of these tasks, but so ardent was he for the Cause, he overcame every difficulty, and produced a series of papers worthy of high praise.[21]

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[21].–"Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph published at Keighley, in Yorkshire, at the expense of Mr. Weatherhead, a grocer, and edited by his shopman, Mr. Benjamin Morell, who conducted it with much ability from 1855 to 1860. After the publication of one volume it assumed the title of the British Spiritual Telegraph, and contained a great mass of valuable matter. It ceased on the appearance of the Spiritual Magazine. (It contained contributions from Dr. Garth Wilkinson, Dr. Ashburner, the late Mr. Elihu Rich, Mr. Thos. Shorter, etc.) "Beside the support of this journal, Mr. Weatherhead built a Spiritual Lyceum. Mr. Weatherhead lived, not only a staunch Spiritualist, but as a Temperance and Dietetic Reformer, till 1875, when he died at the age of seventy-three—a man who, in a remote corner, had rendered most essential services to truth and progress."—William Howitt. Whosoever shall undertake the important task of writing the history of the rise in England of the Spiritual-movement, will find in the volumes, now all but forgotten and rare, of the Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph, a mine of curious and highly valuable information. The memory of earnest workers in the cause is so speedily overgrown by new labours and new names, that it is necessary an "Old Mortality" should ever and anon appear to piously restore their epitaphs."

Taken from: "Pioneers of the Spiritual Reformation Justinus Kerner—William Howitt," by Mrs. Howitt Watts (Anna Mary Howitt Watts) published by the Psychological Press Association, London 1883, footnote on page 294.

During the Society's residence in the Working Men's Hall, various house or cottage meetings were held by different people, partly for psychic development, but chiefly for immediate spirit-communication. Almost incredible phenomena at times occurred, through which firm sceptics were brought to a knowledge of the truth of spirit-return.



The Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph.

No. 1. APRIL, 1865. Price 1d.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

Not long ago, a few of us published a small pamphlet, entitled "Spirit Rapping Extraordinary," containing a short sermon, and a small quantity of poetry, which we supposed were given by those invisibles, called Spirits. We certainly thought at the time, that nearly any thing coming from that source, would be read with the greatest interest. This, very likely, would have been the case, providing we could have convinced the public that they really were the productions of Spirits; but as might almost have been expected, we found that convincing them upon that point was a very great difficulty.

Our method of Table Moving, by the hand of a medium, and making poetry and other compositions, entirely new, and strange to either the medium or the company, was looked upon, either as a downright piece of deception; or, as the effect of some new kind of mesmerism, galvanism, or electricity, passing, by some invisible means, through the company, and centering in the medium and the table. As the name of our principal author on that occasion, as well as on the present, was that of Burns, and the poetry we got, was pronounced, by his admirers, to be vastly inferior to his acknowledged productions, we had some of them at once in arms against us, and without making any particular inquiry into the subject, gave us as good as the tit direct; affirming that there was no similarity between the two, and that it was nothing short of a gross insult to the character of the poet, to suppose that he was any way concerned in the matter. One of his admirers, in an article on the subject, gave it the title of "sacrilege;" while another scraped upon it a large assortment of the finest extracts from his poetry, and defied us to the comparison. Being, however, quite convinced that the parties knew nothing of the matter, and that we had nothing to do with the composition, or of attaching the name of Burns to it, we continued our seances, thinking that time might assist in explaining the mystery; and, now, we again beg to present you with some more, bearing the name of the same author.

Since the publication of the last pamphlet, we have seen a great many proofs of its truth, quite sufficient, we think, to almost convince the most sceptical. We have seen it overturn Mr. Faraday's theory of muscular action, by moving tables, and giving language with the hands of mediums, placed on the surface of a dish of water. We have frequently seen it change the mediumship from one person to another, sitting at the table, and give intelligent communication through persons who did not believe in

After several years the Society, through imperative circumstances, had to leave its first home and move to an empty chapel in East Parade. Judging by the seating capacity, the new place could not be regarded as an improvement, for it was able to seat only about one fourth of the former hall. But the audiences so exceeded the power of the chapel that another large room in the same building had to be requisitioned. Two meetings were, therefore, conducted in the place every Sunday evening simultaneously. East Parade was generally called by the members The Lyceum.

During the occupation of East Parade there existed another Spiritualist Society in the town, yclept The Spiritual Temple, holding meetings in Dalton-lane. When, in 1895, the removal to the present building occurred, the two Societies combined and formed one Society.

Success appears always to have favoured Keighley Society, for all the time the Society most needed a larger hall, Heber-street Temple was vacant. This place had also formerly been used as a chapel, and so offered psychic conditions very suitable to Spiritualism. The change took place very suddenly on account of the Societies having to decide within three days whether they would purchase the building or not.

It so happened that a brewery company had offered a certain price for the building, and it rested with the Societies whether they were prepared to offer more.

A building fund had for some time been in existence, so that a nucleus of money was already in hand. A special meeting was quickly convened, and it was decided to make the purchase. The necessary balance was procured through a building society. Ever since this decision the members have acted most loyally

in the interests of the Movement and the Society, so that the debt thus incurred is nearly paid.

Speaking on this subject, Mr. Ernest Shackleton, the popular secretary, said: "It is the intention of the members that the Society shall be clear of all debt by the end of this year. The building will then belong to the Movement, as, according to the Deed Poll, it must be devoted to the Cause of Spiritualism only."

The nature and frequency of the special meetings held is usually an indication of a Society's condition. If they are plentiful, it is a sign of prosperity; if they are few, it is usually the reverse. Special meetings play a conspicuous part at Heber-street. Harvest festivals, flower services, anniversary meetings of the Lyceum and church, at homes, and even special missions lasting a whole week, conducted by some highly-qualified platform worker, are held with commendable regularity. The at homes, [sic] always an excellent source of financial improvement and good feeling, last for three days in November.

Private developing circles, of course, exist, whilst the Society conduct an after-circle at the close of each Sunday evening service, and it is usually very well attended. In this way much good is done and encouragement given inquirers to persevere in their endeavours to communicate with the spirit-world. Psychic development has always been regarded as of supreme importance, and through the Society's efforts in this direction some splendid work has been accomplished. Few Societies can show a larger or better list of mediums and platform workers who have developed through their efforts than Keighley. Some of the names take us back considerably into the past. Messrs. Hardacre, Taylor, Richards, Abraham Shackleton, John Wright, Mrs. Lucas, and Mrs. Scott; later came Mr. J. Pickles, an earnest and enthusiastic Lyceum worker, and some others. Most of these workers limited their efforts to Keighley.

It has been said that Yorkshire people love children. Certainly, with their natural acumen they realise their value. Accordingly, Heber-street Spiritual Temple has done all in its power for the bairns. A visit to the Lyceum, which is one of the oldest in the country, must be made if the completeness of success in this branch of our work is to be realised. Miss Fossey, the conductor, is to be complimented on the healthiness of the Lyceum to which she and her assistants are so whole-heartedly devoted. Their reward is granted them by the splendid results of their efforts.

The present membership is over seventy real live children, who love the Lyceum. They must compare favourably with any body of youngsters of a similar nature. No doubt their brightness and ability is largely due to the nature of the Lyceum instruction. The methods adopted by Spiritualists in the religious training of children is far superior to anything outside the Movement; indeed, used properly, one is inclined to think them the last word in such instruction. Why the Lyceum generally is not more popular is most difficult to understand. The discovery, for such it seems to be, that real religious teaching must include the exercise of body as well as mind, alone raises Lyceum methods above those of other religious bodies.

Calisthenics do much more than develop and beautify the body; they quicken and enlarge the mind, especially in children. If any doubt this, go to Heber-street Temple one Sunday morning, and watch the members of the Lyceum respond to the orders of drill instructor Mr. Elijah Summers. It is remarkable how children, many of them very young indeed, can so readily respond to the almost bewildering series of commands literally rapped out by Mr. Summers. The drill instructor is to be sincerely congratulated on his success and splendid pupils, who also are to be complimented on so excellent a commander.

Everyone is proud of the Lyceum, and that is sufficient guarantee of its continuance. So long as the work among the children persists, there need be no fear for the progress of Spiritualism in Yorkshire.

On two occasions the Temple has maintained a resident speaker. In the first instance, about fourteen years ago, Mr. Walter Howell was retained for three years, and later Mr. Frank Hepworth remained in charge for a period of four years,[22] about seven years ago. If nothing else were recorded to express the fine spirit of Keighley Society but these two facts, sufficient would be said, for it is only the greatest earnestness and enthusiasm that can accomplish such an end.

When writing about a Society as old and venerable as Keighley there is a great deal that can be said, but owing to the necessary limit of printing space it becomes a difficult duty to decide what is best to select for recording, for all is so very interesting. But it were a fault to omit to mention the existence of so many old and faithful members, who date their connection with the movement back to the very earliest days. They are too numerous to be mentioned by name, and to distinguish any above the others would be unfair.

There are entire families who have given workers to the Cause, and the children of the present generation are not one whit less sincere than their parents. Suffice it to say there are in Keighley some of the oldest Spiritualists in Great Britain, who are not only unshaken in their confidence of the truth of the fundamentals of Spiritualism, but confirmed by long experience.

The officers of the Temple are to be congratulated on their Society and work. The respected President, Mr. Benjamin Gledson, and his fellow committee-men, well recognise that. And how many persons concerned with the finances of other Societies must envy Financial Secretary Mr. Moss, and Treasurer Mr. T. Holdsworth, who is an honoured member of the Town Council, with the importance of their tasks, rendered free from worry by the able support they receive. Vice-president Mr. Harry Middlebrough shares with all their good feeling and efforts in the Cause.

Sixty- years have passed away since the glorious news of spirit-return was brought to Keighley and England for the first time. What will another two generations do for the Cause? Keighley's answer is given in the splendid spirit

[22].–Frank Hepworth, an early worker for the Spiritualists' National Federation, later became SNU President 1909-1910.

of unity which she displays, and it is not too much to assert that if this attitude is everywhere adopted Spiritualism will by that time have established itself in its right high place as a living force throughout all civilisation.

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Heber Street Spiritualists' Society

In 1897 the society then called the 'Heber Street Spiritual Temple,' became affiliated to the Spiritualists' National Federation that later became the S.N.U. After 117 years remains affiliated to the Union.

Details of the Society's weekly public services, open circles, healing, and special events, etc, can all be found on their website.[23]

Or contact by e-mail: keighleychurch@aol.com

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[23].–Heber Street Spiritualists' Society:—http://www.cylex-uk.co.uk/reviews/viewcompanywebsite.aspx?firmaName=heber-street-national-spiritualist-church&companyId=23020810

GENERAL SECRETARIES OF THE SNU

The Thirteenth and final Annual Conference of the Spiritualists' National Federation was held at Bootle on July 5th and 6th under the Presidency of William Johnson

"Mr. Johnson departed from the precedent set by former occupants of the Presidential chair in that he did not present a formal address to the Conference during its session. This, to our thinking, was a practical step, inasmuch as it gave a deal more time for business, and thus extended the too limited opportunities for the discussion of the multifarious business of the movement.

"In succeeding years there will be less business of a formal character to be transacted, and the movement may congratulate itself that this Thirteenth Conference, the last of the Federation, practically saw the end of the long and ofttimes wearying discussions on matters of legal Phraseology.

"Thirteen in this case will, we hope, be a lucky number rather than the reverse, and we trust that at the first Conference of the Spiritualists' National Union it will be possible to spend considerable time in the discussion of matters concerning the immediate practical work which lies before the movement."



FIRST GENERAL MEETING
OF THE
SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION.

Following upon the adjournment of the Federation business at 8 p.m. on Saturday evening, those persons who had given in their names as desirous of becoming members of the Union met for their first general meeting.

It was purely a formal business meeting, but it was extremely gratifying to find that so large a number as 79 names were already enrolled as ordinary members of the Union. This was the number present, and the business was speedily transacted.

The officers of the Federation would be the first officers of the Union, and a formal resolution was carried to give effect to this.

Messrs. Tallent-Bateman and Thwaites were elected solicitors.

The Draft Bye-Laws, as approved by the Federation Conference, were adopted, and on the invitation of Mr. F. Hepworth, seconded by Mr. Jos. Whittaker, it was decided to hold the first Conference and Annual General Meeting of the new Union at Keighley, on the occasion of the jubilee of that, the oldest British, society on July 4th and 5th, 1903.

The meeting was of brief duration, and, as the attendance was of historic interest, we hope to be able to publish shortly a list of first subscribers to the roll of the Spiritualists' National Union Ltd.

On Saturday, July 5th, 1902 at 5 p.m., the Spiritualists' National Union Ltd, which was earlier registered by the Board of Trade on October 18th 1901, held a brief preliminary meeting prior to the opening of the Federation Conference, which commenced at 6 p.m. Reports were given by the Secretary, Treasurer, Propaganda and Benevolence Committees, which were unanimously adopted, and a number of bye-laws for the future guidance of the Union were submitted and adopted. At 8 p.m.[9] the Federation meeting was adjourned; a short general meeting of the Union was held, with the formal appointment of the Officers and members of the Executive of the Federation becoming the first Officers and Council of the Union, with the exception of James J. Morse, who was about to embark on a tour of Australia.

[9] The above Conference quote and image is taken from the Thirteenth Annual Conference at Bootle, reported in the *Two Worlds,* July 11th 1902, pages 354-357.

James Morse, at the fifth Conference of the Spiritualists' National Federation held at Darwen in 1894, proposed Mr William Harrison take the post of Federation Secretary, replacing Mr T. Taylor (Manchester). Harrison at this time was the Secretary of the Robinson Street Society, Burnley. It should be noted for completeness that the Spiritualists' National Federation was constituted and formed at Bradford in 1891. Mr James B. Tetlow (Pendleton) was the first Secretary and held this position until 1893, when Mr T. Taylor succeeded him. Apart from 1896, when Wilfred Rooke (Levenshulme, Manchester) held this position and the following year James Swindlehurst (Preston) became Secretary, with Harrison as his Assistant Secretary, Harrison held the position as Federation Secretary until 1902, when he then became the first SNU General Secretary of the newly constituted National Union.



The first AGM was held at the Spiritual Temple, Heber Street, Keighley on July 4th and 5th 1903.[10] William Harrison was re-elected Secretary; the following year he became Vice-President, with former SNU Vice-President, Hanson Gledhill Hey, taking up the now vacant position of Secretary. It would appear their roles were exchanged prior to the July AGM held at Bradford. Hey's residence, a tobacconist's shop at Halifax, became the first registered office of the Union.[11] Around fourteen years later Mr R. H. Yates was appointed to help Hanson Hey when he fell ill around 1918. Hey retired owing to his health problems in 1920 and Yates was appointed his successor. It was decided at the AGM (Reading) that, given Hey's long contribution to the Federation and the Union, he "… would be retained on salary for the forthcoming year. In case the higher call should come to the late secretary, Mrs Hey would be left, and she had served the Union in more ways than the public knew." Hanson Gledhill Hey died soon after: August 30th 1866 - February 28th 1921.[12]

[10] See last Pioneer, Volume 1, No. 4, July 2014:–Richmond & Weatherhead – An account of the introduction of Spiritualism at Keighley:–
http://www.snu.org.uk/documents/pdf/SNU%20PIONEER%2001_04.pdf

[11] Photograph (Britten Memorial Museum) of 68 Crown Street, Halifax, the first office of the Spiritualists' National Union Ltd and the residence of the Hon. Secretary, Hanson G. Hey; it was demolished for road-widening in 1937. Former SNU President Duncan Gascoyne originally researched the information about the photograph; it should be noted that the man standing outside is not Hanson Hey.

[12] For more information on Hanson Hey and his obituary see Psypioneer, Volume 6, No. 10, October 2010.



On the eve of the 1922 AGM word came that Mr Yates had suffered a stroke; his written resignation was read at the AGM held on July 1st 1922 at Caxton Hall, Westminster, London. Yates consented for the registered office of the SNU to remain at his home in Thornton Lodge Road, Huddersfield. At the SNU quarterly meeting on October 28th in Manchester a new registered office was discussed; after considering several towns it was agreed that Manchester offered the most central position and first-class railway facilities.[13]

Around 70 applications were received for the post of General Secretary; on October 2nd 1922 George Berry was appointed, resigning his office as President. Ernest Oaten moved from Vice-President to fill the Presidential chair and Jessy (also spelt Jessie) Greenwood was elected to be the first lady Vice-President. Berry remained as General Secretary until 1933, when he took on the Union's position of Organising Secretary. Frank T. Harris succeeded him on June 12th until his resignation in May 1938, not taking effect until June 4th 1938. Former President Ernest Keeling acted as interim General Secretary and in October of that year he was officially appointed Secretary of the Union. He was given a salary of £130 per annum, plus an allowance for travelling and subsistence.

May Price succeeded Ernest Keeling in September 1944. Keeling remained in office to help her, being the only female Secretary, began her duties on October 2nd 1944. There had been 120 applicants for the post, including one man who described himself as a "youth of 80"! Price was a lifelong Spiritualist and for many years she was on the staff of the Co-operative College, Manchester, where she was Senior Lecturer in Social Studies. Price resigned her post in 1946 and in November of that year Richard (Dick) Ellidge took over.

The Two Worlds reported on December 6th 1946:



"The Council of the Spiritualists' National Union have appointed Mr. Richard Ellidge of Shaw, near Oldham, Lancashire, as General Secretary of the Union. Mr. Ellidge, who has already commenced his duties, was some years ago the Hon. Secretary of the Manchester District Council, and has been actively associated with the Movement since I920, when the Lyceum at Shaw was restarted after being closed for some time. He has since held

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

various offices until in 1930 he was elected Church President.

It should be a source of satisfaction to the Lyceum Movement that one of their number should be given this important appointment, and augurs well for the future relationship of the two bodies.

Under his leadership, and with the help of a small number of workers, the Church at Shaw has advanced from renting a small to owning stone built, two storeyed premises, with substantial funds in hand. As delegate, Mr. Ellidge has attended many Annual Meetings of the Union and will be known to many in the Movement, but more so, as a former secretary for more than five years of the Manchester District Council, in which capacity he organised a number of large scale propaganda meetings. A believer in the value of publicity of the right type, the new secretary is keen to get the fullest possible value out of the Centenary Celebrations, and is looking forward to taking an active part.

Diploma Holder.

Educationally, in order to officiate at his own Church, Mr. Ellidge took up the education Scheme and now holds the Class "B" Diploma. He has developed to some extent his own gift of clairvoyance to further satisfy himself of the reality of survival, and to eliminate the necessity of an intermediary. Last year he was appointed a minister of the Union.

Mr. Ellidge was married in I936, Mr. Frank Hepworth performing the ceremony, which was the first of its kind to be held in Shaw in a Spiritualists' Church. Incidentally, it was Mr. Hepworth's one hundredth marriage service.[14] A six year old daughter is already showing signs of the psychic faculty.

Although only in his middle thirties, the General Secretary has extensive international and political knowledge, which should be of value to the Movement. From the cotton industry, where he spent many years, Mr. Ellidge took over a post during the war, as an export correspondent for India and Ceylon, for a well known asbestos firm, and was responsible for sending large quantities of war material to the East in readiness for the final effort against Japan. As a result of honorary work in the political field, he was invited in 1945 to become a political agent and organiser. Taking charge of a County constituency during the General Election, Parliamentary By-elections, County and Local Government elections have since occupied his time as agent, and in the case of County and Local elections, as candidate as well.

Interest in the Spiritualists' Movement, an urge and desire to assist in the great task of unifying our forces, and applying our strength in

[14] SNU President 1909.

the work ahead, are the sole reasons for declining a political career. Argumentative, but not vindictive, logical and unassuming, Mr. Ellidge will endeavour, quietly but firmly, to raise the standard of the Union even higher. As an organiser in the political field he has already established a reputation, and seeks the co-operation of the Movement in building up an organisation worthy of those who have fought in the past and who still lead us."

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

It was in this year that the Union was faced with an ultimatum, with demands from the local fire authority in respect of fire precautions. Essential modernisation would involve an expense of at least £2,500 to the Union's registered office at Tib Lane, Manchester, and after several deferments a final date of August 1st was given by the fire authorities to either vacate Britten House or carry out the essential work. So the office moved to Stansted, taking over the Annexe, which became known as Britten House, as it is still called today.

Dick packed up home and moved to Stansted Hall, where he continued his duties as Secretary until around 1973, then taking on a new role as SNU Consultant. He was diabetic and suffered from heart problems; he had two previous heart attacks and, sadly, the third was the cause of his passing in around December 1978.



Ronald J. Baker replaced Ellidge as Secretary, who also resided at Stansted Hall. He was a popular figure at the College as a fine speaker and demonstrator and participated on the numerous courses. Ron, a former Roman Catholic, was destined for priesthood; he was the sixth of seven children and was born in Birmingham in May 1936. Ron also suffered from diabetes. It was at St. Helen's Spiritualist Church, Lancashire that a simple one-worded message was given to him – "sugar." A urine test confirmed he had diabetes mellitus, which meant self-administering insulin injections.

In 1972 Ron joined the SNU as a full-time officer responsible for administration and finance, then becoming the General Secretary. Ron resigned

his General Secretary's post in August 1976. A Minister of the Union, Ron died in December 1987 at the age of 50.


GENERAL SECRETARY REQUIRED
for the
SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION LTD.,
Must be capable of undertaking secretarial duties and preferably conversant with S.N.U., matters.
Salary, with free accommodation, £2,500 per annum negotiable.
Applications in writing to:
Mr L. C. Davey, Vice-President, S.N.U. Ltd., 94 Woodlands Road, Isleworth, Middlesex.

Advertising for a new General Secretary, an advert was placed in the August/September 1976 issue of the SNU's 'Communicator', edited by the National Publicity Officer, Jeanette Dunn. By November a new General Secretary was appointed and was expected to take up his duties in January 1977. Acting General Secretary during this interim period was Douglas R. Lawrence, MBE. Lawrence was the Secretary to the National Executive Committee, the Council of the Union and the Building Fund Pool; he was also a Minister of the Union.[15]

The newly appointed General Secretary was Harold Mayze and the following are his own words of introduction taken from the SNU 'Communicator', Vol.2, No. 1, 1977:



"REALISING that many people must be wondering who is taking over the General Secretary's job at Britten House, I appreciate that our members would like to know something of me.

I am a Derbyshire Tup, born in Derby, 16th May, 1915, and educated at Bemrose School, Derby.

I started a local government career, spreading over some 46 years, as a Junior in the Borough Accountant's Office, Babington Lane, Derby. While with that council from 1st April, 1931, I qualified as a Municipal Accountant. I moved to Rochester, Kent, in February 1949 as Chief Accountant in the City Treasurer's Dept. In September 1953, I was appointed Chief Financial Officer to Spalding Rural District Council and I was appointed Clerk of the Council to that authority in 1969.

[15] A lecture by Lawrence given in 1976 at Reading Spiritualist Church is included in a new double CD, "Physical Séance Room Recollections – As told by Senior Spiritualists". Lawrence gives numerous accounts of his experiences in physical mediumship, being allowed to handle a sheet of ectoplasm, his experiences with Helen Duncan, etc. This was reviewed in Psypioneer, Volume 10, No. 09/10, 2014, with contact details to acquire a copy.

On the 31st March 1974, I took early retirement rather than join the reorganised larger authorities. I had about six months holiday and then accepted the post of Town Clerk to Epping Town Council in Essex.

I am a married man. My son is a metalurgist, holding a degree as a Master of Science and my daughter is a Nursing Sister at Canterbury Hospital. I have two grand-children. My wife has been a Spiritualist since the age of 17, is a capable speaker and a spiritual healer. She also paints a little but spends most of her spare time helping the elderly people around here.

Church Work

As a Spiritualist, I do not qualify for a long service award. Whilst living at Spalding, I was for a short period the President of Peterborough Cromwell Road S.N.U. Church. As a speaker /demonstrator, I have some aquaintances and many friends in the East Midland and Essex/Herts areas. I have tried to be of service to as many people as possible and still hope to continue in like manner.

Refering to the job as General Secretary, I am an administrator and hope to bring the experience gained over many years to my new job.

My main aim is to provide an efficient working office for the Officers and members of the Union. I shall attempt to be of service to all the members of the Union and particularly help the many voluntary workers towards the expansion and progression of our movement.

It is my intention with the approval of the Council and members to look for and train a much younger person to follow as General Secretary in a few years.

The Spiritualists' National Union must go from strength to strength in its aim to continue to spread our teachings and philosophy to enlighten many more people. Without a strong and viable Union, Spiritualism would face a difficult and very nearly impossible path."

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The "younger person to follow as General Secretary in a few years", as suggested on the retirement of Harold Mayze, was Charles Coulston, BA. On August 4th 1980 he took office.

Charles Coulston became interested in Spiritualism in 1960, aged 16, when he attended Carlisle Grammar School. As part of his Divinity 'O' Level studies he was required to pick a religious denomination, research the religion and deliver a talk. He chose Spiritualism and his selected reading material

included Arthur Findlay's *Rock of Truth* and Carl Wickland's *Thirty Years Among The Dead*. The seed was sown; he continued his reading into Spiritualism, leading him to Carlisle Spiritualist Church.

Leaving Carlisle Grammar School, Charles moved to Durham University to read Classics (Latin, Greek and Ancient History); attending the University for three years, he earned a 2(i) BA Honours degree. Charles decided to take up teaching and joined a preparatory school in Northumberland; after a few years he moved to Loughborough Grammar School, where he would spend the next ten years.



Official Opening

In late 1972 Charles began attending Loughborough Spiritualist Church and in 1976 he became Minutes Secretary. In 1979 he was elected President on the retirement of Mr Jim Teasdale, who had been President since 1966. Loughborough has a long Spiritualist history reaching back to the late 1800s, when around 1884 Mrs (Ma) Brookes founded the Loughborough Society of Spiritualists; like most early societies they survived in private houses and rented rooms, moving to larger premises as the society grew. In June 1901 Loughborough Spiritualist Society affiliated to the Spiritualists' National Federation, which shortly after became the SNU. Ma Brookes continued as its President until around 1924, followed by Miss Mercy Ellen Mee, who held office until 1966. With the help of the Union's Building Fund Loughborough Spiritualist Church was officially opened on April 4th 1964 by SNU President Charles Quastel.[16]

Up until joining the Church Charles had been unaware of the National Union; he soon became a Class B member and attended his first SNU Annual General Meeting at Swanwick in Derbyshire. He involved himself in future AGMs and was invited to become a member of the Rules and Standing Orders Committee, which he accepted. Harold Mayze decided it was time to retire and Charles noted the advertisement in the Spiritualist press. In July 1980 Charles resigned as Church President to take up his position as General Secretary of the Union.

[16] On August 15th 1992 Charles Coulston officially opened an extension to the church building known as the "Sanctuary". In 2004 the church celebrated 40 years of service, a Re-Dedication Service was officiated by SNU President, Duncan Gascoyne on Saturday April 3rd 2004, to which Charles was in attendance. More recently on March 29th 2014, minister David Bruton President of the SNU accompanied by their former Church President Charles Coulston, conducted a Service of Blessing to celebrate their fiftieth anniversary. Loughborough Spiritualist Church: http://www.loughborough.snu-emdc.org.uk/

Historic information is taken from "Spiritualism in Loughborough" compiled for the church by Janet E. Lorimer.



He has become the longest-serving General Secretary and is due to retire on March 31st 2015, clocking up almost thirty-five years' continuous loyal service, serving under five Presidents: Gordon Higginson, Eric Hatton, Judith Seaman, Duncan Gascoyne and our present President, David Bruton. But the story does not end here: Charles, like Dick Ellidge, will continue as SNU Consultant.

Charles Coulston's retirement next year will also bring us to the end of an era, as he will be the last General Secretary of the Union. The new position will be titled Chief Administration Officer and on April 1st 2015 Shirley McGee will undertake this new position.

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July 1890 "National Conference of British Spiritualists" – July 1891 "Spiritualists' National Federation" – October 1901 Spiritualists' National Union Ltd, registered by the Board of Trade – July 1902 last Federation Conference – First Union General Meeting – July 1903 First Union Annual General Meeting & First Elected Council



THE FIRST ELECTED COUNCIL OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION, LTD.

National Secretaries

1890: James B. Tetlow *(pro tem)*
1891-1893: James B. Tetlow
1893-1894: Mr. T. Taylor
1894-1896: William Harrison
1896-1897: Wilfred Rooke
1897-1898: James Swindlehurst
1898-1904: William Harrison
1904-1920: Hanson Hey
1920-1922: Mr R. H. Yates
1922-1933: George Berry
1933-1938: Frank T. Harris
1938-1944: Ernest Keeling
1944-1946: May Price
1946-1973: Richard Ellidge *
1973-1976: Ronald J. Baker *
1976-1977: Acting Gen. Sec. Douglas R. Lawrence
1977-1980: Harold Mayze
1980-2015: Charles Coulston

* Ellidge / Baker circa 1973







May Price



Hanson Hey



“Remembering our old workers”

Mrs Mary Stair was one of the early pioneers of the Spiritualists’ National Union. She was rooted in the core of National Spiritualism and its propagation in the north of England. She became a member of the Executive Committee of the Spiritualists’ National Federation in 1889 (subsequently becoming incorporated as the Spiritualists’ National Union in 1901) and continued to sit on its National Council until her death in 1924. The first SNU elected National Council was in 1903; a photograph was shown in the last issue of the Pioneer in the article on our General Secretaries.

Below is an interview published on the front page of the *Two Worlds*, November 5t 0h 1915; we can note she had married Mr Stair in 1889. To save any confusion, her husband already had a daughter, also called Mary Stair, who was born in 1876. The daughter would in some avenues carry on her stepmother’s work after her death as Hon. Secretary of the Fund of Benevolence. An account of Miss Stair follows this article:

Mrs. MARY A. STAIR (Keighley).



A LONG PROMISED visit to Keighley enabled the writer to call upon Mrs. Stair for the purpose of interviewing her, and gathering some account of her life and work for Spiritualism, for presentation to the readers of THE TWO WORLDS, and of some of the incidents associated with the labours of the well and widely known subject of this interview.

Comfortably seated in her pretty drawing room, the interviewer found Mrs. Stair an apt subject for the task in hand. On the table and upon the walls of this cosy apartment were many photographs of our worthies, of whom Mrs. Stair had many kindly words to say, and numerous interesting reminiscences to recount. Her pleasing features were full of animation as she narrated the following matters in reply to the questions with which the scribe plied her, for time nor service hath not dimmed the geniality of the Miss Mary Musgrave of former years, who was so welcome a visitor to many a Yorkshire platform in her early days. Days, too, of strenuous enthusiasm in Bradford, Bingley, Halifax, Leeds, and other towns in the shire of broad acres.

In reference to her family history, it was elicited that she was born in the village of Kilnhurst, Yorkshire, in the year that does not matter, for the interviewer was too polite to press for precise details on that point. But at five years of age her parents removed to Bingley, owing to the ill-health of her mother, Mrs. Musgrove. Two years after the removal, her father, on account of ill-health, went on a visit to Halifax, where he stayed with Mrs. Summersgill Walker (an aunt of Mrs. Stair’s), when he was taken to a spiritual circle held at the home of Mrs. Ambler (sister of the well—known Mrs. Batie), with

the result that he became deeply interested in our subject. So much so that on his return home he commenced a private circle, being determined to test the truth of spirit-return for himself.

Mrs. Stair was but nine years of age when first controlled by the spirits. Her early mediumship was used for "test" purposes, in many cases of a most striking character. Her psychic power was evidenced by many prophetic dreams, while her clairvoyance enabled her to accurately describe the appearance of the arisen, and to repeat incidents and conversations connected with their earth lives, which were fully verified afterwards. Her development was as rapid as it proved satisfactory, much to the satisfaction of her father. When she was eleven years of age her father passed to spirit-life after an illness which lasted for five years.[23]

The home of her parents was literally an open house to most of the Keighley pioneers, and it was a deep regret to her that many of the names of those early stalwarts were not included in the history of Keighley which appeared in THE TWO WORLDS a year or two ago. Mrs. Stair mentioned the names of Mr. James Naylor, Keighley's pioneer medium, Mr. Abram Shackleton,[24] and Mrs. Lucas, who visited her parents' home on Sunday evenings to hold meetings, before a Society was formed at Bingley, which was done by her mother, assisted by Mr. Charles Illingworth, Mrs. Bower, and others.[25] Among the early speakers who visited Bingley, under the auspices of the Society, were Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, Mrs. M. H. Wallis, Walter Howell, J. J. Morse, and others. The Society was particularly noted for its fine choir, which on special occasions assisted the Lyceum at Keighley. The Society itself had a very successful Lyceum. Mrs. Stair was often taken by her father to Keighley, when she had the opportunity of listening to such noted lecturers as Gerald Massey, Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond,[26] Miss Rosamond Dale Owen,[27] and other bygone celebrities in our ranks.

Mrs. Stair recalled with touching emphasis the times when they entertained the pioneer workers at her home; days in which they had to put up with the taunts, scorn, and jeers of the people, who bitterly denounced all that pertained to Spiritualism. She contrasted those days with the present respect paid to our Cause a change in which, the interviewer ventured to suggest, she had played her part in bringing round. A smile of assent was her response to the suggestion, which, by the way, is true in fact.

Referring to her entrance into the public work of Spiritualism, Mrs. Stair remarked that her development was continued up to that time, at which she was only seventeen years of age, and from that time to the present she has laboured continuously, save for occasional inability owing to ill-health. She has visited every town of any note wherein Spiritualism is advocated in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. The value of her labours has been frequently proven by scores of people testifying personally to her the helpfulness received by her services as a medium and a speaker, as well as by her assistance to inquirers in the forming of home circles for private investigation. About fifteen years ago

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[23] Her father passed in 1876.

[24] *Abraham* Shackleton: See Psypioneer: Volume 2, No 5: May 2006: "Keighley celebration 1882".

[25] See SNU Pioneer: Volume 1, No. 4: July 2014: "Richmond & Weatherhead – An account of the introduction of Spiritualism at Keighley".

[26] "SPIRITUALISM first came under my notice, and entered into my home," said Mrs. Stair, "in the year 1872, a consequence of the visit to this country of that distinguished advocate of our truth, Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond, of Chicago: " *The Two Worlds*, July 27, 1906, page 365.

[27] Daughter of the well-known Spiritualist, Robert Dale Owen, son of Robert Owen: see the SNU Pioneer: Volume 1, No. 3: April 2014: "Robert Owen – Spiritualism & Andrew Jackson Davis".

she visited the United States, lecturing there to many Spiritualist Societies with her usual gratifying acceptance to all concerned. Her fame had gone abroad, so she naturally received invitations to visit South Africa, for tours of six months and a year, but these invitations she was unable to accept. Questions regarding her platform work elicited the information that it included inspirational speaking, impromptu poetry, and clairvoyance. She added that the higher aspects of our philosophy most appealed to her, for she considered that aspect of our work was most essential to the progress of our Cause.

As showing her interest in and connection with the public organisational work of our Movement, she referred to the fact that she was one of the original members of the Spiritualist National Federation, at which she was present when it was formed in Manchester. She continued in membership when the Federation was merged into the present National Union, therefore she is one of the pioneer members of the national body, and has been a member of the Executive Council for fourteen consecutive years.

To hundreds the name of Mrs. Stair has been associated with the splendid work of the S.N.U. Fund of Benevolence, to which she has acted as the hon. secretary since January, 1912.[28] Mrs. Stair said that during her term of office the pensioners have increased from ten to above twenty-six in number, apart from those who have received temporary aid, the number of which has been considerable. This work has made heavy demands upon her energies and time, but it has all been done cheerfully, for, as she said, "What better work is there than helping to smooth the lot of those who spent themselves in our service? I bless them all continually."

Mrs. Stair, whose maiden name was Mary Ann Musgrave, was married to Mr. Stair on April 3rd, 1889.[29] The union has been singularly happy, two sons and one daughter being born to them. Miss Stair is keenly interested in all that pertains to our work, both Societary and Lyceum. She is a bright, amiable young lady, who is in all respects a credit to her parents and the Cause. Mr. Stair conducts a flourishing business as a florist in Keighley, and is a loyal supporter of his wife in all her good works. Much more could be said, but the lady was not inclined for the scribe to repeat all the nice things she had to say of her husband and her daughter. Even hardy interviewers are compelled to respect the sanctities of domestic life.

The public work done by Mrs. Stair for our Cause is so well known that she preferred that her record should speak for her, rather than that she should elaborate upon it herself. The interviewer then led her to mention an aspect of her public career that does not find its way to public notice among our people.

In the matter of temperance work Mrs. Stair has been an active worker for a number of years in the local branch of the National British Women's Temperance Association. Indeed, her connection with the Association covers a period of over twenty years. She is now a member of the National Executive body, whose meetings are held in the Metropolis. In her work for temperance she has addressed Mothers' Meetings and those of the Women's Social Hour, in all cases with profit and benefit to her hearers, as her remarks are always couched in terms quite out of the ordinary way in which temperance addresses are constructed. Another branch of work in which she takes an active part is as a member of

[28] The Fund of Benevolence (FOB) was founded by Mrs Minnie Wallis and was originally called "The Order of Progressive Spiritualists' Sick, Benefit, and Pension fund". See the SNU Pioneer: Volume 1, No. 3: April 2014: "Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists' National Union".
(Mrs Stair took over the position from Mr A. E. Button.)

[29] Henry Stair died on September 24th 1925, aged 75 years; the interment took place on the 27th at Bingley Cemetery by Ernest Oaten.

the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which work makes a close appeal to her kindly disposition. She is also a member of the Woman's Suffrage Society and the National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain and Ireland. She is likewise a worker for the Infant Aid and Mother's Help Society, founded by the Mayor of Keighley in 1907, a most valuable and helpful organisation. In fact, it may be said that there is no public effort that is made in Keighley, or any public function in the town, for which her help is not asked. As showing how slowly a just appreciation of Spiritualism enters the minds of those outside our ranks, it may be mentioned that many people formerly expressed surprise that as Mrs. Stair is a Spiritualist, she has such a wide outlook upon life, for her ability and tact have resulted in not a few realising a higher respect for our Cause. Some day it will dawn upon the outsiders that a Spiritualist is a live thinker, and cannot help being so.

Since the commencement of the war Mrs. Stair has been an active member of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Association, also acting as an investigator for the War Relief Committee. She has also assisted in the collecting for the many funds that have been opened by the Mayor of the town. By all this it will be seen that Mrs. Stair is truly an all-round woman, whose Spiritualism has made her the useful personality she undoubtedly is.

As Mrs. Stair is such an active worker in our ranks, it was but to be expected that the interviewer should ask her opinion upon the outlook of the Cause, and of its work in the future. She expressed herself in the following cogent observations: "I think the time has come when the Movement must stand for SPIRITUALISM only. Pure Spiritualism, as a message from the spirits, must be presented without so many fringe movements and side issues being tacked upon it. The Movement can no longer afford to be a nursery for irresponsible people, nor a sheltering ground for any who discredit it. The best is needed and must be given. Never was there such a need of definite work and capable workers. Humanity is crying aloud for the truth and the evidence which Spiritualism can give. Constructive work is our need at this time."

The interviewer was much impressed with the candour and earnestness of Mrs. Stair, who met every inquiry with perfect frankness. Evidently sincerely and heartily devoted to her life's labours, she cannot fail to inspire respect and confidence in all who meet her. With her it is not a case of intellect ousting womanliness; quite the contrary, for the charm of the woman and the courtesy of the lady shine in all she says or does. A subsequent chat at the tea table deepened the impression made during the more formal talk of the interview, and the visit terminated in feelings of good—will on both sides.—HISTORICS.

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Mary A. (Musgrave) Stair was born at Swinton, near Barnsley, on January 2nd 1865. Her two children did not survive infancy; she was regarded in the movement as a fine trance medium. Mary died at Keighley on Friday April 4th 1924; she was interred at Keighley on April 8th, which was officiated by Ernest Oaten.

Below is taken from the "National Spiritualist" for April 1930 – "Who's Who in the S.N.U."

MISS M. L. STAIR,

Hon. Secretary of the Fund of Benevolence



Miss Mary Louisa Stair was born at Keighley October 27th, 1876. As a young girl she attended the Congregationalist Sunday School. When she was eleven years of age, her father became interested in Spiritualism through the mediumship of a Mrs. Summersgill Walker, and the daughter transferred her attendance to the Heber Street Lyceum. This is one of the oldest Spiritualist Churches in England and was founded by David Weatherhead. Miss Stair thus missed the orthodox theology, and has enjoyed to the full the whole message of Spiritualism undimmed by the small persecutions that fell to the lot of the Spiritualists of these early days.

For a few years the family lived in Stalybridge, and the nearest Spiritualist Churches and Lyceums were in the neighbouring towns of Ashton-under-Lyne and Rawdon. In her eagerness to attend a Church and Lyceum, Miss Stair gladly walked the long distances to these towns. She had memories of listening as a child to those great propagandists, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, E. W. Wallis, J. J. Morse, and others. At the Annual Conference of the S.N.U. in I898, at Keighley, she was introduced to Doctor Peebles, Mrs. Brigham, and Mrs Cadwallader. In 1901, she became a member at Heber Street, Keighley, and still retains that membership.

It is not given to everyone to be a leader of men and command the attention of great audiences. It might often be asked how much of the work of the leader is dependent upon the selfless devotion of those who are content to hold up the hands of a tired Moses. During 25 years, Miss Stair was hostess for her mother on occasions when Mrs. Stair was actively engaged on public work for Spiritualism, and the flow of speakers and demonstrators through the home looked to Miss Stair for their domestic ministration. In addition to these duties, Miss Stair assisted her father in his business as a florist and seedsman, and during his last illness took sole charge. In spite of these calls upon her time, she took office in her Lyceum, being successively Secretary, Treasurer, Conductor, Auditor, and District Visitor. She was elected President of the Bradford Lyceum D.C. in 1920, in which year the B.S.L.U.[30] held its annual conference at Keighley. For that conference she acted as Organiser and Hospitality Secretary.

In 1912, Mrs. Stair took over the work of the F.O.B. In the first years the work was light. As the work increased, Miss Stair was gradually drawn in to assist her mother, and thereby was prepared for the day when she was called upon to take up the entire work on the calling of her mother to the Higher Life. When the call came, the S.N.U. Council wisely asked Miss Stair to continue until the following annual conference. She was then elected to her mother's position as Secretary, and has ably fulfilled the duties of the office.

[30] On January 1st 1948 the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union (BSLU) was amalgamated/incorporated into the SNU, then called the "Lyceum Department", later renamed in 1951 "The Spiritualists' Lyceum Union"

The F.O.B. work has naturally increased with the passing years. In replying to enquiries, acknowledging donations, writing friendly notes to the aged pensioners, fully 1,000 letters per year are sent out. The enquiries into new cases calls has fallen upon the shoulders of her daughter.

Miss Stair is a familiar figure at Conferences of the Union. She became a Subscribing Member in 1909, and with the exception of the war years 1914-1918, she has attended every Conference. She is keenly interested in the education work of the joint Unions, and believes that Church and Lyceum should work together in close co-operation. She is also an ardent temperance worker in the Yorkshire Branch of the British Temperance Movement.

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Miss Mary Louisa Stair passes, aged 69:

We have to record the passing of Miss M. L. Stair, which took place at her home at Lowestoft on Wednesday, October 16th, after a few days' illness.[31]

Miss Stair was the daughter of Mr. H. Stair of Keighley, and the step-daughter of Mrs. Mary A. Stair, the well-known and Clairvoyant, and had been virtually brought up in Spiritualism. For nearly twenty years she acted as assistant to her step-mother as Secretary of the National Fund of Benevolence. On the transition of Mrs. Stair, she took over the full duties of Secretary of the Fund, and in addition to her normal duties made it her business to personally visit many of the old folk who were aided by the Fund.

Hers was a life of service in which she sought no honour other than being useful.

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[31] *The Two Worlds*, November 8th 1946.

"Remembering our old workers"

Spiritualism in Blackburn

Blackburn holds a significant place in Spiritualist history and within the Spiritualists' National Union

Below is quoted from the 'Two Worlds', May 17th 1895, under the editorship of Edward Wallis, who co-founded the journal with Emma Hardinge Britten in 1887:

"Blackburn has been a centre of Spiritual activity for a number of years, and was for a long time the scene of the operations of one of the strongest, most harmonious, and most successful societies in the kingdom. Audiences of upwards of a thousand persons assembled for some time, and month after month, on Sunday evenings, 7, 8 or 9 hundred people listened to our speakers and mediums.



Richard Wolstenholme

"Among the earnest and devoted workers of those days the subject of our sketch for this week, Mr. R. Wolstenholme, did yeoman's service, and we are pleased to have him in our portrait gallery. He it was who, some ten years ago, seeing that there was a likelihood of the termination of the Glasgow engagement with Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, set on foot the scheme to bring them to Lancashire to live and labour for Spiritualism. Quiet, observant, thoughtful and persevering, outspoken and high-principled he has won respect and esteem from all sorts and conditions of men, and after a spell of rest has again consented to be president of the Blackburn Society, which society, by the way, has just successfully entertained the Lyceum Union for their Annual Conference."[13]

Richard Wolstenholme was born in the village of Rhodes, near Manchester, in 1842. He was one of the founders of the 'Blackburn Psychological Society' and its first President, which continued for some years. In 1895 he was elected a member of the Board of Directors of the Two Worlds Publishing Company Limited; below, Wolstenholme briefly outlines in his own words the early years at Blackburn and the forming of the Society:

[13] This was the tenth Annual Lyceum Conference, held on May 12th 1895 at the Blackburn Spiritualist Society. Thomas Olman Todd was elected President for the ensuing year, Alfred Kitson Hon. Secretary and J. Sutcliffe Treasurer.

"In 1873 I came to live in Blackburn, and in 1876, for the first time in my life, I heard Spiritualism publicly advocated from the platform. Mr. Samuel Quarmby, of Oldham,[14] was the speaker, and from what I heard that night I determined to investigate for myself, and see what truth there was in the subject. For this purpose I held a circle at my own house every Sunday and Thursday evening, where I became thoroughly convinced of the genuineness of spirit return. With the enthusiasm of a new convert I went wherever I could get more evidence.

"During the time of the Slade trial my wife and I went to London and had a seance with Dr. Slade; also with Mr. Williams, Mrs. Olive and other noted London mediums. Several times I visited Newcastle and had seances with Miss Wood and Mrs. Esperance. I also very often got Mr. John Taylor, the physical medium, to come to our house, when the wonderful phenomena taking place in his presence was watched and critically examined by us. From 1876 to about 1881 Spiritualism was presented to the public of Blackburn only very occasionally, Mr. J. B. Stones, of Pleasington, at intervals getting J. J. Morse to give a lecture. The Lancashire Committee also occasionally sent Miss Longbottom and others to speak, but about 1881 a number of us met together to form a society and to inaugurate the same. Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten came and spoke most effectively in the Exchange Hall. Then followed Mr. Colville, Mr. Howell, Rev. C. Ware, Mr. James Burns (late Editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*), Mr. Farmer (then Editor of *Light*), Mr. Morse, Mr. and Mrs. Wallis, and many other able exponents of the movement; in fact, all the best speakers in the country were engaged, and Spiritualism spread fast and furious. A strong society was the result, and for years I was annually elected its president.

"During my presidency the famous debate between the Rev. T. Ashcroft and Mr. E. W. Wallis took place, a debate that never would have taken place but for the determined attitude of the committee of the Blackburn Society. When Mr. Ashcroft broke off the negotiations, a few of the committee went with me one Sunday to Chorley, where Mr. Ashcroft was stationed, and we placed ourselves at every church and chapel door in the town, and gave out printed papers to every one entering the various places of worship, in which we challenged Mr. Ashcroft to debate with Mr. Wallis. The debate came off with, so far as the Spiritualists were concerned, very gratifying results, both friends and foes proclaiming Mr. Wallis a gentleman.

"I conducted the first Spiritualist funeral in Blackburn, over the body of Mr. R. Walsh, one of the pioneers of Spiritualism in the town.[15] I also joined in matrimony the first couple of Spiritualists ever married in England in a Spiritualist

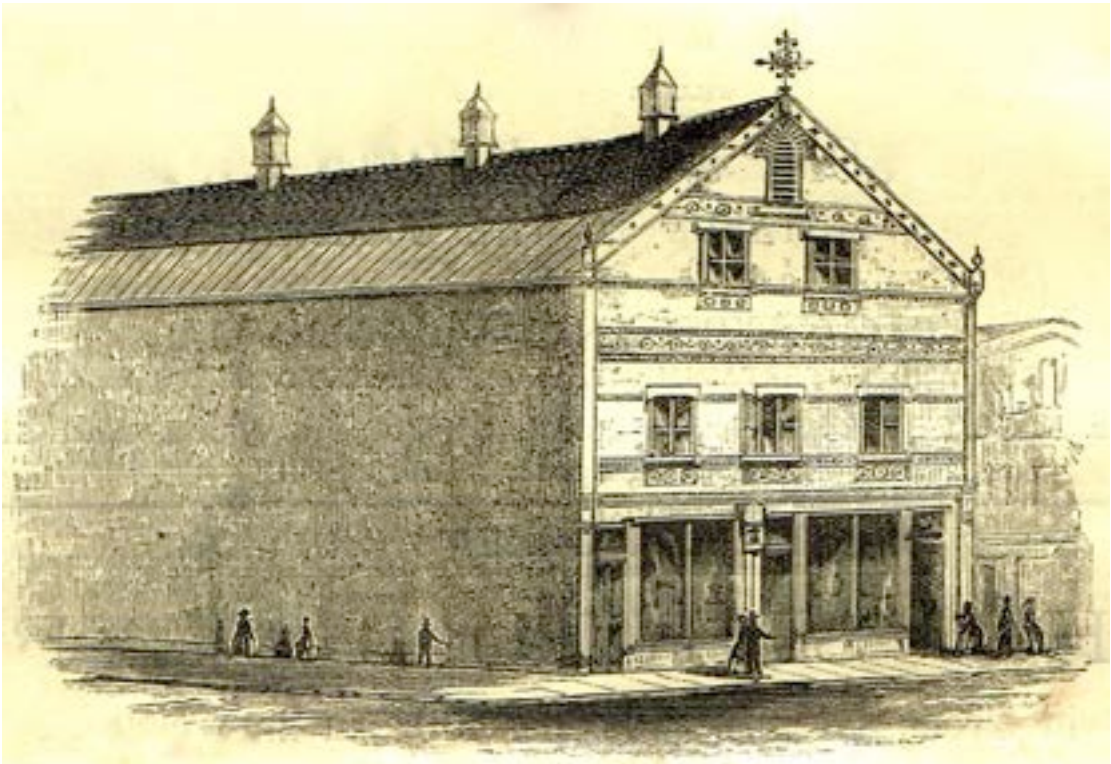
[14] Samuel Quarmby was Secretary of the Oldham Society of Spiritualists; for further information see the SNU Pioneer, Volume I, No. 1, August 2013: 'Oldham Society of Spiritualists': http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/pioneer

[15] Richard Walsh died on March 28th 1886; he had built the public hall in Blackburn where the Spiritualists held their meetings. The funeral procession route on April 1st was lined with people; hundreds assembled to watch the proceedings. James Pemberton was one of the coffin-bearers; Pemberton founded a Lyceum at Blackburn and was known for his work in the days of the Spiritualists' National Federation. In 1892 he became a director of the 'Two Worlds', in 1893 he was Secretary of the South-West Lancashire Committee and in 1903 he was elected to the first S.N.U. Council.

meeting room and with a Spiritualistic ceremony. Spiritualism in Blackburn for a long term of years sailed with the flowing tide until jealousy, that curse of societies, crept into what once was an earnest and enthusiastic body of workers. A new society was formed, and to-day we have the spectacle of two struggling societies, each burdened with heavy liabilities, neither of them presenting Spiritualism to the public as it ought to be, neither of them able to afford (only on very rare occasions) to engage the best speakers in the movement. Blackburn is not the only town where this suicidal folly has been developed, but all over the country this canker-worm has crept in, destroying instead of raising the status of Spiritualism. When will men learn that to be true saviours we must sacrifice self, and that he who is least shall become greatest? When shall we learn the lesson that union is strength and disbanding is weakness? Let me appeal to Spiritualists all over the country to amalgamate and form strong, robust societies where the truths of Spiritualism can be intelligently and effectively put before the public by intelligent and forcible speakers, whose lives shall command respect and admiration, and whose words shall carry conviction to all who hear them. This can only be done by unity and unselfishness, and if we cannot see eye to eye with our neighbours, let us try to so mould our lives and actions that we may work for the general good."

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On Saturday March 7th and Sunday March 8th 1885 a new hall opened in Blackburn. The opening was front-page news on March 13th in the 'Medium and Daybreak'. Below are quoted the opening remarks (the four-page report is freely available from the editor):



HALL FOR SPIRITUALISTS.
NEW WATER STREET, STATION ROAD, BLACKBURN.

OPENING OF THE NEW HALL AT BLACKBURN

On Thursday evening a private party of local friends, some 200 in number, had a preliminary seance in the Hall, though it was then in an unfinished state. In fact on Saturday, Mr. Delaine and his men were busy with the work necessary to the completion of the building. Some of the plaster had been recently put on, and rather a cool influence predominated, but which was amply compensated for by the heartiness of the audience which crowded it in every part.

The platform is at the end opposite to the front entrance, the deep gallery coming well forward into the middle of the area. At the platform end the house is nearly double the width of the other end. There is, therefore, a kind of side hall to the left of the speaker, which can be boarded off by moveable shutters into two small halls or seance rooms: one on the level of the platform and the other on the lower level of the floor of the Hall.

THE OPENING ENTERTAINMENT.

On Saturday evening the twenty-five feet screen on which the pictures were thrown, stood so far forward on the platform that the side space was not available. The other parts of the house were filled. It was supposed that about 1,000 persons were present, and the entrance money was about of £18; so we were informed. There were a few seats at 1s., the other prices being 6d. and 3d. Mr. Wolstenholme had his lantern well back under the gallery, requiring a very long focus to magnify our spirit friends to the vast proportions of the twenty-five feet screen, but in such a large hall it was needful to have size, that all might see perfectly what was placed before them. The whole of the proceedings, which were of rather a complex character, went off without a hitch, as if all had rehearsed their parts together to perfection.

Mr. Wolstenholme took entire charge of the exhibition department, and did his work in a very able manner. Mr. Burns had the duties of the platform entrusted to him, and in words few and to the point, he seemed ready to offer appropriate comments on all that appeared on the screen. Mr. Holt presided over the musical arrangements, surrounded by his devoted choir, who did all they could to add the charms of their delightful art to the merits of the entertainment. Several ladies and gentlemen did effective service as soloists, &c., which items will be duly noted as we proceed.

Long before the time for opening, the doors were besieged by a clamorous multitude. It was like Drury Lane Theatre on the first night of a great piece, only the crush was proportionately less severe. Half-past seven was the hour for commencing, and by that time a full house was in a state of eager expectancy. Mr. Wolstenholme, as President of the Society, briefly introduced, from the platform, the business of the evening, after which he took his position at the lantern. The gas was turned down to a “blue peep” by Mr. Delaine, and Mr. Wolstenholme threw on the screen,

Welcome angels, pure and bright,
Children of the living light,

which was sung in a glorious manner and in the sweetest harmony, by the whole audience. That hymn was indeed the consecration of the building, for it altered the atmosphere entirely; all tumult and confusion passed away, and a serene and spiritual influence pervaded the house. The angels had responded to the invitation, and taken

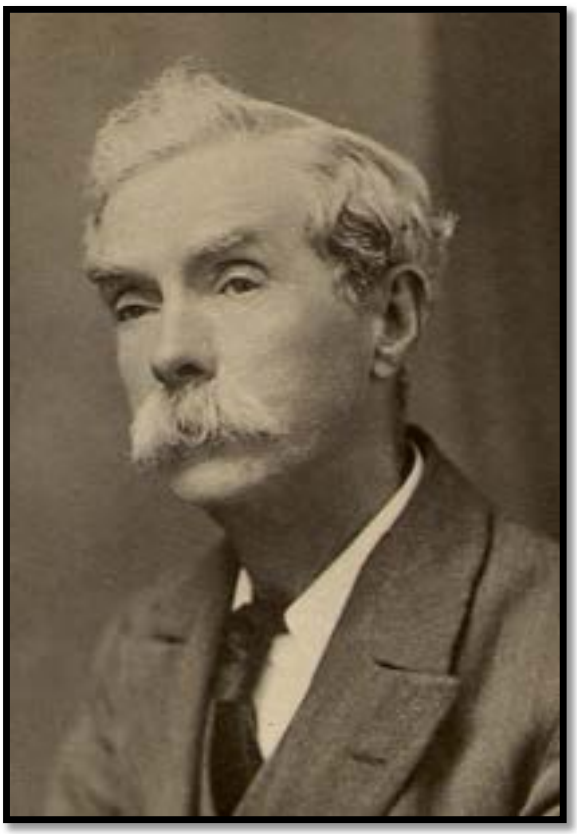
possession of a Home on earth for Spiritual Work. It was at Mr. Walsh's particular request that this was sung, and there could not have been a better introduction. Then followed some mottoes, such as Success to Spiritualism, and some views of the MEDIUM: the page commencing the Bishop's Sermon, last week's front page with the portrait of Hon. R. Stout, also the programme page with the engraving of the Hall, and a motto recommending all present to secure a copy of the MEDIUM. This advice was followed by hundreds' of the audience.

A full programme of events followed a lecture on the 'Facts and Phenomena of Spiritualism' by James Burns, a choir, duets and solo singers. More lectures on drawings, direct drawing and spirit photography continued till late in the evening. Wolstenholme gave recognition of Walsh's enterprise in building the hall and leading Spiritualists filled the platform; on the following day the Hall was formally inaugurated for spiritual purposes on Sunday afternoon. The Blackburn Spiritualists enjoyed another full day.

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One of the greatest clairvoyants that the movement has ever produced and who was closely associated with Blackburn was Tom Tyrrell. The article below is taken from the 'Two Worlds', March 2nd 1928, pages 133-134:

Mr. Tom Tyrrell



As briefly announced in last week's issue, Mr. Tom Tyrrell, the famous clairvoyant, was translated to spirit life on Friday, February 17th, at 8-15 a.m., at his home, 54, Whalley Banks, King Street, Blackburn. For several years Mr. Tyrrell has known that there was a danger from an impending stroke, and for at least eight years has been gradually easing up his public work with a view to avoiding it, but he had a seizure on February 13th (not the 15th as we stated last week) which affected his right side. Consciousness was intermittent for several days, during which, without alarm or regrets, he carefully made all arrangements concerning his estate and his interment. He passed peacefully away on the Friday morning.

Mr. Tom Tyrrell was born at Darwen on July 2nd, 1857, and was thus 70 years of age at the time of his passing. He was of Irish extraction, his parents migrating to Lancashire from West Meath sometime before his birth. Mr. Tyrrell had a twin sister who passed to spirit life in 1918. The family were adherents of the Church of England, and Mr. Tyrrell was brought up in the heart of that communion in Darwen. He was always weakly in health, and in early manhood was several times prostrated by the breaking of blood vessels. His father died when Tom was a child, and at a

very early age he went into the cotton mills to earn a few shillings to assist his widowed mother to keep the wolf from the door.

Brought up in the heart of Lancashire he became a weaver, and at one time worked a hand loom. Later he had charge of four power looms, and continued in the mill until he had turned 60 years of age. He was twice married, his first wife being Miss M. A. Horrocks, of Bolton, a daughter of one of the old circus clowns, and as a result of this union there were three sons and one daughter, all of whom survive him. His early life was a struggle—long hours, small wages and the responsibility of a young family, and was one continual struggle against poverty.

His first wife passed away in 1912, and in the following year he was united to Miss Annie Holt, a former sweetheart and early friend of his first wife. It was some 45 years ago that Mr. Tyrrell's interest in Spiritualism commenced, and he was introduced to his first seance at the house of Mrs. Holt, subsequently destined to be his mother-in-law. He soon found himself possessed of very exceptional powers of a decidedly physical nature, and for some years his house was full of physical manifestations which are almost unbelievable. In his presence heavy articles of furniture would be moved from place to place or carried from room to room. These phenomena were decidedly distasteful to Mr. Tyrrell and caused him a good deal of distress. To the end of his career he was always full of fear when physical phenomena occurred in his presence, probably due to a nervous reaction caused by the withdrawal of the psychic forces from his body. Had he pursued physical mediumship it is quite likely that he would have been even greater than D. D. Home, but in the early days of his connection with Spiritualism he was brought into close contact with Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten and she advised him very strongly that owing to his physical weakness it was inadvisable for him to cultivate that class of phenomena, and suggested that he should endeavour to develop the clairvoyant and clairaudient faculty.

It was some 43 years ago that this clairvoyant faculty began to emerge, and the results which accrued were really remarkable. Names, dates, places of abode and minute particulars concerning deceased persons seemed to flow naturally through him, and he became one of the greatest clairvoyants that the movement has ever produced. He threw in his lot with the Blackburn Spiritualist Society (then meeting in Freckleton Street), and began to take an interest in the training of the young. He visited Keighley, where a Spiritualist Lyceum had been established, in order to learn something of Lyceum methods, and speedily established a Lyceum in connection with the Blackburn Society.

The possession of a wonderful clairvoyant faculty brought him visitors from all over the country, and Mr. Tyrrell consistently put his gift at the disposal of any and every inquirer who came. Despite the fact that he was in continual poverty he viewed his gift especially as a spiritual privilege and steadfastly refused to take one single penny from anyone, though later in life when he was called upon to take the platform throughout the whole country he, in justice to his family who were then growing up, demanded a fee for the taking of public services, but to the end of his life he would not sit for fees, though he seldom refused help to honest investigators.

No one who has not heard Mr. Tyrrell can understand the value of the services he rendered to the movement. For over 40 years he was upon the platform of Spiritualist Societies and travelled throughout the whole of the country. It was a very rare thing for him to miss a Sunday. Generally he gave clairvoyance at two services—afternoon and evening or morning and evening—and in the course of his public career he must have described something like a HUNDRED THOUSAND SPIRIT PEOPLE. In 90 per cent. of such cases it is safe to say that he gave the full Christian and surname of the spirit described, whilst in a large proportion of cases gave the date and place of birth, the address at which they lived, read the exact wording of their mourning cards, stated the number of children and other intimate details, which left no option between recognition and non-recognition. When it is remembered that quite 80 per cent. of the descriptions given were readily recognised (whilst he would often pick out two or three members of a family sat in different parts of the hall) his clairvoyance could only be described as marvellous. In addition to this he has given thousands of small seances either at his home or in the homes of others.

From the standpoint of the demonstration of clairvoyance at PUBLIC meetings we think it would be true to say that Tom Tyrrell is the greatest clairvoyant this country has ever produced. Others may excel him in private consultation, which was a phase of the subject he never cultivated, but for public demonstrations he has stood unequalled, and thousands of people have been brought to conviction of the truths of Spiritualism through his advocacy. What the future may bring forth we do not know, but his place will be hard to fill.

Inquiry into his family life shows that there is no record of any psychic gift whatever amongst his ancestry, but several of his children are psychically endowed, one in particular having the same gift as his father, although he has never used it or given public demonstrations.

Mr. Tyrrell was very varied in his tastes. He was a clever amateur photographer, and had several times exhibited in photographic exhibitions. He was a keen botanist, and knew practically every herb of the fields and their medicinal and other values. Since his retirement from the platform some few years ago he had used his clairvoyant faculty for the diagnosis of disease and applied magnetic and herbal remedies, and at the time of his passing on had a long list of patients whom he was treating. As a healer he was extraordinary. Quite a number of cases of epilepsy had been cured by him, and we believe it is true to say that he never treated a case of epilepsy without effecting a complete cure. On several occasions he showed the possession of the remarkable gift of handling fire, live coals, etc., without harm to himself. Throughout it all he was the most humble of men who never spoke about himself and became impatient when you talked of his gifts, and studiously endeavoured to efface himself. He detested public life, and was never happier than when taking a long ramble through the country amongst the nature which he loved. There is not a tree which grows in this country which he could not name on sight. He has journeyed forty and fifty miles to see a rare tree. Even foreign trees which had been imported to this country he quickly recognised, and to take a country walk in his company was a generous education.

He was never a successful speaker and never tried to become one, but as a teacher in a class he was one of the best we have ever known. He could interest everyone, from the child

to the adult. His knowledge of botany, mesmerism, phrenology and psychic investigation was unequalled.

We venture to express the opinion that there is no man living who knows as much about the philosophy, laws and practice of mediumship or the possibilities of psychic development as Tom Tyrrell, and this world is poorer by his transition. For forty years Spiritualism was his only religion. Tolerant towards others he often proclaimed that no system of religious thought could add anything of value to Spiritualism as taught by the spirit people.

The final obsequies took place on Tuesday, February 21st, when the fine Spiritualist Temple at Blackburn was packed with friends and sympathisers who joined heartily in singing "Where have the world's great heroes gone," and after prayer had been offered by Mr. E. W. Oaten, Mr. Entwistle (President of the Blackburn Church), in a brief and pointed speech, referred to the great work which Mr. Tyrrell had done and the loss which Spiritualism would suffer by the transference of his activities to another plane. He spoke feelingly of the pleasure it had always been to work with Mr. Tyrrell, and urged upon them the necessity of making such sacrifices for a great and noble cause as their comrade had done.

Mrs. Battersby (Vice-President) also paid an eloquent tribute to the work of Mr. Tyrrell, and expressed the sympathy of the members to his wife and family.

Mr. Oaten followed, and was deeply moved as he told of the great debt they owed to the pioneers of Spiritualism, amongst whom the name of Mr. Tom Tyrrell might deservedly be placed. He was one of the humblest and most sincere of men, and those who knew him best had the highest admiration of his character. His word was his bond. Any form of deceit was repulsive to him. He was simple and direct, and though without education he had all the fine feelings of nature's gentlemen. He expressed his thanks to Mr. Tyrrell for the work he had done and considered it a privilege to be associated with such a fine soul.

After the singing of "Blest be the tie that binds" the tremendous company wended their way to the Wesleyan Church Yard at New Row, some few miles out from Blackburn, beautifully situate on the top of a hill surrounded by pastoral scenes. It was a glorious Spring morning. The fresh nip of the winds from the moors was tempered by brilliant sunshine, and the song of the birds and the tramp of footsteps alone marred the peace of the scene. On the hillside, in the very scenes in which Mr. Tyrrell had delighted, we laid his body to rest with that of his first wife, while a company of many hundreds of people representative of all the Spiritualistic interests of a wide area stood reverently around the grave. The committal was pronounced by Mr. Oaten, and Mr. Battersby pronounced the benediction. While the company joined in singing "Father of all" the great throng wended their way back into the town and took tea at the Blackburn Temple.

The mourners were Mrs. E. Tyrrell (widow), Mr. A. Holt (brother-in-law), Miss Maggie Tyrrell (daughter), Mr. and Mrs. J. Tyrrell, Mr. and Mrs. T. Tyrrell, and Mr. and Mrs. H. Tyrrell (sons and daughters-in-law), Mrs. L. Riding (niece), Mr. and Mrs. Warburton (brother-in-law and sister), Mrs. Smith (sister-in-law) and Miss Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Drane, Miss Ward, Mrs. Southworth, Mrs. Crook and Mr. T. Bolton, J.P.

Mrs. Robinson, Messrs. J. Entwistle, G. B. Battersby, E. Holding and S. Crook represented the Spiritualist Temple and Lyceum.

Mr. G. F. Berry and Jessy Greenwood, J.P. (S.N.U.), Mr. W. Edwards and Mrs. L. Nurse (B.S.L.U.), Mrs. Keeling (Lanes. D.C.), Mrs. A. Riding (N.E. Lanes. D.C.), Mr. Hibbins, B.A. (Sheffield D.C.), and representatives were present from Blackburn Churches and others in the district.

There were a large number of floral tributes, including wreaths from a number of Spiritualist organisations.

The memorial service was held in the Temple on Sunday, February 26th, and was conducted by Mr. E. W. Oaten and Mrs. M. E. Pickles.

Mrs. Tyrrell desires us to express her thanks to the many friends whose letters and floral tributes have helped her, and regrets that it is impracticable to reply to all.

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Today we have the 'Blackburn Spiritualist Centre', a fine tribute to its early workers.

On Saturday November 2nd 2013 a Dedication Service was conducted by Minister David Bruton, President of the Spiritualists' National Union



Blackburn Spiritualist Centre
Princes Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 1LS

http://www.blackburnspiritualistcentre.co.uk/home/4584599533

"Remembering our old workers"

Albert Fruin

1888 - 1969

On January 1st 1948, the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union (BLSU) became one with the Spiritualists' National Union, which was unanimously approved by their respective annual conferences in 1947 under the presidency of Albert E. Fruin and Harold Vigurs respectively.

In 1949 the "Two Worlds" ran a series, "Meet the S.N.U. National Council"; below is taken from the March 25th issue:

> Constant contact with mission work[8] and the temperance movement has endowed Albert Fruin (b. Jan. I4, 1888) with abundant knowledge, enabling him to carry out the arduous task of organising our Lyceums. Having completed Gospel Mission work and open-air duties, he became secretary of the Isleworth Mission Church in I909.[9] His initiation into Spiritualism was soon followed by his election to the office of vice-president at the Hounslow, Witton Road, Church, in 1918.[10]
>
> Taking over the Lyceum side of the church, he rapidly became interested in the youth of the Movement, and was elected vice-president of the London Lyceum District Council in I925, and made president in 1926, the office he now holds.
>
> **Happiest Work**
>
> His work on Uncle Bert's page in the Lyceum Banner will be well remembered, and he avows it to be the happiest work which he has ever undertaken.
>
> The B.S.L.U. appointed him vice-president in 1939, then president in 1940, and readers will remember his fine efforts in promoting the Lyceum Movement in Britain.
>
> The recent amalgamation of the B.S.L.U. and the S.N.U. completed in 1948, made him president of the Lyceum department of the S.N.U. His ability to organise has stood him in good stead in his business career, where he has been actively engaged in publicity work with the same company for forty-three years.
>
> In 1911, Mr. Fruin was married to Miss Ruth A. Hoy, of Wood Green, and since that day they have shared a harmonious cooperation in all their work, both in spiritual and social activities. A tribute is paid to his wife and family for their joint interests in all the various branches of the work, he has been led by the spirit world to undertake.

[8] In his missionary work as a young man he would preach in the open air and at one time was employed by the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, going out (only once) to the North Sea fishing fleets to bring comfort to the fishermen.

[9] This was known as Rapson's Mission and a hall rather than a formal church and was an evangelistic place of worship.

[10] Later to move to London Road and known today as Hounslow Spiritualist Church (656 London Road).

Albert continued as President until 1949, when Miss Gladys Mary Halliday (b. 1893) took office. Some readers will remember Albert and Ruth's daughter, Doris, and her husband, Leslie Davey. Albert died on 26th July 1969; his "Psychic News" obituary is published below:



ALBERT E. FRUIN, one of Britain's best-known Lyceumists, passed on last Saturday at the age of 81. Affectionately known as "Uncle Bert," he was for 31 years president of the London Lyceum District Council and president of the Lyceum Union for eight years.

He retired in 1958 because he felt it only fair to stand down to make way for someone younger. His association with Spiritualism began in 1919 after having been a Gospel Mission worker.

In all his service to Spiritualism's youth, he had the wholehearted support of his wife.[11] It was fitting that the cremation service on Wednesday of this week should be conducted by his son-in-law, Leslie Davey, the SNU's London District Council president.

"He performed the marriage ceremony for us," Leslie told PN, "so I will do the honours for him."

It has been suggested that a memorial to Fruin should take the form of a children's corner in the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall, Essex.

Leslie Davey would become the SNU Vice-President to Gordon Higginson in the early 1970s and his wife, Doris, a well-known figure in the Lyceum Union and the Union, both being Ministers of the Union. Leslie and Doris' son, Trevor, and his wife, Lucy, are today connected to the Union and visit Stansted. Trevor is a working medium and author of a number of published books (some being co-authored with his late first wife, Eileen, who was a deep-trance medium) on Spiritualism and has a regular article in Psychic World, as well as being an officer of Maidenhead SNU Church, with the support of Lucy, his wife.

Trevor tells me his grandfather:

"Albert Fruin was born in North London but moved to Crow Park as a young child when his father became stationmaster at Crow Park, Sutton-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire. The family moved back to the Wood Green area of London. He had many jobs as a youngster, including a greengrocers at Balham, photographer's development assistant, "cabin boy" (The Royal Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen), and in 1906 he started his career with London Transport in the Bill Posting Store of the

[11] This picture of Albert Fruin and his wife was taken when they celebrated their golden wedding in September 1961.

Great Northern, Piccadilly and Brompton Railway – ending up as the boss. During this time he developed a skill for artwork and had a number of posters published, some of which are exhibited in the London Transport Museum.

During WW2 Albert was editor of the "Lyceum Banner" and somehow managed to get paper to print the "Banner" on in those times of major shortages.

Albert was a mental medium and served churches as a speaker and demonstrator (always taking the Anniversary Service at Fulham (where my parents were married and I was named in the Lyceum)), often taking the gospel of St. Paul as his reading and inspiration for his address. He was a transfiguration medium and held a Home Circle, including trance, as well as being a spiritual healer.[12] "

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The memorial to Fruin at the Arthur Findlay College became a popular reality, "Uncle Bert" children's corner, which was situated at the end of the lawn. The photographs show Doris in 1973 with her two granddaughters enjoying the memorial to their great-grandfather, "Uncle Bert".





Thanks are due to Trevor Davey, also for the additional information given in the footnotes and kindly supplying the photographs – which will no doubt bring back many fond memories

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[12] "One thing I am not sure of is if my grandfather was an SNU Minister; I always thought he was but I have no proof as such. He certainly undertook a large number of marriage services. "

2015 marks the Centenary Anniversary of the passing of two of the founding officers of the S.N.U.

In July 1890 a "National Conference of British Spiritualists" was held, and the following July it was named and constituted the "Spiritualists' National Federation". The original Conference *pro tem* committee would become the first officers of the Spiritualists' National Federation. The committee consisted of sixteen Spiritualists, significantly made up of the Officers and Directors of "*The Two Worlds*" Publishing Company Ltd, Manchester, including its Chairman, Dr. William Britten.

> Dr and Mrs Britten; Mr and Mrs Edward W. Wallis; Mrs Margaret Wilkinson (Emma Hardinge Britten's sister); James J. Morse; William Johnson; James B. Tetlow (Secretary); H. Boardman; Peter Lee; Mr Rayner; Mr J. Gibson; Richard Fitton; Mr Thomas Brown; Thomas Simkin; and Frederick Tomlinson (Treasurer).[17]

In July 1902 the new legally constituted "Spiritualists' National Union Ltd" took over the property, rights and obligations of the Spiritualists' National Federation.

On May 26th 1915 our first National Treasurer, Frederick Tomlinson, died; later, on October 23rd of the same year, our first National Secretary, James Tetlow, also passed. James Tetlow has been recently mentioned in the Pioneer, October 2014, issue: "General Secretaries of the SNU".

Today these founding members are mostly forgotten but as a tribute to their work in establishing the foundations of our Spiritualists' National Union:

Frederick Tomlinson

Treasurer: July 1890 - July 1893

Below is quoted from his "Two Worlds" obituary, June 11th 1915:

> Mr. Tomlinson was born at Nantwich, Cheshire, on Thursday, April 26th, 1833, and was in the eighty-third year of his mortal career at the time of his translation. Mr. Tomlinson came from a good family, his father being a local solicitor in good practice. He was nephew to Dr. Tomlinson, of Manchester, a well-known medical practitioner, residing in his day in Oxford-road in this city. He left home at an early age, coming to this city to try his fortune when only thirteen years of age. For some time he was employed by Mr. Daniel Lee, a city merchant. When about sixteen he entered the service of the Corporation of Salford, and remained therein some sixteen

[17] The *pro tem* committee's work was to agree the agenda for the forthcoming Conference; they formed sub-committees within the group for various tasks, e.g. printing, announcements, instructions for travelling delegates, train times and accommodation. They nominated the veteran Spiritualist, John Lamont, of Liverpool as their first Conference President/Chairman. It should be noted that Emma Hardinge Britten was never the President of the National Federation, as is often assumed. After the 1891 Conference Emma seems not to have attended any other meeting or conferences of the Spiritualists' National Federation and in February 1892 she resigned as editor of *The Two Worlds*.

years as clerk in the Engineer's Department. He achieved an excellent record for his ability and strict attention to the duties of his position.



He severed his connection with the Salford Corporation on his acceptance of the position of Assessor and Collector of Government Taxes for the Borough, which post he occupied for almost forty years, terminating his official connection on March 31st of the present year. While strictly carrying out his duties, he was, nevertheless, kindly hearted, and his aid and advice were never withheld in any case of difficulty or distress that occurred in connection with the administration of his office. He softened the requirements of his duty by many kindly deeds. On his retirement the Commissioners of Inland Revenue sent him a memorable testimonial as to the value of his services to the Board, a distinctive mark of appreciation which he valued highly, as it is one that is very rarely accorded. It is not too much to say that alike in his public office and his private capacity he won universal esteem for his integrity as an official and high regard for his qualities as a man and a citizen. He leaves a widow, but no children.

Readers of THE TWO WORLDS will naturally be interested in the connection of Mr. Tomlinson with the Cause to which this journal is devoted. He was one of the original promoters of the Company and its paper, as he attended the meeting called for their formation. This was held on Wednesday, August 24th l887, at the house of Dr. Wm. Britten. He was one of the provisional committee, becoming a shareholder in January of the following year. His advice and help in the early years of the Company were invaluable, and it is the fact that but for his assistance in those days of trial the enterprise would have come to an early end. On one occasion he came to the financial assistance of the Company by the advancing of a considerable sum at a particularly critical period. Mr. Tomlinson joined the first Board of Directors in 1887, and remained in that capacity down to the time of his transition, a period of 28 years. He became chairman of the Directors on February 15th, 1898 and filled the position for the remainder of his earth life, in all for seventeen years. The Company owes him more than mere words can express for his devotion to its interests, for his attachment to the progress of the undertaking never relaxed, while his vigilance regarding the paper was a continual presence to his mind. With his strong personality and direction in many crises in the history of this journal he preserved the ship from disaster alike from within and from without.

Mr. Tomlinson was a convinced Spiritualist, and had been so for upwards of thirty years. He obtained satisfactory proofs of communication between spirits and men through the mediumship of Mr. T. M. Brown, who at that time resided at Howden-le-Wear, co. Durham. Mr. Brown was visiting Manchester, and was interviewed by Mr. Tomlinson and a friend, both receiving some most remarkable demonstrations. It was characteristic of Mr. Tomlinson that he made searching investigations before admitting the facts, but when once convinced he felt it his duty to assist in their propagation. To this end he promoted a series of public lectures by Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten in the Lesser Free Trade Hall in Manchester; while in 1886 he personally supported a series of public services in the Town Hall, Pendleton, which were afterwards continued in the Working-men's College, Great George-street, Salford. The result of the first year's work was a financial deficit of £9 12s., which Mr. Tomlinson personally defrayed. Then, as now, the smallness of the collections was the cause of losses. The meetings at the Workingmen's College from January to April, 1887, also resulted in a loss of £6 6s. 9d., which amount was also liquidated by Mr. Tomlinson. Thus, in person and by purse, he did his share in helping to spread abroad the teachings of Modern Spiritualism. It was a keen disappointment to him that, in spite of the best speakers being retained for the course of meetings referred to, they did not receive the support their merits justly entitled them to obtain. In later years he contented himself by occasionally attending meetings in Manchester, Salford, and Pendleton, frequently presiding at such gatherings.

For a considerable period he was a member of the Monton Green (Unitarian) Church, under the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Anderton. He was a good supporter of his church, of which he was a highly-respected member; he was a Mason of standing, and much respected within the fraternity; also, he was a hard-working member of the board of managers of the St. Philip's Church Schools, Salford; to which body his keen judgement was of great service.

The writer of these lines joins with his surviving predecessors in the editorial chair in testifying to the invariable courtesy and consideration of Mr. Tomlinson as the chairman of their Directors. At all times he displayed a sympathetic interest in the comfort of those who worked under him. In the case of the present incumbent of the position the transition of Mr Tomlinson marks the earthly end of a close personal friendship of upwards of thirty years' duration—a friendship that was marked by many acts of utmost kindliness. A sense of personal loss is unavoidable, but such changes are inevitable.

Below is taken from the "Two Worlds", October 8th 1915:

James Bronterre Tetlow

Secretary: July 1890 - July 1893



ANOTHER worker has been called up higher. The old guard is now the less by the transition of Mr. J. Bronterre Tetlow, who passed the gates at 9-45 a.m. on Thursday, October 23rd, 1915, in the sixty-second year of his age, after a brief illness, owing to heart disease. Mr. Tetlow had been in indifferent health for several years past, yet he persevered to maintain his customary activity, and it was only when Nature could no longer respond that he was finally vanquished. He was born at Royton, but his early life was mostly lived at Heywood, where he was married to his wife in the Bridge-street Methodist Free Church. Mrs. Tetlow survives him; there is no family. Mr. and Mrs. Tetlow removed from Heywood to Manchester a number of years ago, since when they have continued to reside in this city.

Mr. Tetlow was born and bred a Methodist. His father occupied a position as a local preacher for upwards of thirty years. It was intended to prepare the son for a ministerial career, but at a later time he came into contact with spiritualism, so instead of becoming a minister he became a medium. His entrance into spiritualism subjected him to much bitter persecution. Then such was the common lot of all who came into our gospel, but Mr. Tetlow lived to reap the fruits of his earnestness, and to see the day of persecution almost at its end.

Like many a Lancashire lad in the early '50's, Mr. Tetlow was not saved from the trials of mill life, as at eight years of age he was sent to the mill to learn the mystery of calico weaving. For five years he worked half-time, and attended school half-time. His education was neither deep nor extensive, though it is recorded that he was no idle scholar, while he became quite an adept in figures. Like so many who were called by the spirits to the work in our earlier days, Mr. Tetlow could not claim any "educational" advantages, but by diligence and practice he was subsequently able to largely repair the omissions of his early scholastic training.

As a medium Mr. Tetlow was well known as a speaker under spirit influence and as a psychometrist. In each capacity he was successful and deservedly popular. For many years he was a quite acceptable platform exponent and demonstrator. He occupied many platforms in Lancashire, and as far afield as Newcastle-on-Tyne, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, while the neighbouring counties of Cheshire, Yorkshire, and others beyond knew him well, and always accorded hearty welcomes when he visited. In recent years he was actively interested in the training and developing of mediums, and was so desirous of seeing steps taken by mediums to improve their conditions as psychics, and to unite them in a bond of fellowship, that he was instrumental in

founding the British Mediums' Union, of which he was for many years the honoured and esteemed President.

Narrating his experiences when he first came into contact with the teachings of Spiritualism—which being so contrary to his preconceived religious opinions, so terribly perturbed him—the following, taken from a short account of his life which appeared some twenty years ago, will not be without interest:

"During all this long conflict of feeling and mental anguish I led a very solitary and physically painful life. My health was bad and my mental sufferings were extreme. I was on the Isle of Patmos, lonely and depressed, but all the time I was being prepared for the coming revelations, though I knew it not. My physical condition led me to become a vegetarian, which, together with my 'teetotalism.' helped to give a fairly good, clear, sensitive organism; thus I was getting ready for the spirits' work. In my solitary moods I sometimes saw faces, heard voices, and went off into semi-conscious states, and chattered away to myself in ways that were to me quite unaccountable. I began to think I was getting desperately near madness. At last the storm lulled. I was told about the spirits, and their desire to use me as their instrument. I sought them, and they came and benefited me in many ways. Four friends and I sat in a 'circle' weekly, and we believed in darkness, not because our deeds were evil, but because we thought we were doing the best thing to get the spirits to manifest. They tilted the table, they rapped upon it, they entranced me, and spoke many strange and unaccountable things. They developed my clairvoyant vision, and I saw the ghostly forms of the so-called lost ones. For six months in darkness we wrestled with the spirits, and they conquered. Then I was sent to speak publicly in Heywood, and from that day for years I rarely went out of my home or from my work but I was howled at and taunted in the street. How I stood it God only knows, I cannot tell. I hope and pray no other soul may have the terrors of those days. But they are gone, and sunshine has come."

In recent years Mr. Tetlow used his pen to considerable advantage. He contributed many articles to THE TWO WORLDS and other of the British Spiritualist periodicals, besides producing several very useful pamphlets upon mediumship and its development. Undoubtedly his career was marked by a steady and appreciable intellectual development, which serves to again emphasise the point that mediumship, intelligently pursued, is in no sense detrimental to mental evolution.

The closing scenes of this earnest worker's earthly career took place on Tuesday, the 28th ulto., when at 2 30 p.m. a short service was held at the late home. The sympathising company present, in addition to Mrs. Tetlow, included Mr. John Tetlow (brother), Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. J. Tetlow, Miss Pollitt, Miss Ada Pollitt, Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, Miss Elsie Jackson, Mrs. Ellen Green, Mrs. Bailey, MI. and Mrs. A. E. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Clegg, Miss P. Jones, and Mrs. Clarke. At the special request made by Mr. Tetlow (on the night prior to his translation) to Mr. J. J. Morse, that gentleman conducted the impressive service, which included appropriate hymns, an invocation and an address, closing with a benediction. Mr. Morse spoke in feeling and moving terms of the life and work of his arisen friend, of his faithful service to the spirit world, of his devoted attachment to his wife and his friends. He eulogised his personal character, and as he had suffered so much it could but be felt by all present that the end had come as a merciful release from bodily pain.

The funeral cortege comprised the hearse and three coaches, in which the friends already enumerated were conveyed to the Manchester Southern Cemetery. The hearse had many handsome floral tributes upon it. The body was carried straight to the grave, wherein it was duly deposited. A large concourse of friends, estimated at upwards of three hundred persons, had assembled to show their esteem and respect for our translated brother.

The Council of the S.N.U. was represented by Mr. J. J. Morse (Vice-President), Mr. James Knight, and Mr. Frank Hepworth. The British Mediums' Union was represented by Mesdames Buckley (Vice-President) and Bentley and Messrs. J. Knight (Treasurer) and Frank Hepworth, …



Early S.N.U Education History

It took a long time for National Spiritualism to become established in this country. Its long task started at a Conference in Darlington in 1865 with the formation of the 'Association of Progressive Spiritualists of Great Britain'; the following year it became known as the 'British Association of Progressive Spiritualists'. Spiritualism at this time was primarily represented by a Christian Spiritualist publication titled the 'Spiritual Magazine'.[14] Progressive Spiritualists were mostly a non-Christian group, holding various yearly Conventions throughout the country, which included many distinguished Spiritualists of the day like James Burns, David Richmond and Mr Hitchcock, of Nottingham, who reported the establishment of the first Children's Progressive Lyceum in Nottingham.

James J. Morse, at the 1873 Liverpool Conference, gave one of the first structured conference speeches on an organised National Spiritualism in this country. It was at this Conference that the 'National Association of Spiritualists' (BNAS) was formed, but despite its title it never became a national organisation. Although it had some affiliated societies, it operated solely in London. It became one of Spiritualism's largest societies and holds many credits to its work; it became the foundation of the London Spiritualists Alliance (LSA), today known as the College for Psychic Studies (CPS).

But Spiritualism was steadily growing in the North of England, with no representative body and little communication between the various societies. At a Conference in Bury in August 1875 the 'Lancashire District Committee' (LDC) was the first district association to be formed and its aim was to promote Spiritualism in new districts and places of weak or non-existent Spiritualist activity, supply experienced speakers and distribute literature. The 'Lancashire District Committee' was due to the initiative of William Johnson. In the 'Spiritualist Newspaper', Friday February 2nd 1877, W. Johnson and Mr John Hartley write:

> "Organisation is the basis of all efficient movements, whether social or political. The Lancashire Spiritualists have determined that a more vigorous organising policy shall be commenced at once, for the purpose of enabling every town where there are a few Spiritualists only, to hold regular Sunday services and week-night classes for research and discussion in connection with the subject. There is scarcely a town or village in the district which the Lancashire Committee has not already visited, and sown the first seeds. Organisation would aid the progress of Spiritualism in these places."

District Committees were formed in other areas, giving a network of societies receiving literature and general information on the growing movement. Meetings were addressed by good (trance) speakers like Morse, Johnson and Edward Wallis, who were engaged by the District Committees, and in 1890, when the National Federation was at last founded, these early workers, amongst others, made up part of its first Council. All three became President, with William Johnson becoming the first President of the SNU.

[14] The *Spiritual Magazine* (1860-1877) was started in January 1860 under the editorship of Mr William Wilkinson, its originator and proprietor, with Mr Thomas Shorter, best known at the time by his *nom-de-plume* of Thomas Brevior (a Latinized version of his name), as sub-editor. William Howitt and Benjamin Coleman were well-known contributors. Later editors in the last years were Dr George Sexton, followed by J. Enmore Jones.

'The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union' is serialised in Psypioneer, starting in the August 2012 issue, which also includes the article by James Morse, 'The Nationalisation of Spiritualism'.

During these early years emphasis was placed on the ability of good, trained, experienced speakers/mediums to be engaged for large meetings; however, it would not be until the Seventh Annual Conference of the Spiritualists' National Federation held at Daulby Hall, Liverpool on July 4th & 5th 1896 under the presidency of A. J. Smyth, that education and examination were directly approached. In his presidential speech Smyth remarked:

> … There is a duty that lies directly at our door that we *could* perform, and that is the proper education and development of our speakers and mediums. There are two items on the agenda, one for their education and another for their examination. I will not entrench upon these subjects farther than to say that the latter would be futile without the former, and both would form a perfectly workable section of the District Councils, and do much to increase the intellectual, moral, and spiritual status as stepping stones to that more powerful, but less virtuous, legal status so much desired.

Below is taken from the Conference report published in the Two Worlds, July 10th 1896, pages 437-438:

A PROPOSED BOARD OF EXAMINATION.

Mr. CRAVEN (Clitheroe), in proposing,

That it is highly desirable that a Board of Examination for those aspiring to platform mediumship be constituted in connection with the National Federation of Spiritualists. [Other particulars of the resolution appeared in TWO WORLDS last week. *Shown Below**]

* The Clitheroe Society of Spiritualists submit the following motion:

1. That it is highly desirable that a Board of Examination for those aspiring to platform mediumship be constituted in connection with the National Federation of Spiritualists.

2. That the number of examiners be left with the Conference; that they be elected annually by the Conference, retiring members being eligible for re-election.

3. That the examinations be held half-yearly, at suitable centres to be fixed by Conference, and that mediums wishing to present themselves for examination should give not less than three months' notice to the secretary, and attend the examinations at their own expense.

4. That any medium successfully passing the Board of Examination be entitled to use the words "Approved by the Board of Examination," such to be a guide to societies that the medium is capable of conducting services.

5. That all affiliated societies receive annually a list of approved mediums, and their addresses.

6. That no platform medium, in the recognised sense of the word, be eligible to serve on the Board of Examination.

[Mr Craven] said he was anxious to see the speakers on their platforms brought up to the right standard. At present the development of mediums was little better than a scramble, and incompetent speakers were foisted upon them, to the damaging of the societies and the movement. At Clitheroe they would have been in a better position now but for the manner in which the philosophy had been expounded and the phenomena given. He had come over from a religious body, who trained and educated their ministers to the very highest excellence, and he wanted to see the same system carried out with spiritual mediums and speakers. Some mediums looked upon themselves as "Paul Redivivus," but were very ignorant and incompetent. They wanted their orthodox friends to come amongst them, but after such pitiable and deplorable expositions of incapacity, how could they dare to invite them again? I only ask you to approve of the resolution in principle, even though you accept it in another form.

Mr. ALLEN (London) seconded.

Mr. JOHN SLATER (America) asked whose fault it was that platforms were occupied by incompetent mediums? It is yours. Be your own examining Board, and see that the members of Societies also develop themselves. I blame the societies who put fulsome reports in your spiritual papers. (Hear, hear.) Speak the truth, and the matter will soon settle itself. You can criticise only what you know. He felt some of the remarks, for he was a phenomenal medium. Take away the phenomena and your Spiritualism will not stand, for if phenomena does not convince, nothing in this world will. You cannot all be at the top of the ladder—you must start at the bottom. If you have ten talents, you are ten times more responsible than the medium with only one talent. (Applause.)

MR. ARMITAGE (Batley) spoke vigorously against the manner in which the philosophy and phenomena of Spiritualism were frequently advocated on their platforms, although he must speak well of Mr. John Slater and Mr. Thos. Wild, who could give names and addresses of departed spirits. If other mediums cannot do this let them sit until they could, even if they sat until they hatched hens and chickens. (Laughter.) The Conference or Federation ought to single out those they thought competent to take the platform, and print their names and addresses in the TWO WORLDS. Let them have respectable mediums, and not fortune-telling. The best Board of Examination is to use your own judgment, and competency will prove the best advertisement.

Mr. AINSWORTH (Blackpool) thought all mediums were not to blame, for the spirits may have something to do with it. Some of the best tests he had received had been given to him by mediums who had no suitable opportunities of proper development. The cause depended largely upon public phenomena and tests. He was afraid a Board of Examination would sweep away mediums, in whom he had great confidence. Jesus, a medium himself, went to rude, untutored fishermen for his disciples, and they were successful. Who were going to sit as judges? He would not like to be one. They must have perfect liberty in this matter. Once you are dissatisfied there is no need to engage the same medium again, if you think him or her incompetent. (Applause.)[15]

[15] At the first SNU AGM in 1903:—"Mr. John Ainsworth, of Blackpool, stated that it had long been his desire to do something to help the Lyceum children, and he now proposed, subject to the decision of the Conference and its legal adviser, to hand over to the Union his house in Blackpool, and the furniture it contained, to be used as a

Mr. JOHNSON (Hyde) moved an amendment:

That this Conference desires to impress upon societies the necessity of placing upon their platform speakers and mediums of known character and intelligence.

He believed in perfect liberty, and in the natural development of mediums. Many of the so-called incompetent mediums met the requirements of the audience. If you keep the spirit world back, you will have a poor class of mediumship. Who are you going to examine, Johnson or the spirits? We retain our individuality, and so do the spirits, and sometimes the spirits say things through me with which I do not agree. Get the spirit influence through yourselves, and then the mediumship will improve. (Hear, hear.)

Mrs. M. H. WALLIS seconded the amendment, as she was in sympathy with what Mr. Johnson had said. Are we, as Spiritualists, going to have a Board of Examination to do our work for us? All kinds of people come back from the other side of life, and all kinds of people communicate through the mediums. She would uphold all plans for improvement of mediums. Let us all do our best to improve ourselves, mediums and non-mediums, so that a perfect avalanche of spiritual truth may come and remove all scepticism; no matter whether it comes from the lisping lips of the child, the cultured medium, or the untutored sensitive. Depend upon it the spirits would do their work in their own way, and will be the grandest teachers of the mediums if we place no obstruction in their path.[16]

Mr. CRAVEN replied, stating that he did not object to proper phenomena, but to mere guess work. He wanted clearer phenomena and a loftier exposition of the spiritual philosophy.

The vote was then taken, when the amendment was carried by a large majority.

Mr, TUBBS (Birmingham) proposed

That the constitution be amended as follows: Clause 6, art 2. The development and education of mediums, speakers, or other workers, for the propagation of Spiritualism, by means of Classes, Homes, or Colleges, or in any other manner which may be found practicable.

He contended that the fittest to survive was not the physical, but the intellectual. It is not matter, but mind that rules the world, and intelligence calls men to a higher place. Truth is sometimes presented to us in rags, all tattered and torn, so that even its most ardent admirers can scarcely recognise her, and her high and holy mission is degraded. I do not wish to speak in unfriendly words, as I owe my present position to mediums. Mediums who leave all to the spirits are

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convalescent home for Lyceum children and indigent Spiritualists. He had a strong impression that he would not long remain on this side of life, and he wished to see the transfer accomplished during his lifetime. If possible he would do something also towards its endowment." – It is later recorded:—"1928: The Ainsworth Home of Rest Scheme was accepted by the Charity Commissioners in this year. They allow the interest on the capital to be used to defray the expenses of accommodation at seaside places for Lyceumists who are in need of convalescence."

[16] Minnie Harriet Wallis (1854-1939) was the founder of the Fund of Benevolence in 1993 (see 'Pioneer' 1.3, April 2015, and her obituary in 1.4, July 2014).

like Christians who leave all to Christ. It is a barrier to Spiritualism to have mediums speaking ungrammatically, and placing their words in the wrong place. Education will give elasticity to the mind; I mean moral education; it would also reveal the hidden beauties to minds open to Spiritualism. I would impress upon you the importance of finding educated and cultured speakers, such as Mrs. Brigham, Mrs. Wallis, and others. This can only come by mental and moral cultivation (Applause.)

Mr. LONG (London) felt strongly on the matter, and would like to leave with the Executive the preparation of a list of a list of competent speakers and mediums. They did not want a Board of Examiners to tell them who was competent. We can find that out for ourselves. If societies will send a true report to the papers, there will be no mistake as to "the survival of the fittest." He feared that the demand of the audience was largely supplied from the platform, and there was need of a levelling up from the audience to the medium.

Mr. PETER LEE (Rochdale), in seconding, said evolution taught them that the higher was taking the place of the lower forms of life and intelligence, so it was with the medium. He must not leave all to the spirits, but educate and develop his own powers. If mediums will take one step forward, the spirits will be certain to take the next. Mr. Lee then referred to the developing classes for mediums he is now conducting weekly at the TWO WORLDS Office, to which all kinds of people applied for admission, many of whom he had to refuse. Spiritualism, as Mr. Slater said, is Naturalism, and they must trust largely to their own experiences.[17]

An adjournment was made for dinner, after which the discussion was resumed, and the resolution unanimously accepted.

It was proposed by Mr. SWINDLEHURST that standing orders be rescinded, to allow Mr. Long's motion (which had already been deferred twice as out of order) to be brought forward.—This was seconded and carried.

A LIST OF MEDIUMS WANTED.

MR. LONG (London) proposed the following resolution:

That the N.S. Federation shall be empowered to prepare a quarterly list of competent advocates of our philosophy and exponents of our phenomena, which shall be published for the information of societies.

He thought the majority of the people got to understand the mediums, and he did not expect all tests to be of a grammatical character, still the authority of the Executive should be sufficient evidence in favour of mediums occupying public platforms, they could then ask their friends to come and hear the glad tidings given in a forcible and intelligent manner.

MR. J. SWINDLEHURST (Preston) seconded; This was agreed to without further discussion.

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[17] Peter Lee (1841-1908) was National Federation President 1894.

Incidentally, at the same 1896 Conference the subject of 'Legal Status' was first proposed to the Conference by Mr Thomas Olman Todd (Sunderland). Todd submitted a draft,[18] but it would not be until the following Blackburn 1897 Conference when Todd submitted a Deed Poll; this would, with much discussion and changes, lead to the Spiritualists' National Union.

It appears that the next major step in proposing some form of Examination Education Board was proposed at the onset of the Union taking over from the National Federation at the last (thirteenth) Federation Annual Conference held at Bootle on July 5th & 6th 1902. 'Light' published on July 12th a report of the Conference, giving an overview of the newly-formed Memorandum of Association of the Union; on page 329 it states:

> The points in the 'bye-laws' that will be most interesting to the readers of 'LIGHT' will be found in the clauses dealing with the 'Exponents and Demonstrators'—as mediums are in future to be designated by this body. It is proposed that: —
>
> 'Under the auspices and supervision of the Union a body shall be established of persons (whether male or female) who shall be recognised by the Union and through them by British Spiritualists in general as holding or bearing and entitled to hold or bear a similar position in or relationship to the faith, philosophy, science, and practice of Spiritualism as ministers, preachers, missioners or teachers do in or to the government and practice of Protestant Free Churches in England and Wales. It is further proposed that such persons should be known as "Spiritualist Exponents" and "Spiritualist Demonstrators" respectively, and should be authorised or certificated to lecture, speak, expound, and demonstrate as representatives of and in the name of the Union and (through it) of the general body of British Spiritualists. It is further proposed that such persons respectively should undergo an examination or probation being entitled to speak officially as aforesaid.'
>
> The council must appoint an 'exponent's committee' to arrange for 'the examining, recommending, appointing, and certificating of exponents and demonstrators of phenomena.'
>
> A candidate for examination, &c., must be member of some Spiritualist society, must also be a member of the Union, and must be proposed in writing by another member. He,

[18] The 'Legal Status' Question, basing his (Todd) remarks on the following draft copy:—That a Committee of persons be this day appointed by this National Spiritualists' Federation Conference, which Committee, together with the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of this Federation for the time being, shall be vested with the following powers 1. To prepare a Deed containing (*a*) A declaration of the principles of the Spiritualist movement; (*b*) Definition of membership and privileges; (*c*) Definition of a society and its powers, including the election of trustees and successors; (*d*) Definition of a District Council and its composition and powers; (*e*) Definition of Auxiliaries, their acceptance and status; (*f*) Definition of Annual Legislative Conference, its composition, powers, and officers; (*g*) The Status of Legal Signatories and their powers, either conserved or delegated to Conference, and the method of electing successors; (*h*) The necessary clauses for legally securing property and dealing with same. All rights and privileges of members and societies to be left intact, so far as possibly may be done without infringing on the powers necessary to hold property for the general body. 2. To seek such legal advice and assistance as may be deemed necessary. 3. To raise and disburse funds for the furtherance of the powers hereby delegated to this Committee. 4. To elect its own officers; to elect successors; to add to its number. 5. To report at the next Annual Conference of the National Spiritualists' Federation, or at any intermediate Conference of either Spiritualists or Federation, which may be convened for that purpose. (Taken from the *Two Worlds*, July 10th 1896.)

or she, must be of good moral character, certified to by at least two well-known Spiritualists; must be of average education, and 'possess and exhibit earnestness in research, study and exposition in and of spiritualistic philosophy as well as love of service in and devotion to the Spiritualist cause.' He shall be elected and appointed by the council by ballot, provided not less than seven members are present, unless there shall be black balls in the proportion of one out of five balls. If elected he shall receive a certificate (to be renewed annually) on payment of a fee of 1s., and unless his fees are paid within a specified time he may by resolution of the council be struck off the roll of officially recognised exponents. Not only so, but the council may suspend him and debar him from all the rights and privileges of an official exponent for a period not extending beyond the next general meeting, for any cause which they think renders such suspension necessary or expedient, provided that eight out of twelve members of the council consent thereto. He shall be liable when called upon to attend any special meeting which may be summoned to consider 'his continued qualifications, fitness, or otherwise'; to answer reasonable questions: and to desist from making speeches at Spiritualist meetings which a two-thirds majority in a full meeting of the council regard as unduly pledging them or the Union to certain tenets or procedure.

The exponent is to have the Privilege (which all members enjoy) of using the offices, library, reading, and other rooms—such are obtained by the Union.[19]

Like Mr Craven's 1896 Conference proposal of 'A Proposed Board of Examination', it met with some strong criticism but the Union stuck hard to the question of certification. The article below, published in the 'Two Worlds' on April 22nd 1904, shows the extent of the Union's opposition:

CERTIFICATION.

WE regret to observe that much of the opposition to the certification of speakers on platforms and the press inclines toward sentiment rather than sense.

If any adequate conclusion is to be arrived at upon this matter, it must be by judicial reasoning rather than by oral pyrotechnics. Fireworks may be successful in rousing an audience to clapping-enthusiasm,—but often the veriest clap-trap is hidden behind the brilliant word-maroons.

At the several conferences during which the formation of the Union was in process, there were various outbursts of vague sentimentalities. 'Strike for liberty!' 'Uphold the flag of freedom!' 'Resist despotism!' 'Down with tyranny!' Such were the rallying cries of certain sections; but in the face of all this, the great majority of the representatives at those conferences went steadily ahead, forging those fearful bonds which were to bind them and render all who entered the Union prisoners to tyrannical overlords, or forging the scimitar which was to flash fearsomely in the hands of despotic duplicity in the shape of an elective council.

Why all this extravagant waste of the powers of imagination? We wonder that some of its opponents do not take to novel writing—it is a pity such imaginative powers

[19] The Britten Memorial Trust, set up on the death of Emma Hardinge Britten in 1899, would later supply these. A trust was needed, as the National Federation was unable to legally hold property.

should run waste upon such an infantile and ridiculous bantling as the Spiritualist National Union.

We are told the Union threatens the liberty of speakers and societies, but not a shred of evidence is brought forward to back such an assertion. The very men who are fierce in their denunciation to-day either acquiesced in the formation of the Union, or were absent from the conferences when the discussion of the clauses of its bye-laws were under consideration.

Who are the arch-traitors endeavouring to undermine the very vitals of Spiritualism? Presumably the Council. Who are they? In the main, men and women who for long years have battled for the well-being of the Cause, and who have been in the front ranks when fighting has had to be done.

What is the treachery? Broadly speaking, the attempt to carry out the recommendation of the great majority, in conference assembled, that speakers should be certificated.

Those who were present at the said conferences well remember the depth of feeling manifested upon this matter. There were scarcely two opinions about it. 'The platform needs purifying!' was the cry, and few voices were raised against that statement of what was evidently regarded as a fact.

The Council of the Union proceeds to give effect to the demand, and forthwith the opposition objects.

'Let the societies do the weeding,' says a prominent opponent. The societies begin to do this by supporting the Union, whereupon 'see the application of the boycott,' cries another prominent opposer.

We well remember the vigorous complaints made by one of the leaders of the present agitation for society rule when he was ruled off a certain platform because some of his fancies did not please the society.

But in this matter of platform workers societies need some guide, and that they feel the Union will now fill this want is evidenced by the number of societies affiliating themselves with the Union. Let the malcontents turn to the platform guide in this issue, and they will recognise that the Union is a representative body, and that the societies composing it are at least worthy of consideration.

The Union has no desire to coerce speakers to apply for certificates—platform workers can please themselves, and will do. The Union does not dictate to societies whom they shall employ on their platforms; the societies can please themselves, and *will do so*.

We would point out, however, that the very men who are opposed to the optional examination of speakers have undertaken the investigation of the moral character of their fellows, and have refused to have at least one worker in their particular Union.

The National Union's certificate will imply that its possessors have had the courage to put not only their capacities but their characters to the test. The certificate is a safeguard to the workers. Today there is all too much tittle-tattle about the moral characters of exponents, and many say behind their hands in privacy what they dare not repeat in public, even in a privileged place. The certification clause is designed by the Union to put an end to much of the, at present, unchecked slander and back-biting by giving every medium a chance to clear his or her character before a number of trusted fellow-workers.

The Union pleads for justice and freedom—that justice which demands and receives a fair hearing, and that freedom which will ensue when it is known that underhanded slanders, and barely-veiled libels which are vitiating the chances of the would-be worker, will be brought to the light of day, or be smothered at their birth.

A little less condemnation and a little more consistency on the part of its opponents would suit the members of the Union better.

The Conference transpires in July; will the opponents of certification make their voices heard in the one place where they can be efficiently answered, and where, if they can persuade the majority of their fellows that the certification clauses are so many mistakes, they can see that the errors are remedied?

A list of the first to apply for certification was published in the *Two Worlds* on September 30th 1904. The SNU General Secretary, Hanson Hey, had published the lists on three occasions and had been instructed by the Union to ask for any objectors to any person on the list to make their statement in writing to the Exponents Committee by October 8th of that year. As far as is presently known, there were no objections to the names; the list contains many of our early pioneers from the National Federation (N.F) and future Presidents, General Secretaries, etc. of the Union. The list is published at the end of the issue; I have added a few notes in bold for points of reference.

To conclude, George Berry, former editor of the SNU 'National Spiritualist', SNU President and General Secretary, outlines the early Exponents Committee published in the 'National Spiritualist', December 1931, pages 182-183. Further details of these early years will be given in the next issue.



George F. Berry: For further information please see the SNU Presidents page:

http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/presidents

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S.N.U. Committees.

THE EXPONENTS COMMITTEE.

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The first scheme, to regulate the certification of Exponents and Demonstrators was presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Union at Bootle, July, 1902. The scheme was promoted to establish a recognised body of public exponents and demonstrators who should be regarded by the Council of the Union and Spiritualists generally, as holding a position in Spiritualism similar to that held by Ministers; Preachers, Missioners, or Teachers in the Protestant Free Churches in England and Wales. Under this scheme candidates for Certification submitted themselves to (a) an examination or (b) a period of probation, before being placed on the official list.

After being in force fourteen years, a more ambitious scheme was presented and accepted by the A.G.M. held at Glasgow, July 1916. The new scheme set up a higher standard of examination. Three classes were dealt with, viz. Inspirational or Trance Speakers, Normal Speakers, and Demonstrators. The first two classes were examined by written essays on various aspects of Spiritualistic history, phenomena and philosophy, as well as being subjected to tests for efficiency as platform workers. Similar tests were devised for the demonstrators.

In addition, Honorary or Long Service Diplomas were awarded to workers who had rendered conspicuous service to Spiritualism, or who had been continuously serving the platform from the year 1908, and were acceptable Exponents or Demonstrators at the time of their application. Workers who had been certified under the original scheme were granted the Diploma Honoris Causa. An Intermediate Certificate was introduced for young workers showing promise of platform ability or Lyceumists who had passed with distinction the B. S. L. U. Grade V. examination.

This improved scheme operated for nine years. In spite of many discouragements the Committee steadfastly adhered to the high standard of examination for speakers classes (a) and (b) and (c) demonstrators, until at last the Diploma of the Union won its recognition and is now the coveted possession of practically all platform workers.

At the A.G.M. held at Bristol, July 1925, a still more ambitious scheme was accepted, the joint product of the Educational Committees of the B.S.L.U.[20] and the S.N.U., under the style and title of the National Spiritualist College.[21] It comprises a three years course of study with yearly examinations and terminal certificates. Candidates must be (a) Lyceumists who have passed the five grades (B. S. L. U.) examinations, or (b) persons who have passed an Entrance examination.

The planning control, and examination of candidates in this three years course is undertaken by the Education Committee, and the candidates only come before the Exponents Committee for the final Diploma, Class A. Normal Speakers. Meanwhile the Exponents Committee deals as before with the examination and certification of (b) Inspirational or Trance Speakers (c) Demonstrators whether Clairvoyants, Clairaudients,

[20] B.S.L.U.: British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union.

[21] Available online: see http://www.ehbritten.org/docs/nsc_bslu/nd__nsc___the_college_guide.pdf

Psychometrists, etc, and who must give satisfactory evidence that they can demonstrate "spirit return." (d) Demonstrators of varying types of physical phenomena and including Healing Mediumship. (e) Young workers who may be described as probationers without full experience, but who satisfy the Committee of potential platform ability.

Nearly thirty years have elapsed since the inauguration of the first scheme. The committee have often worked under difficult circumstances. Some of the older, but honoured, workers through whom the Spirit World delighted to manifest, were without the educational advantages that are freely open to the younger generation. As the years pass and the demand for a more highly educated platform grows more insistent, the older categories of Diploma have been withdrawn. In 1925, it was resolved to discontinue the issue of the Diploma Honoris Causa, and at the A.G.M. this year at Portsmouth, it was further resolved to discontinue the issue of the Long Service Diploma. To the present and future members of the Committee is committed the task of filling the platform with workers adequately trained, and educated to serve an age devoted to the spirit of scientific investigation and demonstration, and on whom the traditions of belief by faith has ceased to have effect.

G. F. BERRY.

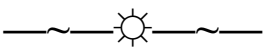
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The first names proposed for S.N.U. Certification "Exponents and Demonstrators"

J. C. Macdonald, 22, Byron-street, Patricroft. ***N.F Executive SNU Propaganda Committee**
Will Phillips, 18, Corporation-street, Manchester. ***N.F - Editor of the 'Two Worlds'**
Mrs. Batie, 18, Alma-street, Halifax.
Aaron Wilkinson, Holdsworth, near Halifax. ***SNU President (1910-1911)**
Prof. Timson, 3, Museum-square, Leicester.
H. G. Hey, 68, Crown-street, Halifax. ***SNU Head Office – General Secretary**
Mrs. Timson, 3, Museum-square, Leicester.
Mrs. C. Taylor, 48, Rosebank-mount, Westfield-road, Leeds.
Mr. T. Coupe, 60, Regent-road, Blackpool.
Mrs. R. Wade, 206, City-road, Bradford.
C. L. Hilton, 104, Central Drive, Blackpool.
Mr. and Mrs. Thewlis, 16, Waterloo-street, Oldham.
Mr. Curry, 14, Dent-street, Shildon, R.S.O.
Mr. Dilke, 73, Leicester-street, Wolverhampton.
Mrs. Wilmot, 69, Norman-street, Melton Mowbray.
Mr. Reginald Wightman, 35, Vauxhall-street, Blackley, Manchester.
J. W. Thompson, 105, Cavendish-street, Ashton.
Mrs. Burchell, 65, Girlington-road, Bradford. ***Trustee, Britten Memorial Trust**
Mrs. Fanny Taylor, 52, John-street, Castleton.
J. Parker, 663, Little Horton-lane, Bradford.
R. Hughes, 21, Holland-street, Higher Broughton.
Mr. Proctor, 19, Buccleugh-street, Barrow-in-Furness. ***N.F**
Mr. Jones, 49, Napier-street, Barrow-in-Furness.
Mr. Owen, 46, Highfield-road, Barrow-in-Furness.
Frank Hepworth, 23, Carlby-grove, Keighley. ***N.F - SNU President (1909-1910)**
Mr. Walker, 17, Garfield-road, Ponders End.

Mrs. Waddilove, 10, Lostock-square, Lostock Hall.
Eldred Hallas, 17, Ash Mount, Great Horton, Bradford.
J. Jackson, 24, Manor Croft, Baildon, near Bradford. ***Hon. Sec., Britten Memorial Trust**
Mrs. Stair, 8, North-street, Keighley. ***See Pioneer 2.1, January 2014**
W. J. Mayoh, 115, Auburn-street, Bolton.
Mrs. France, 32, Elland-road, Brighouse.
Mrs. Armitage, 145, Elland-road, Brighouse.
Mr. Viggars, 95, Richmond-road, Crewe.
F. O. Lund, 39, Elland-road, Brighouse.
Mr. Blackburn, 5, Earle-street, Colne.
J. Isherwood, 16, Parkfield-road, Great Lever, Bolton.
Mrs. Johnstone, 44, St. Mary's Gate, Rochdale.
Paula Corona, 145, Denmark-road, Greenheys, Manchester.
R. Annakin, 9, Pattie-street, Meanwood-road, Leeds.
S. Featherstone, 50, Beartree-road, Parkgate. ***First SNU elected Council, 1903**
Will Edwards, 68, Ormerod-street, Accrington.
F. Rothwell, 11, Kemp-street, Rochdale.
A. E. Button, 9, High street, Doncaster. ***First SNU elected Council, 1903**
Robt. Prince, 220, Habour-lane, Lady House, Milnrow.
Mrs. Eva Harrison, Grasmere, Chester-road, Erdington, Birmingham.
E. S. G. Mayo, Rotunda Buildings, Cardiff.
W. Johnson, City Bank, Market-place, Hyde. ***NF President. First SNU President**
R. A. Webb, 1, Gainsborough-street, Duke's Brow, Blackburn.
Mrs. M. Thompson, 64, King-street, Accrington.
Chas. A. Holmes, 9, Aberdeen-ter., Bradford.
C. Porter, 36, Duke-street, Park, Sheffield.
Mrs. Powell Williams, 3, George-street, Moss-side, Manchester.
Isaac Grattan, 9, Union-street, Doncaster.
Mrs. B. Berry, 5, Jubilee—terrace, Goosnurgh, near Preston.
Mrs. Summersgill Walker, Shakespere Gardens, Marsh, Huddersfield.
Mrs. S. Clarke, 115, Robin Hood's Chase, Nottingham.
D. Gavin, 150, Folkstone-street, Bradford.
A. Hulme, 34, Grosvenor-street, Bolton.
J. J. Parr, 227, Stanley-road, Liverpool. ***NF. First elected SNU President (1903-1905)**
Mrs. M. J. Place-Veary, 2, Diseworth-street, Leicester.
R. Taberner, 56, St. Bees-st., Moss-lane, East Moss Side, Manchester.
Mrs. Heaton Barnes, 167, Burnley-road, Accrington.
Mrs. Jessy Greenwood, Ashleigh, Hebden Bridge. ***First SNU lady President (1923-1925)**
Mr. J. H. Barraclough, 8, Gilpin-terrace, Tong-road, Wortley.
Mrs. Law, 32, Stoodley-terrace, Halifax.
Mrs. S. A. Sunderland, 110, Rochdale-road, Todmorden.
Mrs. Sarah Beardsall, 36, Swindon-place, St. Margaret's-rd., Bradford.
Mrs. Walmsley.
Mrs. J. Roberts, 70, Church-street, Blackpool.
Mr. J. Roberts, 70, Church-street. Blackpool.
Mr. J. J. Morse, 26, Osnaburgh-street, London. ***NF President. SNU Education, etc.**
Mr. R. H. Yates, 17, Even's-terrace, West Bowling, Bradford. ***SNU Gen. Sec. (1920-1922)**
Mr. John Adams, 27, Cheapside, London. ***SNU President (1905-1907)**
Mr. H. Crossley, Bank Top, Lindwell, Greetland.
Mrs. A. Nicholson, 12. Rothesay-terrace, Gt. Horton-road, Bradford.

Mr. T. H. Wright, 5, Clement-street, Sowerby Bridge.
Mr. Samuel Emil Bloor, 53, Collyhurst-st., Rochdale-rd., Manchester.
Mr. J. Briggs, 50, Lockwood-road, Huddersfield.
Mr. G. H. Walters, Spencer-place, Leeds.
Mrs. Bessie Hyslop, 33, Oxford-street, Shaw.
Mrs. M. A. Stell, 22, Rose-street, Hopwood-lane, Halifax.
Mrs. Richardson, 43, Salisbury-place, Akroyden, Halifax.
Mrs. Mayo, Rotunda Buildings, Cardiff.
Mr. P. Smythe, 66, Thornton-av., Chiswick.
Mr. F. Windridge, 5, Field-street, Seedley.
Mr. A. Burgess, 88, Rice-lane, Egremont.
Mr. W. H, Lote, Beetwell-street, Chesterfield.
Mr. Henry Boddington, 17, Ashmere-grove, Acre-lane, Brixton.
Mrs. Henry Boddington, 17, Ashmere-grove, Acre-lane, Brixton.
Mr. J. M. Smith, 20, Lewtas-street, Blackpool.
Mr. J. K. Jones, 37, Bawtry-road, Attercliffe.
Mr. George Harris, 88, Albany-road, Road, Cardiff.
Mr. S. Rastall, 29, Hillhouse-road, Huddersfield.
Mr. T. Wild, 62, Oldham-road, Rochdale.
Mrs. E. Gregg, 9, Outland-avenue, Camp-road, Leeds.
Mr. Ken. McLennan, 2, Ailsa-terrace, Hill Head, Glasgow.
Mrs. Ellen Green, 22, Derby-street, Moss Side, Manchester.
Mr. H. J. Webster, 33, Britnall-street, Attercliffe.
Mr. R. Wyvil, 14, Kilburn-street, New Shildon, R.S. O., Durham.
Mr. W. Massey, 23, West; High-street, Salford.
Mr. Chas. Shaw, 2, Topham-street, Sheffield.
Mr. S. Gratton, 62, Vickerman-street, Halifax.
Mrs. Susannah Hitchen, 42, College-terrace, Savile Park, Halifax.
Mr. Albert Wilkinson, 10, Percy-street, Nelson. ***SNU President (1910-1911)**
Miss M. Williamson, 13, Sun-street, Newton Heath.
Mrs. Fanny Taylor, 78, Holly-street, Nelson.
Mr. A. E. Stark, 237, Holton-road, Barry Dock, South Wales.
Mrs. Southworth, West Cliffe, 102, Derbyshire-lane, Sheffield.
Mr. J. Belshaw, 14, Worsley Mesnes, Wigan.



Why did the S.N.U. remove Helen Duncan's diploma in 1945?

Special Introduction:

The Union is sometimes asked why (70 years ago this year) it withdrew its certificate as a physical medium from Helen Duncan shortly after her release from prison. Officers of the Union had assisted Mrs Duncan in her trial and the Freedom Fund provided considerable financial help.

After her release, experienced sitters with Mrs Duncan reported that she had resumed frequent sittings and that the quality of her mediumship showed a marked decline. Attempts to help her establish a safer mode of work were rejected by her. The Union became concerned that in the event of a further arrest and trial the good name of Spiritualism would be damaged. Any medium who holds a certificate from the Union is in effect sponsored by the Union.

Recently the Executive Committee has re-examined the surviving documentation. It has given permission to Paul Gaunt, the curator of the Britten Memorial Museum and editor of the Union's own historical journal, 'The Pioneer', to publish this, so that Union members and the public can have the facts before them. We welcome any further information.

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Although at the time the Union published an official statement in the 'Two Worlds', seven decades on the reasons for the Union withdrawing the diploma that Helen Duncan had held from circa 1931 are shrouded in mystery. The various biographies and websites give no information on the actual events which resulted in the removal of her diploma.

On Friday September 22nd 1944, Helen Duncan, after serving 172 days of her nine-month sentence, was released from HM Prison Holloway. As published in the 'Two Worlds' for October 20th 1944, Helen wrote from the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh:

I am likely to be here for some time as my heart is affected . . . .My Spiritualism is my life, and for all the laws of the country I could not and will not give it up. I will not sit again under the same conditions, but intend to keep my mediumship active.

There are numerous reports that Helen had broken away from the SNU shortly after her release from prison; this claim appears not to be strictly true. Helen was a friend of Percy

Wilson[1] and his family, who gave support to Helen at her 1944 trial. Dorothy Wilson was the Secretary of the Exponents and Education Committee[2] and her husband Percy was a National Councillor of the Union and also (I believe) the Chairman of the Exponents and Education Committee.

In September 1944 the National Council appointed Miss May Price as General Secretary of the Union, taking over from Ernest Allan Keeling in October. The Union had inaugurated a 'National Register' of Exponents and Mediums, using the 1944 Diploma list as a basis.[3] Miss Price sent out the documentation in December 1944 and as part of the Union's campaign for religious freedom Helen was asked to sign the declaration and return it with her Class B subscription for 1945.

Dorothy Wilson wrote to Helen on February 1st 1945, as the General Secretary had had no reply and the signed declaration, etc. were required by February 10th. A few days later Helen's reply was received, thanking Dorothy for her nice letter and giving her regards to Percy and the boys. Helen stated: "I did not think it worth my while signing it as I am not working. I am not in a position meantime to renew my membership fee. I did think the S.N.U. would have made me a member free meantime." She returned the signed (V. H. Duncan) declaration dated February 4th 1945.

Dorothy Wilson replied on February 7th thanking her for the declaration and commenting: "I thought you were not working at present but did not know if you intended to take up work again. With regard to your membership fee, I am afraid that the Union could not pay, but my husband and I will gladly pay it for you this year. I think you are wise to take a long rest from seance work. I hope you will soon get back to health and strength…" Wilson notes: "subs 5/- sent to office".

The following month SNU Minister and founder editor of 'Psychic News', Maurice Barbanell, received news that Helen was again working. Below is taken from 'Psychic News', March 31st 1945 – "All Worlds Are One" feature: -[4]

> **Warning To Helen Duncan**
>
> Once again it falls to my lot to issue a public warning to Helen Duncan. If she had paid attention to my previous warnings, I doubt whether she would have been prosecuted.

[1] SNU President 1950-1953.

[2] Today we have the Dorothy Wilson Prize: this is for the highest marks over a completed range of subjects required for the award of a Diploma as a Speaker, Demonstrator or Administrator.

[3] 1943: A New Scheme by the Exponents' Committee for a National Register approved by the National Council. Percy Wilson exhibited this to the Conference at the following AGM at Leicester (July 1944), with a printed copy of the Exponent's Certificate, which had been approved by the Exponents' Committee. During this year "Applications from platform workers for inclusion in the National Register have been coming in steadily. During 1944 365 Certificates were granted, bringing the total on the Register, including Diploma Holders, up to 514. There were no educational examinations held during 1944," as the whole Educational Course was in the process of being revised.

[4] Kindly supplied courtesy of Psychic News, Suite 6, Thremhall Park, Start Hill, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 7WE.

Soon after her release from prison, she was approached by the Spiritualists' National Union, whose freedom fund paid the entire cost of her defence, with the suggestion that the Union should take charge of her seances. Mrs. Duncan refused to agree.

She has been giving "materialisation" seances in Lancashire, and the results, as they are described to me, are very poor. Whatever they are, they are not materialisations. That does not surprise me in view of the ordeal through which she has passed. The reports are sent me by sympathetic Spiritualists who attended her seances in the old days.

Heading For Trouble

I warn Helen Duncan that she is asking for trouble. To travel the country, giving seances without competent supervision by the S.N.U. or some similar body, will land her again in jail. This time the sentence is likely to be not nine months, but five years. In any case, she ought to wait till her powers return.

At least as a gesture to the S.N.U., which has done so much on her behalf, Mrs. Duncan ought to place herself under their auspices.

Besides, she is placing the S.N.U. in a great dilemma. She holds their diploma as a physical medium and therefore they are sponsoring her seances.

Maurice Barbanell informed the Spiritualists' National Union of concerns surrounding Helen's mediumship, giving contact details of a séance held in the Wigan area. On March 31st Dorothy Wilson wrote to the complainant regarding a séance held on March 5th. Asking for full details and a statement confirming the report if possible from some other person, Mrs Wilson stated: "It is highly important particularly at present, that everything should be done that is possible to safeguard the movement generally."

On April 2nd Dorothy Wilson received a copy of the report of the séance in question and the next day she received another report of the séance signed by the complainant, with signatures and addresses from four of the sitters at the March 5th séance. Although the report is seventy years old the personal details of all parties are not here published.

Below is the full report printed for the first time. The complainant sent what he called the 'First report', signed by four of the sitters, and in a 'Further report' he gives more information about the séance and his own personal views. The First report is inserted into the Further report as instructed by the writer.

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Report of a seance held in Lancashire on 5th March, 1945. With Mrs. Helen Duncan as the Medium

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The subject-matter of a tentative report forwarded to the Editor of "Psychic News" on 21st March, 1945, having received mention in the columns of that paper and resulted in a request for further details for consideration by the Exponents Committee and the Council of the Spiritualists' National Union, the following facts, comments and theories are to be read in conjunction with that report as the personal observations and statements of the undersigned, and are not to be embodied above any other signature which may be appended to the First Report, unless application is made to such other signatories for confirmation.

Experience of Spiritualism.--I have been interested in Spiritualism for more than 20 years, and in addition to clairvoyance, clairaudience and Psychometry, have had the experience of seeing levitation, Transfiguration, cold lights, slate writing, trance and other kinds of control, pictures in the crystal (whether or not this can be considered as part of Spiritualistic phenomena), hearing voices from the trumpet and direct voice, trance and inspirational addresses, and exponents of Spiritualist philosophy. In addition I have seen materialisation with Mrs. Helen Duncan dating from pre-war days and one other medium for materialisation.

I have read much Spiritualist literature, and received messages of great importance from mediums as well as a lot of messages which have never come true. At the risk of unpopularity I have always insisted upon the recipients of messages and the witnesses of phenomena keeping to the actual facts of their experience.

Events before the seance now under consideration.--The party for the seance on March 5th consisted of 14 women and three men, and apart from the householder, I was the only male present who had witnessed materialisation, though several of the ladies had attended such seances. On one occasion I saw as many as three figures walking and talking to members of the audience at a seance in Lancashire, but Mrs. Duncan was not the medium that day. However, I have seen figures materialised and walking about when Mrs. Duncan was seated in her chair, there being no doubt that the figures were entirely separate from Mrs. Duncan. I know Mrs. Duncan personally, having had long conversations with her and there is no possibility of mistaken identity in this case.

Lunch was taken at an hotel situated some half mile from the meeting place. All were in good humour, for the journey had been pleasant, the day was fine though not too warm, and the lunch was quite enjoyable. One or two of the party had a small whisky with tea or coffee, but the majority had nothing intoxicating, and approximately three hours elapsed between the end of lunch and the commencement of the seance. I must leave it to others to comment on the possibility of this liquor having a detrimental effect upon the proceedings which were to follow.

The medium was not on hand when the meeting place was reached and during the wait of almost two hours many of the party became restless and anxious. Some were fortified with tea but the sigh of relief when the arrival of the medium was announced was indicative of the strain under which most of the party had been labouring.

The medium arrived in a taxi and was unaccompanied. I thought she looked younger and fresher than when I had seen her before. Despite the advisability of a rest being urged upon her, the medium decided to carry on without delay, and the party moved into the séance room, the accommodation proving to be only just sufficient. Although testimony was given as stated in the first report (inserted below) that the cabinet had been examined it was not examined during my presence in the seance room, and as I was one of the first in the room to take my place at the farthest end, there had been opportunity after such examination to carry out any irregularities had such been intended. Mrs. Duncan did not change into seance robes as was her former custom, indeed she said she did not intend to change, but invited a search to be made of the clothes she was then wearing and retained during the séance.

I had an opportunity to look into the cabinet after the seance, and a glance revealed the presence of a cupboard or drawer behind the curtain, and this, along with the perfunctory search of the medium, came in for adverse criticism after the meeting.

The First Report should be read here. - ⇓

The seance was held in a cottage situated in a remote part of Lancashire. The meeting room about 12’ x I5’, contained furniture appropriate to the premises, while the cabinet was formed by dark draw-curtains across one corner. About 20 people were present, some of whom had had experience of materialisation. Lighting was provided by means of an electric torch and a storm lamp, both being dimmed by red material.

In answer to a question by the medium one of the sitters testified that the cabinet had been examined. The medium then left the room to be searched and, on returning, entered the cabinet immediately, sinking down into the chair with her eyes closed, whereupon the curtains were drawn. At once a voice from the cabinet asked for the light to be reduced, and the electric lamp was extinguished. The storm lamp (which was suspended from the ceiling), continued to give illumination sufficient to enable all the sitters and the contents of the room to be seen with ease and in detail.

A voice from behind the curtain described a visitor and, after being invited to come forward, a figure appeared holding the curtains apart. From the farthest end of the room the figure was plainly that of the medium draped in something white, her face, hands and dress being distinguishable.

The announcer from the cabinet spoke in a voice unlike that of the medium, and the figures which appeared had intonations in keeping with their age and sex. The voice of the announcer sounded very tired and dropped to a weary whisper at the end of each sentence. The figures were not announced by name, and the sitters concerned were found by the voice from the cabinet asking for someone near the centre, or someone near the back, and so on, and first one sitter and then another would speak up until the right one was found, signified by: “Yes, that is the voice”.

The only information volunteered from the cabinet was man, woman or child, and the nature of their passing. “Came to our side of life under very tragic circumstances”, “The cause of passing was due directly to child-birth”, “Died from consumption”, “Invite the lady out, please,” “Sing a hymn”. These few sentences, each repeated more than once,

comprised the conversation from the announcer, and every languid utterance trailed off--a low rallentando, with a kind of despair, which persisted even in the closing remark when the announcer "Hoped he had made everyone very happy".

The figures, when they did talk, often failed to address a single remark directly to the sitters who had claimed them, reserving their conversation for those people near to the cabinet, while the voices, dialects, expressions of speech and mannerisms sometimes proved a hindrance rather than an aid to recognition. On more than one occasion when the visitor fai1ed to display any of the characteristics which should have served as identification, a dumfounded sitter would be further embarrassed by the visitant's remark—"Is that all you have to say?"

One of the sitters asked after her own guide--an Indian of exceptional height, and the medium appeared holding her left arm aloft, with the hand turned palm downwards over her head, whilst a quantity of white stuff draped the hand--a representation of the head of a tall man. Unlike the more averaged-sized figures, this head seemed to be featureless, the majority of the faces being well formed and of a good colour - healthy looking in the rosy light, and belonging to figure which was the medium in her black dress (really dark navy Blue), scantily draped in white stuff--often transfigured to fit the part, but still the same.

The announcer had already intimated that the power was failing when someone in the audience asked for the medium's child guide. A figure appeared and made an attempt to sing and give some semblance of gaiety, but it was a failure, and the figure withdrew.

Through the sitting the moving of feet inside the cabinet was to be heard and sometimes distinct footsteps sounded, as the figures approached the curtains or shifted position whilst in full view of all present.

The meeting was very orderly, (*and though it was obvious to both the experienced sitters and those unacquainted with the phenomena what was taking place,) no attempt was made to interrupt the proceedings.

Signed … . … & four of the sitters.

End of First report inserted.

In the last paragraph of the First Report (marked*) the words in brackets should be deleted and read here (*and though it was obvious to both the experienced sitters and those unacquainted with the phenomena what was taking place,) for it was only after the seance was over that it became obvious that all present knew what had been taking place, and I wished to keep the First Report free from all comment.

Being in a private house I, for one, did not wish to create any disturbance, and along with the others paid the fee (12/6), with as good a grace as possible, and the party returned to the hotel for tea.

Behind closed doors tongues became loosened, and opinions about the seance were expressed with great candour. One or two claimed to have seen the irregularities of such a nature that they were reluctant to make unsupported statements. These I must leave for further verification.

Comments and opinions by the sitters.--All who spoke up at the meeting over the teacups were emphatic that every figure was Mrs Duncan draped in white stuff. Those nearest to the cabinet confirming what I had seen from a greater distance. Only one claimed to have received anything evidential and that was in a single remark said to be characteristic of the person who was supposed to have materialised. One gentleman received a long speech upholding Roman Catholicism from his returned 'father', who claimed to be a Roman still, but as the real father was never a Roman Catholic it was not evidential.

Figures claiming to be my wife's mother and an Uncle John of mine followed one another. Neither spoke directly to us, and both would have made us blush with their coarse speech and dialect, for my wife's mother was a gently reserved woman, full of warm love for both of us, while the Uncle John referred to was an author, poet, linguist, historian, of mild speech and ready but kindly wit.

This example proved to be typical of practically all the 'visitors' as the following comments will show.

(1). The whole show was a hoax.

(2). Mrs. Duncan brought the white stuff into the room.

(3). The white stuff was hidden in the drawer or cupboard in the cabinet.

(4). Mrs. Duncan was conscious all the time and faked the trance.

(5). Mrs. Duncan is a ventriloquist.

(6). Mrs. Duncan is a transfiguration medium.

(7). The white stuff was muslin or some such material.
Etc. Etc.

As such remarks as these were passed by sitters who had previously been convinced of the genuineness of Mrs. Duncan's powers as a materialisation medium, the Portsmouth affair takes on another aspect if it was a séance of similar quality.

Each of the above comments presents its own difficulties, and, as I do not accuse the medium of any one of the above suggested 'frauds', I will pass on to my own speculations as to the why and wherefore of the matter, but must first mention further comments made: -

(8). The white stuff was apported material.

(9). Conditions were poor and an attempt was being made to please the sitters.

Personal opinion.--of the above (1) Too crude. (2) Foolish to bring insufficient. (3) As No. 2. (4) No evidence that Mrs. Duncan is so cunning or so clever. (5) No evidence—would do well on the stage. (6) Possible, but useless without other factors already dismissed in (2). (7) Again, why bring an insufficiency. The medium was never fully draped. (8) Why poor show at materialisation when gifted as apport medium? (9) A poor excuse for all the sitters were displeased.

Those in a position to know stated that the medium smelled of whiskey. I do know that this applied on former occasions. I also know that the medium is sometimes draped when genuine phenomena also takes place at the same seance.

My problems are somewhat different. The lighting was greater than I have ever seen before. The voice of Albert, allowing for the tired tone described was, in my opinion, the same tone and manner of expression as formerly. If Albert was in charge why should he allow such a travesty? The attempt at vivacity was very like the former Peggy, as was the voice.

I therefore conclude that Mrs. Duncan was unconscious of the proceedings, and under the influence of a subconscious power with the clairvoyance of the hypnotic state, with ectoplasm present as the automatic result of training by external powers, i.e., Albert and his assistants, the insufficiency of ectoplasm being due to the power required to move the medium physically.

I may be completely wrong, and would appreciate any further suggestions or findings of the Exponents Committee or Council.

(Signed)…. . ….

The complainant added another five points to his report:

(I) The seance lasted somewhat under half an hour.

(2) The sound of footsteps referred to were slippered or booted feet.

(3) During the seance the remark “Don’t do that!” was made inside the cabinet as though one person was remonstrating with another. The voice was not Mrs. Duncan’s normal voice.

(4) About two-thirds way through the seance a request was made from the cabinet for the light to be lowered and a gentleman turned the storm lamp lower, but there remained sufficient light to see clearly all that was taking place. The storm lamp, though covered round the side allowed a considerable amount of white light to escape, throwing a ring of clear light onto the ceiling.

(5) One sitter near the cabinet declared that when a child’s figure was presented the medium was definitely stooping down, her back, in a horizontal position being clearly visible. I did not see his myself.

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On April 13th 1945 a typewritten letter signed by May Price, the General Secretary of the Union, was sent to Helen Duncan outlining the complaints against her:

Dear Mrs Duncan,

The Council of the Union has received reports that you have recently held a number of seances in North Wales and in Lancashire in circumstances which might have brought grave consequences to yourself and to the Spiritualist Movement as a whole.

One report, signed by a number of the sitters who were present, contains details of a seance which you attended unaccompanied at a certain village in Lancashire. It is stated:

(1) that at this seance a number of supposed materialised forms appeared but that the particulars of identity given by these forms and by the voice from the cabinet – ostensibly that of 'Albert' but very tired and dropping to a weary whisper at the end of each sentence – were fictitious and in no wise evidential:

(2) that all these supposed materialised forms were plainly yourself in your dark dress, scantily draped in white stuff; your face and hands and dress being distinguishable from the farthest end of the room;

(3) that throughout the sitting the moving of feet inside the cabinet was heard and sometimes distinct footsteps (as of booted feet) sounded as the figure approached the curtains or shifted position whilst in view;

(4) that some sitters identified the form of a small figure as yourself bending to a horizontal position and partly draped in white.

The council also understand that some of the sitters allege;

(a) that when you arrived at the cottage your breath smelled of whiskey.

(b) that before the seance neither you nor the cabinet was searched in the presence of witnesses;

(c) that the white material was introduced by yourself.

(d) that the whole sitting was a hoax.

Other sitters, whilst not accusing you of conscious fraud or deliberate attempts to deceive, nevertheless regard the seance as entirely, and even dangerously, unsatisfactory and indicative of a very serious deterioration in your mediumship.

The Council has learned of these reports with great regret since the holding of seances of the kind, and in the conditions of these to which the reports relate, cannot but be regarded as "likely to discredit the cause of Spiritualism" (see Regulation 5 enclosed).

In view of the warnings already given to you, privately by the Union's legal advisor after your discharge from Holloway gaol and publicly in the Declaration of the Freedom Committee, the Council has been obliged to consider the question of the continuance of your Diploma. In this connection, it is prepared to take into account any representation

you may wish to make provided these are sent to me within the next 28 days. For the present, however, having regard to the serious position created by your conduct, the Council must ask you to regard your Diploma as being suspended.

Yours sincerely,

p.p SPIRITUALISTS' NATION UNION LTD.,

General Secretary.

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A handwritten reply was received from Mrs Duncan on April 18th 1945 as shown below:

Dear Miss Price,

I have received your letter with the same post I received the enclosed from Wigan.[5] I do think in all fairness to me they might have complained at the time and have given me a chance to defend myself anyway I have not been giving sitting, only there it is the first & last I can assure you. I have come to the conclusion it is kick a dog when it is down. I feel very indignant about the past smelt drink what a dam cheek & I can get those who were in contact with me to prove otherwise. I have never touched any drink in no way since before I was at Portsmouth & I resent it very much. Anyway I am having nothing more to do with the movement so that is final & for Mr. Quastel of Meersbrook he has a very short lived memory he had plenty of me & now he talks about something he knows nothing about.[6]

I am yours faithfully,

V. H. Duncan

P.S.

Oh & by the way who in the S.N.U. offered me any work. I have always worked for S.N.U. churches & for Portsmouth it was a district councillor who took me there first & the one who said I said I would not work for them for £20 is a liar.

Please don't trouble to reply.

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[5] "Wigan, Lancs. Dear Mrs. Duncan, I have read with deep regret the account in the "Psychic News" & I am writing to tell you that the people of Wigan know nothing at all about it. I was dumb founded when Ella came back from Blackpool & told me that they wondered if it was from here, on my oath it was not, for although you have disappointed me so many times & I have been put to a lot of trouble it would be the last thing in my head to do you a dirty trick. We are still expecting you. Sincerely, (signed).. ….."

[6] **Warning To Helen Duncan:** "I AGREE absolutely that if Helen Duncan does not toe the line and stop giving seances until her mediumship is A1 again, and until she agrees to let the S.N.U. "mother" her the S.N.U. should *not* defend her if she gets into trouble again.

"If mediums realise that S.N.U. money will only be spent when *justified* by circumstances, they will work much more wisely.—C. I. Quastel. Sheffield."

Taken from *Psychic News,* 14th April 1945, 'Dear Sir' (letters) feature. Kindly supplied courtesy of *Psychic News*.

Around this time Maurice Barbanell furnished the Union with some more reports, which showed that at around the time of the above-reported séance Duncan had conducted at least six others, some in North Wales, some at Blackpool, and others in the Wyre district of Lancashire. Barbanell was informed on April 22nd 1945 that the matter had been taken up with Mrs Duncan but there was no decision as yet on the course of action against her. There appears to be only one surviving report from the Wyre district of Lancashire dated April 3rd 1945; it states that Duncan gave two séances on the same day, March 5th, and it is reported: "Mrs. Duncan was drunk and the phenomena very unsatisfactory, every entity smelling of whisky." There were nineteen people present at the afternoon séance. A further séance was arranged for the next day, Tuesday March 6th, but Duncan never arrived, as she was in Blackpool and gave two séances.

The combination of these reports resulted in the removal of Helen Duncan's Spiritualists' National Union diploma.[7]

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What can be concluded from these reports?

It is clear these allegations were of a serious nature for the Spiritualist movement as a whole, especially to the SNU, as Helen Duncan was one of their diploma-holders, in essence representing the Union. We can note that Maurice Barbanell did not make these allegations headline news in 'Psychic News' but passed the main bulk of the complaint to the Union to deal with. At this time the Union's 'Freedom Committee' were very active on the Parliamentary pre-election pledges made by candidates that they would, if elected, help change the law on mediumship, and in February of this year Hannen Swaffer had addressed a meeting at the House of Commons. Helen had been released from Holloway prison for less than six months, so another full-scale criminal investigation would have had a devastating effect on the movement and would put the Union in poor light.

As already noted by Barbanell, Helen would not work fully under the auspices of the Union and in the past she had ignored the advice of experienced Spiritualists like John McIndoe and Maurice Barbanell about over-sitting. It may appear that this is one of the major problems in these allegations. No doubt Helen's response to the claims put against her did little for the SNU Council[8] and the Exponents and Education Committee to reach a more favourable decision regarding the removal of her diploma. It is presently unclear whether the Union made further investigations into these claims, which I believe to be doubtful, as Helen makes no other defence than her letter. We should recall also the long efforts of the 'Parliamentary and Freedom Fund'; it is reported that the Duncan trial cost the Fund, originally started in 1916, around £3,000 (I have not confirmed this figure). As the efforts to gain freedom from the Vagrancy Act and the Witchcraft Act were now more realistic with a change of government, it may have been felt, given the limited response of Helen to the allegations, that the Union had no option other than to withdraw her certificate!

[7] All the documentation (unless otherwise stated) is held in the Britten Memorial Museum at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall, Essex.

[8] Harold Vigurs, President; Mr A. Raffill, Vice-President; John McIndoe, Treasurer.

But what if the allegations had been more fully investigated?

For example:

The Union's complaint no. 5 stated that "when you arrived at the cottage your breath smelled of whisky." The Wyre district of Lancashire report stated: "Mrs. Duncan was drunk…"

Helen's response was:

> "I feel very indignant about the past smelt drink what a dam cheek & I can get those who were in contact with me to prove otherwise. I have never touched any drink in no way since before I was at Portsmouth & I resent it very much."

I am not sure how one can distinguish the different types of alcohol consumed from a person's breath and state it is whisky rather than, say, rum. In June 2015, during an exchange of information with one of Helen's granddaughters, Maggie Hahn, Maggie mentioned to me: "My sister knows how I feel about my gran and she sent me her address book and it had the letter, a medical statement about grandma emitting the smell of alcohol because of her diabetes." On further investigation it appears that diabetics can display symptoms similar to drunkenness and have a smell of alcohol on their breath.

The Séance:

Given the complex structure of physical mediumship and the physical depletion it causes in the medium's body with the extraction of ectoplasm, or, as Duncan's control, Albert, calls it, 'psychoplasm', over-exertion reduces the necessary energy required in the production of a successful séance, especially where full-form materialisation is demonstrated, as in the case of Helen Duncan. If we consider the séance which is at the centre of the complaint, neither the sitters nor the medium sat in what may be considered *conducive* and *harmonious* conditions to achieve the best possible results; it appears that that significant fact may have been overlooked!

The séance party of seventeen persons had been out to lunch and one or two had drunk alcohol. When they reached the séance location the medium had not arrived; in fact she was almost two hours late! The sitters "became restless and anxious". Helen arrived by taxi, unaccompanied; she was urged to rest but the medium "decided to carry on without delay". All moved into the séance room. The first report states that the "cabinet had been examined" (curtains across the corner of the room). The medium did not change into her séance clothes, generally part of her pre-séance procedure. The medium invited a search of her clothes she was wearing again; generally she was stripped and searched (the two reports are slightly conflicting).

Generally speaking, Duncan's séances were fairly well-lit and the séance procedure was quite consistent throughout her years of work. The séance in question is not typical. Duncan's control would announce himself as Albert, ask Mrs Duncan (how he addressed her) to stand up, then he would show himself and his medium together, a prayer would be said and a singing of a hymn. None of this is mentioned in the reports.

The first report, signed by four of the sitters, shows the phenomena were very weak and unsatisfactory. The actual séance is reported to be less than thirty minutes in duration! Given the above problems the circumstances were not *conducive* and *harmonious*.

Despite warnings already mentioned by McIndoe and Barbanell for over-sitting Helen would still conduct two séances in a day; in fact, on the two occasions she was arrested, in Edinburgh in 1933 and Portsmouth in 1944, this was the case! We can note that Helen actually conducted three séances on March 5th! She gave two séances in the Wyre district, possibly one in the morning, followed by an afternoon séance, when nineteen people were present. This goes a long way to answering why Helen was so late and rushed when she attended the Wigan area. It is possible that this séance was her second again, hence the rush and short séance to return to the first venue for an evening séance. The actual séance times are not recorded. The distance between the two locations is forty-two miles! Given that she had three séances booked the following day but only attended two, this helps explain the poor results of the séances, which can only be looked upon as reckless and justifies the concerns about her conduct towards the movement and the SNU.

Did Helen resort to fraud or, given her drained physical constitution, did she become subjected to a subconscious influence, as concluded by the writer of the report? Do mediums consciously premeditate fraud or do low, mischievous spirits carry out the fraud unconsciously? Some will argue that the medium premeditated the fraud and is therefore conscious and responsible for their actions, whilst others would say that owing to the influence of low, mischievous spirits or of the sitters in the séance the medium is totally unaware of their actions, as they are in a somnambulistic state and therefore cannot be accountable for their *unconscious* actions. For example, in August 1877 Catherine (Kate) Elizabeth Wood (1854-1884) was headlined "Miss Wood Caught Personating a Spirit". The report stated: "During the unconscious state the medium is made the victim of the circumstances by which she is surrounded, and either through the perverted action of some of her own controls, or the intrusion of other spirits, she is reduced to the disgraceful position in which she was found."

However, whatever conclusion is reached by the reader, not all the accusations levied against her are fair or correct.

For example:

SNU complaint no. 4 (b): "that before the séance neither you nor the cabinet was searched in the presence of witnesses." This is not strictly true.

Sitters suggest fraud: Duncan brought the "white stuff" into the room – the "white stuff" was hidden in the drawer or cupboard in the cabinet – the "white stuff" was muslin or such.

It was the sitters who searched the medium, as signed by five sitters (including the writer of the report): "…medium then left the room to be searched and, on returning, entered the cabinet…" It is very strange to consider that a cabinet (curtains across a corner of the room) would in fact have these convenient hiding-places: how would Helen know this in advance or did she enter the cabinet before the start of the séance? There is no evidence to support this; as Mrs Duncan stated in her letter: "I do think in all fairness to me they might have complained at the time and have given me a chance to defend myself anyway."

The list of the allegations could be further discussed but what degree of fraud was involved, if any, will remain speculative, given the passing of seven decades. If Helen Duncan had stood her ground, giving further explanations, and had invited investigations to be carried out by the SNU, the outcome would have, at the very least, been more balanced and definitive. The greater concern in the removal of her diploma may have been her recklessness, having

little regard to the management of her own mediumship, as is evident in the reports and comments. Helen's mediumship never regained the quality and support of her pre-trial days.



MAURICE BARBANELL, THE S.N.U. AND HIS PROPAGANDA WORK



The name Maurice Barbanell needs little introduction, but given there is no biography of his life and work we mostly only associate him with being the founder editor of "Psychic News", the medium for the teachings of Silver Birch and the author of numerous books. It is not generally known that for many years he was closely associated with the Spiritualists' National Union. In October 1926 the AGM minutes were published in the Union's monthly journal, "The National Spiritualist",[1] and Barbanell was recommended for a Diploma as a result of the Exponents and Education assessment; his marking was Class B (Honours). In a further report of the 1926 examinations published in May 1927, Barbanell achieved Class A (Honours). At this time education was under the "National Spiritualist College and National Joint Education Scheme" (Union/Lyceum), which entailed a three years' course of study with yearly examinations – for details see "Pioneer", July 2015: "Early S.N.U Education History". By April 1928 it can be noted he was M. Barbanell, Dipl. S.N.U.

At the 1927 SNU Annual Consultative Conference held on Sunday July 3rd at the Art Workers' Guild Rooms, Queen Square, London under the presidency of Robert Owen, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Hon. President, moved the following:

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

Barbanell opposed the resolution, stating:

> If this new principle were added to the seven it would mean that any who felt themselves unable to subscribe to this principle would not be eligible as members of the organisation. He objected also to the term "original" ("the original teaching and example of Jesus of Nazareth") in the resolution. Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, one of the greatest

[1] See Pioneer, Volume 1, No. 1, August 2013: "The First SNU Journal".

pioneers, claimed that Jesus did not originate a single ethic. He read a passage from her works as fo1lows:—

> "But even if he (Jesus) were a man there is no evidence of such a personality save the four Gospels, the authorship of which has conclusively been denied by the best authority to have belonged to any disciple of Jesus. No contemporary historian makes any mention of such a personage. The events stated to have occurred at his trial and death are neither found in Roman nor Jewish records, neither in the writings of the officials nor the historians of the time. Yet Philo, the learned historian of the Essenes, wrote of his period without ever alluding to him. Josephus, the voluminous historian of Herod and his times, makes no mention of him."

If Spiritualism wanted a leader, let it go to the highest and best it knew—a God who was all perfect.

A special Committee was appointed to deal with the proposed eighth Principle, which was presented to the 1928 AGM held at Barry, Vale of Glamorgan, Wales on July 7th and 8th July. Below is its "unanimous report":

> Since the revelations of Spiritualism are universal we recommend that it is not in the interests of Spiritualism or of the churches affiliated to the S.N.U., that the well-known Seven Principles of Spiritualism now embodied in the Memorandum of Association of the Union, should be added to or remodelled in such form as to reduce the universality of the basis of membership, which at present is open to people of all races, colours and religions.
>
> We recognise that spiritual truth is one and universal, and that all religious systems have resulted from an incursion from the spirit world, manifested through chosen instruments. These inspired men have revealed in varying degrees, and in their respective periods and countries, new and higher aspects of God, the spiritual nature of man, and glimpses of the whence and whither of man's origin and destiny.
>
> Recognising further the changing and controversial views regarding the person and work of Jesus current among the orthodox churches of Christendom, and recognising equally the wisdom of safeguarding the movement of Spiritualism from the unjust reproach of being "anti-Christian," we affirm that the development and unfolding of religious ideas from earliest items to the present age conforms to a law of evolution exactly as does the growth of man's perceptions, and his acquisition of scientific knowledge.
>
> Zoroaster, Gotama "The Buddha," Jesus "The Christ" and Mohammed are the recognised founders of great religions known by their names, which still exist and give spiritual consolation to innumerable congregations. Nearest to the Western World and accepted as its special teacher is Jesus. His teaching as represented by the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, and the New Commandment, admittedly embodies an ideal ethical and spiritual standard for human conduct; and the story of his life and self-sacrificing death has been and remains an inspiration and comfort to millions of his followers.
>
> Spiritualism, however, bases its position upon the universal manifestations of the continuity of personal life after physical death and the uplifting influence of excarnate

spirit people upon the incarnate. It therefore accepts all these great founders as inspired and as revealers of spiritual truths to mankind, and builds its own philosophy and teaching not only upon the truths revealed to mankind through these ancient teachers, but also upon the New Revelations received by this generation through modern Seers, Prophets and Mediums.

Since Spiritualism accepts all revelations of truth as progressive it is unwise to impose restrictions which fetter liberty of thought. The S.N.U. therefore welcomes into its ranks every Spiritualist who can conscientiously subscribe to the Seven Principles, leaving him freedom to exercise liberty of interpretation thereto,[2] and to enjoy any further opinions which do not contravene the Statutory Principles.

The following resolution was then proposed:

"That this A.G.M. endorses and adopts the recommendations of the Council concerning the proposal to adopt an Eighth Principle which was remitted for consideration by the 1927 Consultative Conference."

The resolution was passed with ten dissentients.

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In 1928 Barbanell became a member of the SNU Council, taking over from the veteran Spiritualist, Richard Boddington (brother of Harry), as London Area Representative, a position he would hold for many years.

As previously noted, Barbanell had achieved high grades Class A & B. (Honours). I do not know of any other grades he may have achieved; however, these grades are significant. Class A was for "Normal Speakers" and "B" for "Inspirational or Trance Speakers"; Maurice Barbanell was first entranced in or around 1920. After about four years Barbanell came into contact with Hannen Swaffer, a friendship and working relationship which would last for almost forty years. The "Hannen Swaffer Home Circle" was formed, with Barbanell as the medium. It appears that the development of the guide's control, known as "Big Jump", over the medium was slow, with his eventual mastery of the English language changing the guide's guttural responses. It would not be until the 1930s, after *Psychic News* was founded, that the name Silver Birch would come into existence.

Barbanell's trance mediumship regarding "Big Jump" and "Silver Birch" were not public knowledge and remained strictly within the Hannen Swaffer Home Circle. In fact, it would be decades before Spiritualists were told that Maurice Barbanell was the medium for the then well-known spirit guide, Silver Birch. So it is interesting to note that Barbanell received such a prestigious marking for Inspirational or Trance Speaking, given that all reports I am aware of are for Normal Speaking! It may be considered similar to Emma Hardinge Britten; the audience often did not know if she was, in fact, speaking in trance, inspirationally or normally.

In 1929 Barbanell was asked to read a paper to the SNU Summer School students. (See "Pioneer", September 2015, for information on the SNU Summer Schools: "What we did before Stansted".)

[2] Liberty of Interpretation: Primary Cause of S.N.U. Decline! See "Pioneer", March 2015: "Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?"

Barbanell commented: “When I was originally approached and asked whether I would speak at the Summer School, it was suggested that the subject be one which lent itself to controversy, and also one on which we could ask questions. This explains the title of my address; for surely of all questions that have puzzled thinking minds throughout the ages and is still unsolved, it is the great mystery we call God.” The paper was called “The God Idea”; it is an interesting paper but far too long to reproduce here; any reader requiring a copy please contact the editor. It may be interesting to compare this with the later published teachings of Silver Birch!

This generated some discussion in the SNU’s “National Spiritualist” and further articles were written by Barbanell in the publication. As London Representative he had his own column under the title, “Notes From The Areas”, where he kept the readers well informed of SNU business and activities within London. In 1930 Barbanell stood for SNU President and Vice-President but was pipped at the post by John Brown McIndoe and Alexander George Newton respectively. Later, circa 1938, Barbanell was one of the first to be appointed a Minister of the Union.

Barbanell was critical of poor mediumship, which is apparent in this experience, which he published in the SNU “National Spiritualist”, February 1931:

Where We Fail.

I was spending Christmas with some friends in a prominent City in the West of England, and decided to pay a visit to one of the local Spiritualist Societies. Although I bought every newspaper published in the Town on Saturday morning and evening, I could find no mention of the Spiritualist services of any Societies affiliated with the S.N.U. Consulting my diary I noticed there was one which held a morning service at 11 o’ clock. After a little difficulty I found the Hall. To my surprise I found only five other people in the congregation. The form of service was the usual one that I have heard in dozens of Spiritualist churches. There was a lady on the platform who gave a very long invocation full of orthodox tags, followed by a reading from the Bible, which struck me as being unsuitable for any Spiritualist Meeting. The address which followed, by the same lady, was a mixture of Evangelical orthodoxy, Salvation Army teaching, plus a modicum of Spiritualist philosophy. The title of the address was announced as “Responsibility,” but many of the statements were wildly irresponsible.

I learnt to my surprise that the last War was deliberately arranged by God, for some reason that even the speaker did not explain very clearly; also that the founder of Spiritualism was none other than Jesus. No evidence or argument of any kind was called in support of this statement.

At the conclusion of the address it was announced that another lady on the platform would give clairvoyance. The clairvoyant fastened immediately upon me, and gave me three descriptions. The first, an old man she said, was connected with my father. His name was John Henry. I regretted being unable to recognise him. “Can you go back three generations?” As I am not yet 30 years of age this struck me as being impossible. “Do you place the names?” Remembering my Jewish ancestry I decided against there ever having been a “John Henry.” Then there was an old lady named Martha, whose description was too meagre for anyone to recognise. The next description she announced was that of a Jewish Spirit. Could I understand that? “Yes,” said I, “I am a Jew,” a fact

which I have always thought was obvious to anybody who saw me. The message of this Jewish spirit was indeed remarkable, for he impressed upon the medium that I must understand that this (meaning Spiritualism) was the true religion, a fact which I have known now for eleven years. He wanted me to investigate it. Further, I had psychic powers, and I ought to sit in a circle for development. I hesitated, remembering that I had done nothing else for nearly ten years. I then discovered, according to the Medium, that were I to sit in a developing circle, I could get messages direct from the Spirit World, and that I had the gift of materialisation and automatic writing. It only requires someone now to tell me that I possess the gift of Spirit photography, and I shall then have every mediumistic phase that is known.

Everyone present received descriptions. One lady was told that she was a wonderful medium, and if she developed, would go round the world addressing vast audiences. The medium could see lights and ectoplasm streaming from her. I felt very envious.

This was followed by an exhibition of control on the part of the medium by her Guide "Pansy,'' whose method of speaking English was to introduce the letter "s" after every word. Heaven preserve us from these "Pansies" and these "Topsies!"

The hall itself looked very shabby, the walls being badly in need of a coat of paint. I went into that hall an eager, enthusiastic Spiritualist, I left almost an anti-Spiritualist.

We will never make any progress whilst we tolerate services of this kind in the name of Spiritualism.

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The long, arduous work of forming a National Organisation, the Spiritualists' National Federation, later the SNU, was founded on taking Spiritualism to the public in outside meetings, renting halls, etc. Speakers would travel miles, often under very poor conditions, to propagate the truths of our religion – Propaganda Committees organised the growth of the movement. The Federation had been formed in July 1890. Below is an early report published in the "Two Worlds", June 23rd 1893, page 293. Most of the names given are well-known in our history e.g. the founder of the Fund of Benevolence, the Hon Secretary, five Federation/SNU Presidents and members of the *first elected* Council of the SNU in 1903:

PROPAGANDA COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

We have the pleasure of presenting to you a report of another year's labours. Fourteen meetings have been held in response to invitations. Last year the calls came from about six societies, this year from thirteen, which indicates a more active interest in our work. The results of these meetings, judging by the numbers present, are satisfactory. The total attendance was about 3,000 persons, giving an average of 215 at each meeting. The largest gathering was at Royton, and the smallest at Bolton. The latter meeting was held during a fierce snowstorm. The cost of the meetings has been £16 16s. 11d., […]. No fees have been paid to any speaker; all services have been gratuitous and ungrudging.The collections totalled £14 9s. 9½d. The largest expenditure has been for printing and advertising, £8 16s. 7d:; railway and travelling expenses, £4 15s. 3d.; and rent of halls, £2 7s. 6d. Where societies existed with suitable halls, the use thereof has been freely granted, for which this committee thanks the various societies. The places visited were Bolton, Colne, Darwen, Hollinwood, Little Horton, Bradford, Macclesfield, Normanton, Oldham (two societies), Pendleton (two meetings), Rawtenstall, Royton, and Silsden.

The following speakers attended at the various meetings held, to whom thanks are justly due for their generous services, in some cases bestowed at great sacrifice. Number of meetings attended: Mrs, Wallis 5, Mrs. Craven 3, Mrs. J. A. Stansfield 2, Madame Henry 1, Mrs. Brooks 1, Miss Walker 1, Miss Janet Bailey 1, Miss Cotterill 1, Mr. Wallis 7, Mr. Tetlow 5, Mr. Johnson 4, Mr. Swindlehurst 4, Mr. Hepworth 3, Mr. Macdonald 2, Mr. W. H. Wheeler 2, Mr. Pilkington 1, Mr. Walsh l, Mr. Peter Lee 1, Mr. Kitson 1, Mr. Armitage 1.

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It appears that when the Union took over from the National Federation in 1902 the Propaganda Committee did not survive in the same degree, although of course the Spiritualist message was still being powerfully advocated and championed by the likes of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (after 1916) and Ernest Oaten.

Barbanell was young, with fresh ideas. He was born on May 3rd 1902 and was by all accounts an excellent public speaker. In January 1929 he took a Manchester Propaganda meeting at the Ardwick Picture Theatre, speaking on "The Future of Spiritualism", chaired by former SNU President Albert Wilkinson. Below I have quoted part of his address from the front page of the "Two Worlds", January 18th 1929. Such publication of his addresses is rarely found:

Manchester Propaganda Meetings.

Mr. Barbanell said he could not, like the Chairman or Mr. Oaten, speak about the past of Spiritualism. And there were those more expert than himself who could speak about the present, so he put himself on safe ground—where no one could contradict him—and would speak about the future. But he realised there was one danger, and that was if a policeman walked in and heard him predicting the future, he would have to ask that audience to stand bail!

"What is Spiritualism?" I suppose every Spiritualist could give at different definition. But for the purposes of my address, as far as I am concerned Spiritualism resolves itself into three fundamental things:—

(1) The definite knowledge that all people survive death.

(2) The fact that under certain conditions (and I want to stress that) it is possible to open up communication with those who have survived.

(3) The third is not a fact so much as an implication from the other two: that is that man is a spiritual being.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MOVEMENT.

Before we can talk about the future of Spiritualism we have to say: What have we achieved as a Spiritualistic movement?" And in order to see just a little of that achievement I want you to turn your attention to some of the current movements in this world. Take the greatest movement, that of religion. What has Spiritualism achieved in the world of religion during its modern inception? If you want to see the weight of its influence you have to make a comparison between the teaching of modern religion and the teaching of religion say Seventy years ago. To-day so much progress has been made only on account of Spiritualism that the ministers accept half our cause without paying

the tribute to us for what we have taught them. There are very few sensible men and women in the religious camp who to-day speak of miracles, yet 70 years ago there was no other explanation. Spiritualism has explained the so-called miracle, and reduced it to natural law. The last fifty years has seen a breaking away from dogma, from fixed teaching, a desire for more breadth, more latitude, more freedom. We have broadened the whole teaching concerning future states, life in the spirit world, heaven and hell. We have revealed beyond death a natural world, where natural human beings live: we have shown a heaven which is merely the earned heaven of those who have laboured well here. We have shown hell (that is not a fixed abode) to be a place where repentance starts.

Mr. Barbanell here related an amusing story of a sailor who had wandered into a church and heard a sermon preached on heaven. He just woke up, however, in time to hear the preacher say "Now, all those who wish to go to heaven stand up." The whole congregation rose with the exception of the solitary sailor. The preacher said, "You sir, do you not wish to go to heaven?" And the sailor, looking round said. "No, sir not with that crew."

It is a good story, said the speaker, because it has a moral and the moral is this: that being with that collection of people was no heaven for him. Heaven only becomes heaven when you are able to associate with those whom you love.

THE PURPOSE OF SPIRITUALISM.

In the world of scientific achievement amazing progress had been attained in the last seventy-five years. Inventions have followed each other so quickly that it is almost impossible to keep abreast of them. In physics we have witnessed a complete change of scientific foundation, a change from the visible to the invisible. An extraordinary thing is this: that every scientific discovery in no way conflicts with the teaching of Spiritualism. And in nine cases out of ten nearly every one of those discoveries was foretold by spirit people many years ago.

What about the future? What is the purpose of Spiritualism? Many years ago a keen investigator in America made a practice of asking all mediums this question, and he invariably received the answer: "Firstly, to demonstrate man's survival beyond death. Secondly, to unify the religions of the world." To me, the whole progress of Spiritualism in this country and throughout the world is dependent on the soundness of mediums. Mediumship, as I understand it, is the platform of Spiritualism, and we shall only progress when we develop more and more mediums whose standard of mediumship is the highest it is possible to have. The Spiritualistic church of the future which has not its developing class for mediums might just as well not exist, and I urge the necessity for the production of mediums who will realise that mediumship is the most sacred gift in the world—not to be prostituted for material ends.

As a natural corollary with that, we shall find psychic faculties developing in the human race itself. I am certain that the next generation will be much more psychic than this, and as the generations proceed we shall have more and more psychic individuals who will bring the psychic faculty uppermost even in their daily lives. That will bring greater revelations, more inspiration. Some Spiritualists fallaciously believe that Spiritualism is the summit of revelation. We have not yet scratched the surface of

spiritual inspiration: there is more truth and wisdom, light and knowledge waiting for us when we can receive it, when we have developed our powers of reception.

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In the October issue of the Union's journal, "The National Spiritualist", 1931, Barbanell announces the Union's decision to restart its propaganda activities:

Propaganda.

By MAURICE BARBANELL.

The Union has resuscitated its Propaganda activities following upon the kind offer made by our Hon. President, Mr. Swaffer, who, at the annual General Meeting at Portsmouth, placed himself at the service of the Union for Propaganda meetings with myself. The following arrangements have already been made. Sunday, 27th September, Victoria Hall, Hanley; Saturday, 14th November, Town Hall, Birkenhead; Sunday, 15th November, Picton Hall, Liverpool; Wednesday, 18th November, Winter Gardens, Bournemouth; Sunday 22nd November, Opera House, Blackpool; Wednesday, 25th November, Central Hall, Southampton; Sunday, 29th November, Capitol Cinema, Tonbridge; Sunday, 6th December, Golders Green, London; Sunday, 13th December, Town Hall, Bolton.

At the time of writing, arrangements are also being made for meetings at Cardiff, Wakefield, Sheffield, Bradford, Maesteg, Derby and Hull, and it is hoped to include Aberdeen and Dundee.

In each case the meeting is being organised in co-operation with the local Union, Society, or District Council, and if only each Church will make a point of giving publicity to each meeting, and arrange for a strong platform for the next few weeks afterwards, the result should be to stimulate public interest in our Movement.

I intend to give my impressions in the Journal of these meetings, and where necessary offer criticism which I hope will be helpful.

Barbanell's first report November 1931:

S.N.U. Propaganda.

Mr. Swaffer and I commenced our first Propaganda meeting at Hanley, where several of the local Societies closed down their Sunday evening service to join in this meeting. The large Victoria Hall which seats approximately 3,000 was very well filled. The Lord Mayor elect was on the platform, and I noticed that she listened most intently to our case. The Chairman was rather worried because he had been told that many of the "young bloods" were in front and intended to disturb the meeting, but of course nothing happened. I sometimes wonder whether we would not be better off for an occasional disturbance. To my recollection there has never been a single incident at any of our Propaganda meetings.

I was struck by a very curious notice that was exhibited in the speaker's room at Hanley church, which asked mediums to give only spiritual phenomena on Sundays. "What happens," I asked, "When the medium feels she has an important message?"

"Then we leave it to their discretion" was the answer. Personally I do not know where lines of distinction can be drawn between the spiritual and the material.

An excellent spirit animates the Spiritualists in the Potteries; they are full of zest and enthusiasm. It is sad though to see the elder generation suffers the handicap of lack of schooling, as many of the written questions were illiterate.

When Mr. Swaffer and I arrived at our Hotel to engage rooms for the night, the clerk enquired, "Commercials?" I looked at Mr. Swaffer and shook my head.

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Venues continued to attract thousands of people; Swaffer would outline the works of the older pioneers like Emma Hardinge Britten. The meetings also presented a strong platform to fight the Vagrancy Act; at this time the Witchcraft Act had not been used against mediums and was not seen as a threat. Manchester's Free Trade Hall on December 2nd had a congregation of 2,000. Well-known mediums would demonstrate at these propaganda meetings, and on this occasion it was Mr Vyvyan Deacon. Below is an overview covering the second year of the tour, taken from the "Two Worlds", April 17th 1931. To save any confusion on dates, Barbanell has included his and Hannen Swaffer's total propaganda work of Great Britain, which took almost three years:

ON TOUR WITH HANNEN SWAFFER

WE CONTINUE OUR CRUSADE

BY MAURICE BARBANELL



Hannen Swaffer circa 1929

HANNEN SWAFFER and I have just completed the second year of our propaganda tour. In all we have visited twenty-five towns, ranging from Newcastle in the north to Portsmouth in the south, with Reading in the west and Southend in the east. The audiences that we have addressed total nearly 100.000, and we have answered hundreds of questions. During the whole of the tour neither Swaffer nor myself have made any charge for fees or expenses, and as far as possible we have seen that a donation has been sent to the Fund of Benevolence by the promoters of each meeting.

We commenced our tour in September at Reading, where the Central Cinema had been engaged. To our delight we were met outside by a venerable-looking old gentleman, with white beard, distributing pamphlets full of warnings of the work of the Devil. He became very voluble when he saw me, but Swaffer's appearance apparently frightened him, for it reduced him to silence!

On our arrival at Portsmouth for our next meeting we found a huge crowd awaiting outside the Cinema, which had been engaged. Unfortunately hundreds had to be turned away through lack of accommodation. The meeting was excellently organised by Mr. MacFarlane, and instead of a reading a record made by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was played and magnified by a loud speaker. An unhappy incident marred our visit to Portsmouth. We drove after the meeting to the house of Mrs. Read, who had prepared an excellent supper, and had left the meeting hurriedly to receive us. In her excitement she fell, was taken to bed, and so we missed the pleasure of meeting her. Next day we learned she had died during the night.

Once again we found ourselves at a Cinema when we arrived at Norbury. We have now spoken with success in so many Cinemas that Swaffer and I are wondering whether we might designate ourselves as "Talkie" Stars. Here again the capacity of the hall was insufficient, and many were turned away. Mrs. Estelle Roberts, who accompanied us on this occasion, gave some very fine clairvoyance, which was reported in detail by a local reporter, who verified all the descriptions by making personal enquiries. His account of the meeting filled two-and-a-half columns.

THE JOYS OF PROPAGANDISTS.

We were now due at Letchforth [*sic* Letchworth], where once more the inevitable Cinema had been engaged for the meeting. Prior to this meeting my own car was put into "dock" for repairs, and we hired another. My friend Mr. Hirst, who has kindly acted as our "chauffeur" on many of these drives, carefully examined the hired car to see if he could detect any flaws, but everything seemed in order. The Letchworth friends were very thoughtful, and had arranged for a car to meet us at Baldock and pilot us to the hall. The meeting itself was an excellent one; it was crowded. The chair was admirably taken by Mr. Groom and Mrs. Hirst gave some very acceptable clairvoyance. Some hospitable friends supplied us with coffee, and then at 11 o'clock we left for London.

Outside Knebworth the car stopped, and nothing in the world would induce it to start. We tried everything. Thinking we had run out of petrol, we hailed a passing motorist, and succeeded in purchasing a two-gallon can. No! This was not the trouble, and so at 1 a.m. we held a conference to decide what to do. I was bitterly cold! I hailed a car which drove me to a point a mile and half away from the nearest village. I trudged the rest, wondering whether I could find a garage proprietor who lived near his premises. Finally I espied a light coming from one of those small cafes which keep open all night. I enquired, and the attendant directed me to a house a few doors away where lived two proprietors of a local garage. By now it was 2 a.m. I knocked loudly on their door, and finally it was opened by one of the proprietors. I explained my troubles, and he seemed very loath to move. I begged and implored him, and succeeded at last in inducing them both to come to the scene of our mishap. It took us some time to find the others, as by now I had lost my sense of direction, and it was 3-30 a.m. before we were able to recommence our journey to London. Mr. and Mrs. Swaffer, Mr. and Mrs. Hirst and Mr. Groom, who were all in the car, told me they had whiled away the hours singing every song they knew!

Nevertheless, the following week we were on the road again, this time to make our second appearance at Southend, where by way of a change they had engaged a theatre instead of a cinema. We were again confronted by a large crowd, but unfortunately accommodation could not be found for at least five hundred people. When the regulation

number had been admitted, the fireman of the theatre commenced refusing admittance, but a member of the Southend Society was a local police sergeant, and he politely, but firmly, ejected the fireman, and found room for another two hundred people. Swaffer had to leave very early to take another meeting in London, not an unusual thing for him. He always hates making engagements, and resents the idea of being forced to go anywhere at a certain time. Yet when they are made, I have known him cram two or three meetings into one day. As was our usual custom, we had announced that we would answer written questions, and to my surprise there were dozens of them. I managed to answer thirty, but by this time we had exceeded the time allotted to our meeting, and standing in the wings were the amateurs waiting to proceed with their dress rehearsal of comic opera.

A COURAGEOUS VICAR

Once again the great North Road, on which we had travelled many times in the course of our crusade. This time we were bound for Kettering, with an invitation from the Rev. T. B. Clarke, an Anglican Minister, who had engaged the Central Hall for a propaganda meeting. He took the chair himself, and was very enthusiastic. I can remember his words now: "I am proud to be on this platform to-night, to add my testimony to that of Mr. Swaffer and Mr. Barbanell," he said. Mr. Clarke struck me a man of great courage. A few more like him, and the Church would soon be a living religious force.

Nottingham was the next town in our itinerary. The Baths Hall, seating two thousand, had been engaged, and the chairman was Alderman. Huntsman, ex-Lord Mayor of the City, and one of its most distinguished citizens. This was unquestionably our best meeting. We found the audience most appreciative and very responsive. On the platform, were the representatives of the District Council and Lyceum, and in addition, Mrs. Paling, who made a very graceful speech at the end of the meeting.

Soon after this our Bill was "talked" out of Parliament, the only opponent making a speech being Col. Freemantle, M.P. for St. Albans. So we decided to hold meeting in his constituency. The speakers were Mr. Oaten and Mr. Swaffer, and I was in the chair. The meeting was full of enthusiasm, and it unanimously passed a resolution calling upon their M.P. to support our Bill for freedom. Full details have already appeared in THE TWO WORLDS.

Once again we struck the great North Road, this time for Leeds, where, under the auspices of the West Riding Psychical Research Society, we were to appear at Salem Hall. The platform was a tribute to the universality of our Cause. The chair was taken by Mr. George Lethem, the well-known journalist, who said he was a Congregationalist; the Rev. J. Shaw, Unitarian; Rev. Britten, Moravian; Mr. Swaffer, Church of England; and myself, born a Jew. The meeting had been arranged specifically under the name of Psychical Research, with special emphasis on the scientific appeal, yet strangely enough the ministers on the platform decided to end with a hymn and a benediction. Mr. Swaffer took the occasion to pay a very graceful tribute to Mr. Tweedale for his excellent book, "Man's Survival After Death," which he felt sure had been of great service to hundreds.

A BROADMINDED CHIEF CONSTABLE

We made our longest journey to Newcastle, which was the last of our meetings. This was arranged under the auspices of the Northern District Council, and they were fortunate enough to secure Mr. F. J. Crawley, the Chief Constable of the City, to be the

chairman. After our attacks on the attitude of the police at many meetings, this was a decided pleasure. In a beautiful hall, which was almost full, we stated our case, replying particularly to a badly-informed article in "John Bull" attacking Spiritualism by the Dean of Chichester. Strangely enough, there were very few questions, but it was obvious that the meeting had aroused great interest.

It is a difficult task to be engaged on propaganda mission. We try and avoid using the same material because we have heard ourselves making the same point again and again. Although he must have heard many of my arguments repeated often, Swaffer always seemed to me to be listening politely. At one stage Mrs. Swaffer, Mr. Hirst and I repeated word for word one of Swaffer's experiences whilst he narrated it. He frustrated us by leaving it out on the next occasion!

Everywhere we went we found interested audiences; never any sign of disorder, never an interruption. With the exception of Leeds and Newcastle, we always drove back to London the same night, arriving at hours long after midnight. We cannot complain of the treatment of the Press, which has always been fair, and which generally published an account of our meetings; whilst the attitude of the modern man and woman shows that the spread of education has given them an enquiring mind ready to investigate seriously the claims laid before them.

We have tried to continue the work which was carried on many years before by the old pioneers, under conditions not so peaceful as at present, with audiences that must have been more hostile. The pioneers built well, and we heartily thank them.

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Maurice Barbanell (note Helen Hughes sitting behind him) at Edinburgh 1942

Saturday May 28th 1932 saw the first issue of a new weekly paper, "Psychic News", which cost twopence, founded by Maurice Barbanell and Mr J. Rubens, Swaffer's business manager. However, much of the foundation of the paper was orchestrated in the séance-room under the spirit influence; even the name *Psychic News* was chosen! See Psypioneer, October 2007: "Three 'Dead' Men Began Psychic News – Maurice Barbanell". It can be noted from the article:

I had been chosen to be the Editor, though when Psychic News began I had no practical knowledge of journalism. Theoretically I knew from Hannen Swaffer something about how newspapers are produced. Our friendship began shortly after his inquiry into Spiritualism when he set out to prove Northcliffe's survival.

> *For three years Swaffer and I conducted a propaganda tour and addressed a quarter of a million people – a record that has never been equalled. We spoke in nearly every large town in this country.*

Once we addressed three meetings on one Sunday. We spoke at Maesteg in the morning, Merthyr Tydfil in the afternoon and Cardiff in the evening. Then we motored back to London, arriving home after four in the morning. And I had motored down to South Wales on the Saturday afternoon and spoke at a meeting at Cærau that night.

In those three years, sitting up half the night talking, in conversations on trains, in cars and hotels, I learned a great deal about journalism from Swaffer.

My days, however, were spent in the world of commerce. I held some directorships, had my own business and owned some properties. I was fairly prosperous for many years. Then came a series of misfortunes, culminating in the slump of 1931, when things were very black. I was compelled to sell nearly everything I possessed.

I had to wind up my own business and my income came from one directorship, but as that meant attendance at a board meeting for a few hours once a month I was virtually unemployed.

Just about that time Swaffer and I were approached to give editorial assistance to a proposed psychic weekly. Nothing, however, came of it. The scheme petered out.

One day, to my surprise, Swaffer's business manager, J. M. Rubens, a non-Spiritualist who was winding up one of my companies, suggested I should start a psychic paper.

He is well-known in Fleet Street and he thought there was a need for a Spiritualist paper on modern journalistic lines. He even offered to put up some capital though he was not convinced of our truths.

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The next propaganda campaign was open-air meetings at Hyde Park, which started in 1933 and was sponsored by "Psychic News". At first the audience was composed almost entirely of Spiritualists who came to support the speaker, Maurice Barbanell; however, as news travelled it became a valuable platform to discuss and argue the truths of Spiritualism. Death was inevitable, declared Barbanell, and it was surely better to face it with knowledge than with ignorance, he would declare through the hecklers. "Once you have proved the survival of one individual," the speaker said, "you have proved automatically the survival of every individual who has ever 'died' ". The photograph shows Barbanell speaking at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park in 1935. Other well-known speakers joined; a year later, in 1936, the SNU President, John McIndoe, made his debut at Hyde Park, chaired by another future President, John Stewart. It is reported that he successfully tackled the hecklers on issues of religious, scientific and philosophical aspects. He emphasised the Seven Principles, showing that the belief in the Brotherhood of Man would, if acted on, put an end to most of the troubles of the race. Challenged to produce proof of progress after 'death', he said there was evidence that children who passed over young came back at intervals, over years, and proved that they had become educated and enlightened according to their age on the Other Side.

To finish below is a report of the last meeting of 1936 at Hyde Park, taken from "Psychic News", September 12th 1936:

LAST MEETING AT HYDE PARK

CRITIC OPPOSES US AFTER ONE SEANCE

"SPIRITUALISM is a delusion," declared an opponent at the last *Psychic News* open-air meeting in Hyde Park on Sunday. This critic had peculiar ideas regarding the source of the phenomena of Spiritualism. He thought it could all be explained by assuming that the medium read the mind of the sitter and got from it the impressions left by the "dead" person when he was still on earth.

But, as he had attended only one seance, and, presumably, that was the first Spiritualist meeting to which he had been, it would have been very optimistic to expect anything in the nature of reasoned criticism.

At the one seance he attended, the medium described a spirit, saying she had on clothes exactly similar to those she wore on earth. This, to the critic, proved that the sitter had retained in her mind a photograph of her friend, and that the medium was looking at this photograph and describing it as a spirit.

WHAT A NERVE!

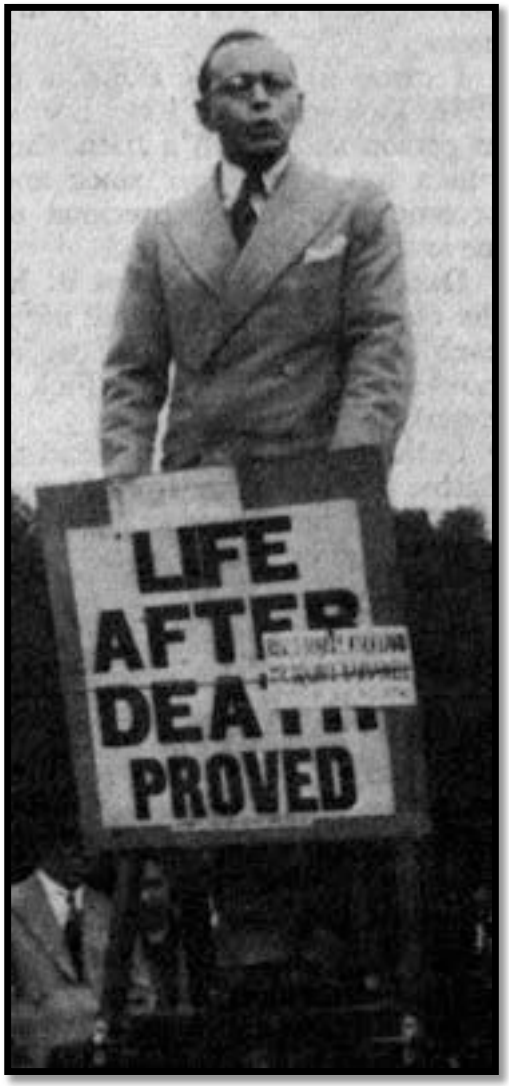
Maurice Barbanell, the speaker, after complimenting the opponent on his "nerve" in daring to criticise Spiritualism after such inadequate experience, pointed out that the theory put forward could not explain such phenomena as direct voice, materialisations, spirit photographs, levitation, the movement of objects or a fraction of the phenomena that prove our case.

Why was it that, at seances all over the world, the intelligence in charge of the manifestations always claimed to be a "dead" person?

The chairman, Leonard B. Lilley, had travelled from Portsmouth specially to preside over this meeting. Commenting on the implications of Spiritualism, he declared that those who accepted our facts were opposed to all forms of cruelty, to stag-hunting and all blood "sports" and to war. Spiritualists were not concerned, merely with what happened after "death." They were deeply interested in the problems of this life.

OTHER-SIDE CLOTHING

Maurice Barbanell explained in his speech why spirits wore clothes on the Other Side—a question which was asked the previous week. He said that to wear clothes was an instinct common to most of the civilised community, and the instinct remaining after "death" as part of the human make-up, the desire to wear clothes continued. The instinct for shelter explained why spirits lived in homes, constructed, like the clothes, of spirit materials.



The questions, though very slow in coming, were varied. There were such queries as: "What is your definition of a psychical researcher?" "Do you think dreams have any bearing on the future?" "Where do you draw the line between those beings who consciously survive, and those who do not?" "Who is responsible for our actions when we are here?"

Asked whether there was any disease in the spirit world, Barbanell replied that physical illnesses disappeared at "death," but there were mental and spiritual ailments which would take their place.

This meeting concluded this year's series of Hyde Park meetings.

The photograph of Maurice Barbanell is undated, circa 1935

National Federation to National Union

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Details of the Spiritualists' National Federation gaining legal status and becoming the Spiritualists' National Union, and the adding of our declaration of principles, are somewhat sketchy and contradictory. The transition was rather complicated and took over five years from when Thomas Todd first broached the matter at the 1896 Federation Conference until the Federation was wound up and its affairs handed over to the Union at the 1902 Federation Conference. Below is a summary of the events that took place to gain legal status.

The Seventh Annual Conference of the Spiritualists' National Federation was held at Daulby Hall, Liverpool under the presidency of Mr A. J. Smyth (Birmingham) on Saturday and Sunday, July 4th & 5th 1896. At this Conference two important proposals were down for consideration, notably the suggestion from Clitheroe "of a Board of Examination for speakers." Please see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 4, July 2015: "Early S.N.U Education History".

The second proposal, from Thomas Olman Todd (Sunderland), President of the 1896 Lyceum Union Conference, was for legal status. Smyth in his Presidential speech stated:



A. J. Smyth
Federation President 1896

The Federation is called upon to remedy these things, but at present it is little more than a propagandist body, and is not educational, benevolent, protective, or legislative. It certainly has been empowered by a special resolution to inquire into and consider the question of "Legal Status," and that is all it has done in accepting Mr. Todd's offer to publish his "Appeal," not necessarily endorsing that scheme. For myself, while strongly in favour of obtaining a legal standing, and feeling indebted to Mr. Todd for his generous efforts, I cannot unreservedly accept his proposals, but still think they are entitled to a full and fair discussion. Judging from the refusal of the Local Government Board to register the London Spiritualist Alliance as a company, and of the Home Secretary to receive a deputation in defence of mediums, as well as the hostile attitude of the law, Spiritualists as a body will be confronted with tremendous opposition when they make their first claim for legal and religious equality.

Todd at his own expense had prepared a draft copy[1] stating at the Conference under the section "Open Council":


Thomas Olman Todd

> … the question was not one to be decided in a few minutes, as it affected the future life and welfare of the movement. The declaration had been criticised by various people; but he was only taking up what had been left undone in the past. That was why he had stepped in, and it did not matter to him personally whether it was taken up by them or not. They wanted laws for the government of societies and the movement, just as they had laws which governed the universe. They had laws for the protection of the people, and they wanted laws passing for the protection of Spiritualist societies. A charge of autocratic authority was laid against the proposition, but it was in reality true democracy. We have been looking upon the question in a wrong light. It is one of morality, to prevent, if possible, persons of low moral character stepping upon their public platforms. We have the right to ask offenders to step down. With regard to trustees, their liability was one of honour, not legality, and they cannot build property with Spiritualists' money, for the latter are not legally entitled to hold property. The draft he had prepared was simply to let them know what they were doing, and might act as a guide. The poll deed would give them the key to the situation, and would not take it away. He did not ask that the question should be settled that day, but proposed that a committee of inquiry be appointed or sanctioned.

At the following Annual Conference held at the Blackburn Society under the presidency of Joseph Armitage (Batley Carr) on July 4th & 5th, every Society had been sent a copy of Todd's proposed Deed Poll; the response was mixed. Below is a quote from the Conference published in the "Two Worlds", July 9th 1897, pages 455-457:

[1] That a Committee of persons be this day appointed by this National Spiritualists' Federation Conference, which committee, together with the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of this Federation for the time being, shall be vested with the following powers: 1. To prepare a Deed containing (*a*) A declaration of the principles of the Spiritualist movement; (*b*) Definition of membership and privileges; (*c*) Definition of a society and its powers, including the election of trustees and successors; (*d*) Definition of a District Council and its composition and powers; (*e*) Definition of Auxiliaries, their acceptance and status; (*f*) Definition of Annual Legislative Conference, its composition, powers, and officers; (*g*) The Status of Legal Signatories and their powers, either conserved or delegated to Conference, and the method of electing successors; (*h*) The necessary clauses for legally securing property and dealing with same. All rights and privileges of members and societies to be left intact, so far as possibly may be done without infringing on the powers necessary to hold property for the general body. 2. To seek such legal advice and assistance as may be deemed necessary. 3. To raise and disburse funds for the furtherance of the powers hereby delegated to this Committee. 4. To elect its own officers; to elect successors; to add to its numbers. 5. To report at the next Annual Conference of the National Spiritualists' Federation, or at any intermediate Conference of either Spiritualists or Federation, which may be convened for that purpose.

AFTERNOON.

Mr. T. O. Todd, in submitting the Deed Poll, said it was not as a personal fad, but as a remedy for an existing state of things, and had been framed to secure the largest possible liberty for all.

Moved by Mr. Todd and seconded by Mr. Kitson:—"That the Deed Poll submitted by the Executive of this Federation be, and is hereby, adopted so far as regards the general principles contained therein, save that the references to associate membership shall be eliminated therefrom, and that on the adoption of this proposition, the Conference do consider the Deed *seriatum*."

Mr. Kitson seconded the proposal. Mr. Johnson objected to giving power *for life* to 50 individuals to govern us. He felt that such a Deed would much interfere with our rights, but was in favour of *some way* being found to hold property legally. Mr. Proctor (Barrow. in-Furness) thought the Cause ought to be organised, and the time had come to endeavour to get Legal Status. Mr. J. B. Tetlow said look at your balance sheets to find if the associates are of use to the Federation.

Mr. E. W. Wallis objected to voting to accept the general principles of the Deed without it having been thoroughly discussed clause by clause and voted upon, and proposed as an amendment:—

"That the copy of Deed Poll be referred back to the Committee with instructions to them to make all inquiries necessary as to whether the required Legal Status cannot be gained in any other more simple yet effective manner, such as a Limited Liability Co., a Friendly Society, or as an Educational Effort, failing any satisfactory result from those inquiries, that the Committee be instructed to carefully eliminate from the Deed Poll all that would savour of government except what is strictly essential to secure the Legal Status so much desired."

Mrs. Porter, Patricroft, seconded the amendment, and Mr. Brookhouse, of Longton, did not think the time had arrived for such a Deed, and supported the amendment.

Mr. J. Lamont desired to give all due credit to Mr. T. O. Todd for, his labour, loyalty, and earnestness, but most Spiritualists were such in virtue of their love of liberty and he feared the Deed, as at present drafted, would divide us up into various sections. We have taken a lot of trouble to strike off the fetters, and, being free, we should maintain that freedom and unite for *work.*

Mr. G. H. Bibbings supported the amendment, as also did Mr. J. J. Morse, who claimed that he had always advocated organisation for business purposes. Ours is no common movement; it did not originate with the people of this world, but was directed from the other side. He felt that the Deed Poll had not been sufficiently digested, and we must go carefully, and make it perfectly clear, whether we are to alter the character of the Federation into a *legislative* instead of a working body.

Mr. Kilby (Southport) made a racy speech. Mr. P. Lee and Mr. S. S. Chiswell thought that something might be devised to meet the case. Like others they had suffered and had come out, and felt disinclined to put themselves under any kind of autocratic control.

Mr. Todd made an able reply, and said if anyone could show him a better way to secure the desired end he would adopt it.

For the amendment.....61
For Mr. Todd's resolution 43

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Below is from James J. Morse's "Spiritual Review", which he founded and edited in April 1900. The monthly publication continued until circa May 1902. The quotes show the sequence of events the Federation took to achieve legal status:

November issue, 1900:


James J. Morse

The Poll Deed of the S.N.F.

THE Executive of the Spiritualists' National Federation are still carefully considering the Draft of the Deed for that body. The solicitors engaged have completed their draft, and after it has again been considered by the Executive, copies will be distributed for consideration by the movement at large. We are in receipt of the Draft, but it would be manifestly improper for us to deal with it yet, nor until the Executive have settled their own revisions thereto. This reference is made merely to advise the movement that no time is being lost, and that all the very needful care is being taken in the premises. Ultimately the Executive will call an interim Conference of the Federation, and when such is held it is anticipated that the deed will be finally ratified, and that thereafter the needful steps *towards legal incorporation will be taken immediately*.

December issue, 1900:

Injudicious Economy.

BUT there is one thing at least that may be mentioned, and that is that injudicious economy is usually disastrous. The National Federation is approaching a legal status, slowly, but surely. When that is reached the Secretarial duties will be enormously increased, and then the appointment of a permanent and adequately paid Secretary will become an imperative necessity. While a permanent Home for the organisation will be an equally pressing necessity. The "Britten Memorial" meets the latter case nicely, and no doubt, when there is a national body on a Legal basis to accept that Memorial, the funds for its creation will flow in much more rapidly than has hitherto been the case. If Spiritualism is to become a powerful cause in this country, Spiritualists must not only maintain their present generous financial support, but they must be prepared to increase it, for the next few years at least.

January issue, 1901:

The Nationalization of the Movement.

The Executive of the Spiritualist's National Federation have at last settled the Draft of the long-looked-for "Deed Poll," which, by the time this is in our readers' hands, will have been sent to all Societies in the Federation, and all Associate members of that body. The Federation will hold a special *interim* Conference on the last Sunday of next month, in the Spiritual Church, Blackpool, when the Delegates from the Federated societies, and the Associates, will meet to finally consider and pass upon the Deed in question. The history of the Deed is interesting from the fact that it has virtually passed through four stages; first, what is known as the "Blackburn draft," prepared by Mr. Todd; secondly the "Wallis-Morse draft," prepared by those gentlemen; thirdly a sub-draft prepared in Manchester under the direction and suggestions of Mr. Todd, and lastly the present draft, the outcome of 'legal advice and direction, and which utilizes as far as possible the various ideas expressed in the three preceding efforts. It is a most important matter, and one requiring care and skill in dealing with. When passed by the National conference, and if subsequently registered as a Legal Document, there will have been inaugurated a tremendous change in the status of all Federated societies, private members, and public work and workers included within the area of the operations of what will then be the representative National organisation.

Long Looked for.

FOR upwards of twenty-five years the Editor of the REVIEW has, by tongue and pen, constantly urged the national organisation of the movement, not the creedalization of Spiritualism, which is a totally different matter. Among the things desired was, that societies could be put on a firm basis, that our finances and property might be secured against the machinations of the designing, or the obstinacy of the opponents of progress within our own ranks, and that some healthy supervision should be exercised concerning those who may desire to represent us on our platform. It is somewhat pleasing to find that our quarter of a century's labours are likely to bear fruit, and it is an additional pleasure to be still on earth to see their consummations realized. It is also satisfactory to see the new comers, our young workers, are equally desirous of helping on the result that is now almost in sight. And if they will bring judgment to their zeal, when attending the conference at Blackpool, their counsels will be valuable, as representing what the new spirit is that they tell us is abroad in our midst?

February issue, 1901:

The S.N.F. and its Deed

The Spiritualists' National Federation will meet in the Spiritual Church, Blackpool, on the 23rd, of the present month to consider, and if accepted, to adopt, the deed to legalise that body. It has been carefully drafted by an able solicitor, and as far as it goes is a workable document. It will create a representative trust, and aims at providing a representative body to which the movement can refer in times of need. It is simply a business document, involving no declaration of Faith, save that which is expressed in the term that it is a body of Spiritualists. It does not seek to establish another sect, nor demand assent to any creed or dogma. Whether it will be accepted remains to be seen. Give it a fair and full consideration, and let the result be based upon that, and the rest can be decided at the conference itself.

The REVIEW neither endorses nor condemns it.

March issue, 1901:

At Last.

After a little over three years and a half, the Conference of the Spiritualists' National Federation has accepted the draft of a new Constitution, and upon the Registration of the same the above body will become the 'Spiritualists' National Union.' The Conference assembled, as an interim gathering at Blackpool, on the last Saturday and Sunday of the past month, and after a painstaking discussion of all the points involved, unanimously accepted the Constitution with the amendments made during the discussion at the above meetings. When duly registered, the movement will have a National body duly constituted according to the Law as applicable to the cause. The event referred to occurred too near the date of the publication of the REVIEW to enable us to more than simply record the facts as stated above.

April issue, 1901:

Federation cum *Union*.

As briefly mentioned in the March REVIEW the National Federation held its interim Conference in the Spiritual Church, Blackpool, on the last Saturday of February. The able legal adviser of the body, Mr. Tallent-Bateman, was speedily able to scatter the dust that had been industriously stirred up to obscure the real issues involved. While the calm deliberation of the delegates soon enabled them to realise that what the Executive had to present was not quite what some authorities had witting, or unwittingly, led them to expect. One objection that was frequently urged was that it was a species of degradation to the cause for the National body to seek incorporation under the Companies Acts, though those responsible for that cry forgot that there are already four companies existing in the movement. The hall and buildings of the Barrow-Furness society, one of the most successful undertakings in the movement, is one. Then comes the *Two Worlds* Printing and Publishing Co., Limited, a purely business corporation trading in the movement, incorporated under the commercial sections of the Acts in question. The other two bodies being, first that exceedingly prosperous and high class organisation, the London Spiritualist Alliance, Limited, and the second the Manchester Spiritualists' Alliance, Limited, each being incorporated under the non-trading sections of the Companies Acts. Companies "not formed for profit and limited by guarantee," under which sections the Federation is seeking incorporation.

Another point.

Another point was, whether or not there should be a declaration of principles? This was settled by Mr. Wm. Johnson, on behalf of the Executive, presenting a simple summary of the opinions held generally by Spiritualists, which summary was adopted. A variety of amendments to the draft were presented, some of which were accepted and incorporated in the document. A more precise definition of the fact of Spirit return was desired, but the solicitor showed certain legal difficulties in the way. As a Spiritualist body must accept Spirit return to be a body of Spiritualists as in the sense of the term in common usage, there need be no cavilling on the matter. After discussing the draft for three sessions the amendments were added to it, and the Delegates and Associates accepted it in its amended form. The next step now is for it to be sent to the authorities for registration. Acting on the suggestion of the solicitor, however, it was decided to change

the name of the body from Federation to Union, which, therefore, will be the name of the National organisation, if the deed is registered.

A Constitution not a Deed Poll.

It will be as well here to make it clear that the document referred to above is not a Deed Poll, but simply a constitution, for the national organisation. No society or person that is not associated with the body can be in any way interfered with. And only when cause arises can the Union exert any of its powers, while even in such cases the ultimate court of appeal is the Annual Conference itself. So non-interference outside, and democratic government inside, is the rule in all matters. The matter has been before the movement for a considerable time, none too long, considering the importance of the various interests concerned. It was the topic of debate at the Blackburn conference in 1897, and thereat a resolution, moved by Mr. E. W. Wallis, then of Manchester and now of London, seconded by Mrs. Porter, of Patricroft, was adopted, instructing the Federation executive to procure incorporation either under the Companies Acts or under the Friendly Societies Acts, or in any other way that might be found expedient, points that were not within the knowledge of some of the critics of the action of the Executive. It is just as well to state these points, merely as a matter of history. Until the document is registered, and so made effective, we reserve any further references to a matter fraught with much importance to the national body and the cause.[2]

December issue, 1901:

A Happy Consummation.

After many months of anxious consideration and conscientious labour by all concerned the Spiritualists National Federation has achieved a Legal status. The body was duly Registered as 'The Spiritualists' National Union,' on October 22nd, and the invaluable services of the Solicitor, Mr. J. T. Tallent-Bateman, greatly assisted the result recorded above. The Law expenses were naturally heavy, reaching almost £100, but for the generous treatment of the gentlemen mentioned they would have considerably exceeded that amount. In due course the Federation will be 'wound up' and its affairs handed over to the new body. As a means of aiding the body to increase its funds, and to assist in liquidating the legal expenses, it has been decided upon the initiative of Mr. Wm. Johnson, President elect of the 1902 Conference, to start a Ten Thousands Shilling Fund, and contributions can be sent to the Secretary of the Federation, Mr. W. Harrison, 42, Hilary Street, Burnley. Will the readers of the REVIEW note the fact, and send their shillings to the secretary, and so bear some small share in the work of establishing a national and representative body for Great Britain?

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[2] April issue 1901 paper report: - THE NATIONAL FEDERATION.—After many years of vigorous discussion, says the "London Daily Chronicle," of the 18th ulto., the growing body of Spiritualists in this country have at last resolved to secure a legal status. The leaders have been in conference at Blackpool for two days, and they debated whether they should apply for a Royal charter, register under the Companies Acts, or appoint trustees after the manner of the Wesleyan community. Eventually, it was decided to incorporate under the Companies Acts, the denomination to be henceforth styled "The Spiritualists' Union," while a declaration of principles was also settled.

Up until now we could only speculate as to when the declaration of principles was added and by whom, as there is little information given. We now know this was done at the National Federation interim Conference at Blackpool on February 23rd 1901 and William Johnson, on behalf of the Executive, presented a simple summary of the opinions held generally by Spiritualists, which was adopted.

Emma Hardinge Britten, at the National Conference of British Spiritualists on July 6th 1890 (the following Conference in 1891 becoming the Spiritualists' National Federation), gave "a summary of religious faith". It can be noted that William Johnson does not mention Emma Hardinge Britten; Emma claimed her summary of religious faith was given by the spirits – "…the creed which is evolved from Spiritualism". A lengthy AGM report was published in "Light" on July 12th 1902, reporting on the transition from Federation to Union and publishing our Seven Principles, probably for the first time. This does not mention Emma; her name becomes associated later.

A contradiction also can be noted: "The body was duly Registered as 'The Spiritualists' National Union,' on October 22nd" but some other accounts state October 18th 1901.

For additional information see earlier issues of "Pioneer":

Volume 1, No. 1, August 2013: "The Formation of the Spiritualists' National Union"

Volume 1, No. 4, July 2014: "How many Principles made up Emma's "Creed of the Spirits"?"

Volume 2, No. 2, March 2015: "Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?"



CHARLES I. QUASTEL

SNU President 1958-1965 & 1968-1970

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Quastel was outspoken, controversial and an ardent critic of the SNU Around 1934 he became the Hon. Secretary of Meersbrook Spiritualist Society and in 1945 he became President of the Society, a post he held until 1952.

Meersbrook Spiritualist Society was inaugurated on October 14th 1913 and affiliated to the Spiritualists' National Union. For their first nine years of meetings the venue is uncertain; on October 16th 1922, however, they moved to Regent Terrace, West Street, Sheffield. The premises were later sold and their new church, opened on Saturday, May 29th 1943, was located at 109 Whitham Road, Broomhill, Sheffield. On Saturday, February 15th 1988, Sheffield Heeley Woodseats Church amalgamated with Meersbrook and became known as Whitham Road Spiritualist Church, and remains so today.

Meersbrook Spiritualist Society in its earlier days had Christian overtones; this can be noted in Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 4, April 2011: "Emblems of the Seven Principles – Paul J. Gaunt", quoted below:



In 1927-1928 Arthur Conan Doyle tried to introduce an extra *Christian* principle into the S.N.U.'s Seven Principles. This lovely design by Mr. H. C. Honey in 1926, may well have been created in anticipation, but Doyle's attempt was rejected at the 1928 S.N.U., AGM (see last issue of "Pioneer").

We can note the additional principle of *The Christ Ideal* with other more subtle changes.

The pillars state:

"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE." "TRY THE SPIRITS WHETHER THEY BE OF GOD." "LET THERE BE LIGHT." "PROVE ALL THINGS." "WHATSOVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT." "UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES KEEP AN EVEN MIND."

On the base is written:

Spiritualism is occupying the attention of the greatest minds in the world to-day Spiritualists claim that human survival can be demonstrated by present day evidence. They claim that they have held actual communication with those whom the world calls "dead" & that these live in the spiritual world and continue their lives in progressive form. As a result of communications with the spirit world most spiritualists have adopted the above affirmations.

The article continues:

> FROM time to time we have had requests on the part of Spiritualist churches for a set of "the principles of Spiritualism," suitable for framing and hanging over the platform or other suitable place. We have just had the opportunity of inspecting a very beautiful design which has been executed for the Meersbrook Spiritualist Church, Sheffield, by Mr. H. C. Honey.

During the early years of the Union there were variations on our Seven Principles. See Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 2, March 2015: "Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?"



Photograph of the Church's interior, taken in 1964, when Charles Quastel was its President.

In 1950 there was much controversy regarding Christian and Rational Spiritualism; Arthur Findlay's brother, John Galloway Findlay, was battling this out in the pages of the "Two Worlds", stating "the Greater World Beliefs are not the Beliefs on which the Spiritualist Movement has been Built." Christian Spiritualism was gaining in strength.

Below Quastel makes his views clear (taken from the "Two Worlds", March 4th 1950):

Merging with Christian Spiritualism

MEANS SINKING OF FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

By C. I. QUASTEL (*Yorkshire S.N.U. Publicity Officer*)

> JUST a few months ago this paper was filled with congratulatory messages from many of your readers on the fact that Spiritualists had closed their ranks and demanded and obtained the backing of the S.N.U. Council in regard to recognition of Spiritualist Churches by the Ministry as religious and charitable organisations.
>
> Our national rally had succeeded and at the October adjourned S.N.U. Conference I had the pleasure of saying that "a new era of confidence in the National Council had been inaugurated."
>
> Today, I am afraid!
>
> My fear is born of the knowledge that through the psychic press and elsewhere, a bold attempt is being made to broaden the platform of National Spiritualism by creating a 'coalition' organisation of Churches by uniting our National Churches with Christian Greater World Churches and by tolerating and, indeed, encouraging S.N.U. diploma and certificate holding mediums to work on Greater World platforms and vice-versa.

A Different Matter

It is my belief that this paper, through its Editor, is trying most sincerely to propagate Spiritualism wherever necessary, and therefore, most wisely has refused to close its columns to any shade of independent opinion.

Nevertheless, to actually advocate the merging of two distinctly separate organisations, by the sinking of the fundamental principles which are recognised as the birthright of the S.N.U. and the basis of the philosophy of Spiritualism, (at least, *our* Spiritualism!) and which *must* be propagated by S.N.U. speakers—if they are honourable in their profession—is a far different matter, which will eventually again unite all S.N.U. Churches in public condemnation.

Fundamental Difference

What is this fundamental principle in which we do and must always differ from our 'Greater World' friends?

Simply this—*they* say that God is 'Supreme Cause and Power of Life' and that Jesus 'Christ' is their sole supreme leader, by whom and through whom they can win their way to a happy eternal life.

We of the S.N.U. say that God is the Supreme Cause and Power of Life and that all evolved souls have *helped*, and do help us to find our way to a happy eternal life.

We believe that Jesus and other great Masters of past ages have simply lived their lives to the best of their abilities, just as we should, and must do, to further our own progressions.

Only S.N.U. Leadership

How impossible therefore, it is for preachers of the different organisations to share the same platform and profess agreement on this vital matter, which is of greater importance in world affairs, than psychic evidence of after-life.

It is as impossible as it would be for a member of a Conservative Club to be at the same time a member of a Socialist Club, although both in their different ways, are anxious to serve their country!

Should any readers accuse me of intolerance, may I repeat what I said at a National Conference some years ago. We welcome men and women of all shades of religious thought into our National Union Churches, in order that we might influence them and cause them to change their religious opinions but *we will not allow members of other religious groups to lead us or represent us*.

Perhaps, however, my fears are not justified. Perhaps the spate of letters and opinions expressed in your columns advocating closer active union between the two organisations have been inspired in the main by professional speakers and mediums who see in this suggested 'union' opportunities for more and bigger fees through the greater competition for their services!

Spirit Guidance

If Jesus is still actively concerned in the welfare of mankind he would be the first to tell us that he has got his work to do and we have ours, and regarding leadership, well, God is sufficient for me and if I find it impossible to understand His purpose there are ministering spirits who come to me, and to you, day by day, to help and advise us.

Sufficient unto our present days are our present leaders thereof! Finally, a word of advice to Christian Spiritualists, consider seriously which of the two organisations, by virtue of their separate philosophies, is best fitted to embrace *all* peoples of *all* countries, where God is worshipped, for that is *the* purpose of our work.

The following AGM, held at Gateshead on 1st and 2nd of July 1950, had on the second day of the Annual Conference a debate on "Christian v. Rational Spiritualism" – a lively start for the newly-elected President, Percy Wilson. Below is a quote of the report published in the "Two Worlds", July 15th 1950:



Lively S.N.U. Annual Conference

THE long expected battle, between those who favour the propagation of Christian Spiritualism from S.N.U. platforms, and those who wish to keep Spiritualism free from Christian dogmas, broke out at the Sunday morning session of the S.N.U. National Conference at Gateshead on July 2nd.

The conflict of opinion started immediately after Mr. Percy Wilson had read the following resolution which invited all shades of theological opinion to join the Union.

"That this Annual General Meeting of the Spiritualists' National Union *Reaffirms* that the Union stands for the freedom of the individual conscience in matters of religion and aims at uniting in federal union all those Spiritualist organisations and individual Spiritualists who can conscientiously subscribe to the Seven Principles:

"*Recognises* that spiritual values are to be found in all world religions that have been given to mankind by inspiration from the spirit world, including Confucianism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam, as well as in the Christian revelation which the Western World has made peculiarly its own;

"*Endorses* once again the policy unanimously adopted by Conference in 1929 on the recommendation of a special committee, which leaves each member of the Union free to seek for Truth wherever he may find it; and

"*Invites* Spiritualists and Spiritualist organisations of all shades of theological opinion to join the Union and so help to spread abroad the knowledge of the spiritual nature of man."

A Grave Danger

Mr. Thompson, who opposed this motion, pointed out how the first three paragraphs which introduced nothing fresh or original had been designed to provide a smoke screen for the last and positively dangerous paragraph,"

"The last paragraph," he said, "constitutes a grave danger to our Seven Principles. This paragraph invites Spiritualist organisations of *all shades of theological opinion* to join the Union.

"If you approve this resolution you authorise the inclusion of all shades of Christian Spiritualism in our Union.

A Contradiction

"How can you accept an organisation which holds to the belief of a Saviour, the virgin birth etc., and hold fast to the Seven Principles, particularly the principle of personal responsibility, which has always been the chief distinguishing characteristic between Christian Spiritualism and S.N.U. Spiritualism.

"If you accept this resolution, you will destroy true Spiritualism, and all that our pioneers established for us, under the guidance of the spirit people, and allow any crank to expound ridiculous nonsense from our rostrums,"

Seven Principles Only

After a long, tense and eager discussion among the delegates in which there were arguments both for and against, Mr. C. I. Quastel, moved an amendment, substituting the words "Spiritualists and Spiritualist organisations who subscribe to the Seven Principles" instead of "all shades of theological opinion," which was carried by a majority, and thus scored a victory for Rational Spiritualism.

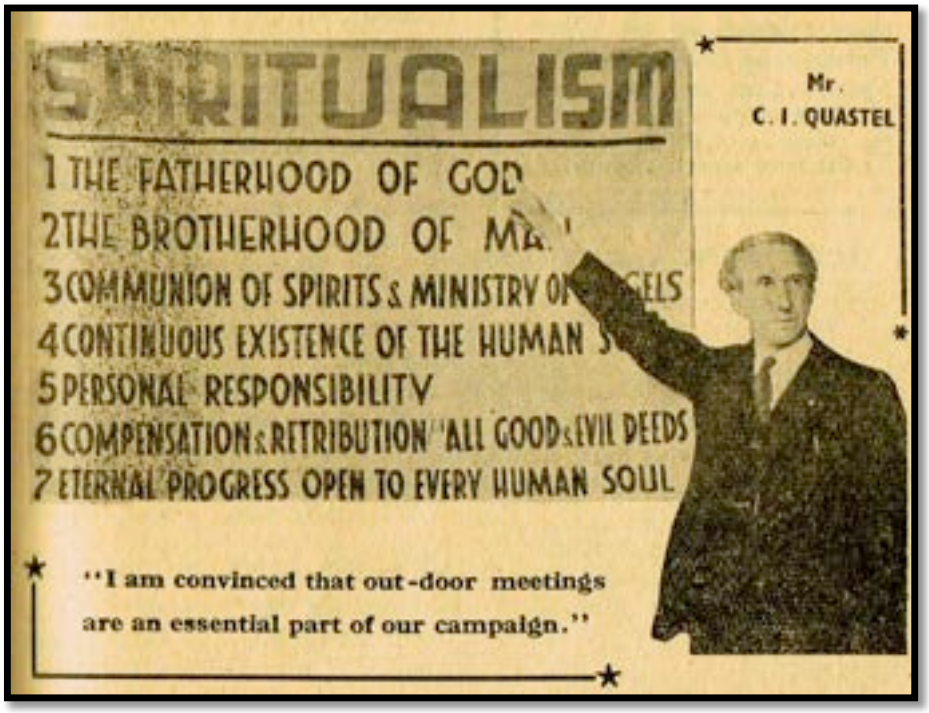
Council Advises Churches and Workers

Mr. Wilson's second resolution, which no doubt arose from the N. Lanes. District Council's decision to ban Christian Spiritualist exponents, and which called for non-interference by the Council in the question of engaging speakers, and with freedom of exponents in deciding which churches they shall serve, was also amended by the addition of the words "but advises S.N.U. Churches to engage the services of S.N.U. registered workers and diploma holders, and advises S.N.U. registered workers to give preference of service to S.N.U. churches," thus giving specific advice to churches and workers alike on this important question, which policy it is hoped, will be maintained by the Union, without fail, in future.

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In the last issue of "Pioneer" we noted the great success of Maurice Barbanell's propaganda work, concluding with his Hyde Park meetings in the 1930s. As reported below in the "Two Worlds", September 9th 1950, Charles Quastel, assisted by Mrs Moule (President of Hilsea Church) and by Mrs Godfrey, takes Spiritualism to the general public:

SOUTHSEA, PORTSMOUTH, WAS THE SCENE OF A REMARKABLE 'MANIFESTATION' ON A RECENT FRIDAY WHEN, ON THE PROMENADE—BUFFETED BY A HIGH WIND——OVER 300 PEOPLE, ALMOST ALL NON-SPIRITUALISTS, LISTENED TO A FORCEFUL AND CLEAR EXPOSITION OF THE TRUTHS OF HUMAN SURVIVAL.



"People, obviously on their various ways to find shelter from the inclemency of the weather, stopped, listened, and remained for over two hours in a solid mass round the raised figure of the principal speaker, Mr. C. I. Quastel. M.S.N.U. of Sheffield."

"By his side was a large banner, 9-ft. x 6-ft., on which, under the prominent heading 'SPIRTUALISM', were printed the" Seven Principles."

"This banner had been especially made Mr. Quastel, and it is his intention to use it on many future similar occasions.

Straight to the Point

"**From the outset, Mr. Quastel plunged into the purpose the meeting—to end the fear of death by the propagation of the Spiritualist's knowledge of the after-life**.

"He spoke of the growth of the organised Movement, and emphasised the need for moral courage in proclaiming and practising the Spiritualist way of life, in opposition to orthodox views."

"*A surprising and agreeable feature of the whole proceedings, was the fact that only one heckler attempted to interrupt the address—with a number of questions based upon an assumed biblical opposition to Spiritualism.*

"The questions were dealt with to the satisfaction of the audience, whose sympathies were undeniably with the speakers."

Started them Talking

"As the speakers departed, the crowd split up into a number of smaller groups, obviously intent upon continuing discussions on the points raised during one of the most successful outdoor meetings held for very many years.

"Mr. Quastel offers his services, **without charge**, to any S.N.U. organisation which can ensure his return to normal scholastic duties "the morning after the night before." "

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By 1953 Quastel had the support of most SNU leaders; he wanted the Union to interest itself more in the spiritual development of its members, as religious bodies tended to do. He also favoured a push towards Spiritualist unity under the SNU umbrella. SNU President Percy Wilson resigned his office and it was further announced in the "Two Worlds", December 5th 1953, that Wilson and his son Laurence had resigned from the SNU Council: "We cannot accept responsibility for decisions of the Council taken since the Annual General Meeting last July." Wilson did not want the SNU to involve itself in religious matters; he and his family, like some other early SNU leaders, had Unitarian links.

Quastel would rise through the ranks of the Union, becoming Vice-President in 1952 and, later, Hon. Secretary, Education and Exponents. At the 1955 AGM he reinforced his views: below is taken from "Psychic News", July 23rd 1955:

"Spiritualism should be non-denominational," stated Quastel:

I have not changed my opinion in the slightest with regard to membership of councils and leadership of churches.

Briefly, I believe that one's religious origin or, indeed, the type of church body to which one belongs, does not matter as long as the religious views upheld and expounded by the individual can be fully identified with our Seven Principles.

To add extra principles of belief, such as certain 'Greater World' principles, is a matter for one's conscience, but the S.N.U. church platform must not be used for the expression of these other beliefs.

We have certain beliefs which are fully contained within our Seven Principles, and it is those beliefs and no others which we should officially present.

Thus, I reiterate my opinion that within the S.N.U. there should be no leaders calling themselves Christian, Jewish or any other type of Spiritualist.

Having said that, I gladly agree that the existence of sectarian organisations, such as the Christian Spiritualist Church or the Jewish Psychic Society, are justified for those whose beliefs cannot find full expression in the Seven Principles.

We are greatly in need of speakers and demonstrators who can give a spiritual lead interpreting the humanitarian purposes involved in our Principles.

Therefore, if only to dissociate the sincere S.N.U. mediums from some of those whose dubious activities cause unpleasant press reports and legal prosecutions, I suggest that all who have our cause at heart should apply at once for registration as recognised exponents. —*C.I. Quastel, Hon. Sec, Education and Exponents Committee of the S.N.U.*

"Education is the key," stated Quastel (quotes taken from the "Two Worlds", July 9th 1955):

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

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

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

At the 1958 Annual Conference, held at Norwich, Charles Quastel became the Union's 22nd President.

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Whitham Road Spiritualist Church

The former Meersbrook Spiritualist Society, known today as "Whitham Road Spiritualist Church", is still situated at 109 Whitham Road, Sheffield S10 2SL.

Their President since 2008, Tim Doyle, reflects on earlier days:



> "When Charles Quastel was President it would appear that the movement was in really good times: the membership of the church was 97; today, in contrast, it's 27. The main difference today is that in the 50s and 60s the church's platform was filled by the best mediums in the country and they had three services over the weekend, with the medium staying over and doing all three (being put up by the booking secretary): Saturday night, Sunday afternoon and evening. There would be a buffet tea on the Sunday. Today we couldn't afford the best mediums in the country, so we encourage the up-and-coming mediums to have the opportunity of working on the platform with a mix of the established local-ish mediums and we only have one service over the weekend."

Tim Doyle mentioned the fall of Union membership to me and kindly sent me part of the then Meersbrook Spiritualist Society's 1949 minutes reflecting Charles Quastel's report of the SNU Edinburgh Conference. The society's Half-yearly Members Meeting was held on Saturday, 16th July 1949, following the AGM, and was chaired by Quastel, as quoted below:

> Mr Quastel delivered his report of its conference, and was somewhat critical of the order in which the business was conducted – the most importaint, being left until Sunday, when a large proportion of the delegates had left.
>
> The conference had not in any way been an inspiring one. There was a good attendance approximately 240, of whom, however, only 87 were actually church delegates; the remainder being Class B. members, or visitors.
>
> There are at present, 475 churches in the Union, which is lower than in 1938, when the figure stood at 500, but is higher than during the war, when, at one period it was as low as 300.



Tim Doyle compares the interior of the Church with the 1964 photograph shown in the article and today.

Details of the church can be found on their website; for anyone travelling to any of their meetings or to special events, advertised times, etc. should be confirmed in advance:
http://whithamroad.co.uk/

Editor's comments on the fall in national membership:

Various reports show a dramatic drop during WWII in numbers of SNU Churches and membership; Quastel states a loss of 200 churches! Geoffrey K. Nelson's book, "Spiritualism and Society", first published in 1969, is an excellent reference book covering SNU history, with statistical tables, etc. Nelson reports that at the outbreak of war the Union had over 500 churches affiliated, with a total membership of 14,028; he further states:

> "When the annual report was published in 1940 the number of affiliated churches had fallen to 361 and the number of members to 12, 460."

Nelson further reports:

> "The movement continued to decline and reached a new low in 1941, when the interim report of the S.N.U. revealed that only 313 churches were then affiliated with a membership of 10, 250."

Some of the decline would be a result of the "No World War" predictions. Leading spirit guides such as Silver Birch, Red Cloud and others assured Spiritualists there would be no war. Assurances were given, more or less emphatic, that there would be "no European War," or that there would be "no Great War," or that there would be "no war for England." SNU President Frank Blake repeatedly said in public and in the press that "war would not come."

These incorrect prophecies from the spirit world dealt Spiritualism a severe blow within the movement and no doubt caused amusement and ridicule from its critics. In the next issue of "Pioneer" I will publish more on this, together with President Blake's and Red Cloud's response to the false prophecies, which had caused bitter disappointment within the movement, as many were no doubt convinced of the infallibility of the spirit guides.

A larger proportion of the decline, I would suggest, was due to the war conditions, blackouts, travel, the Blitz and conscription, etc, adding greatly to the closures of societies and churches and loss of membership.

Did the Union really go into decline and lose around 200 churches during the war?

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The simple answer is 'NO' but I cannot explain where Quastel, Nelson and other reports I have seen got *all* their figures from, although Nelson gave a reference to an SNU Annual Report, but his book, unfortunately, does not generally give precise references.

In 1937 the Union had 510 churches in affiliation; this was seven up on the previous year. By the end of 1938 this had dropped to 475, with 14,750 members. By the end of 1939, the year WWII started, the Union had lost another church but had gained another 250 members, making a total of 15,000.

We can note that both Quastel and Nelson state that at the outbreak of war the number of churches affiliated to the Union was 500 and over 500 respectively. The net decrease of 35 churches between 1937 and 1938 was "*mainly due to a revision of the records*". This will help to explain why the SNU Annual Report for 1938 gives the number of churches as 475.

As for Quastel's statement that "at one period it was as low as 300", and Geoffrey Nelson's: "When the annual report was published in 1940 the number of affiliated churches had fallen to 361 and the number of members to 12,460", and "…1941, when the interim report of the SNU revealed that only 313 churches…", I cannot fully explain this.

The 1940 SNU Annual Report states, page 10: "The number of Churches on the register at December 1940 was 401, with a membership of 13,863. This shows a decrease of 73 Churches and 1,137 members." In 1941, Nelson reveals, there are only 313 churches! Again, the SNU Annual Report states, page 10: "At December, 1941, there were 414 Churches on the register, with a membership of 12,457. There is an increase of 13 Churches, but there is a membership decrease of 1,406."

It should be noted that all the information I have used is taken from the published SNU Annual Reports of the day; these reports record the whole year, ending in December. So it should be noted that figures will vary throughout war-torn Britain during these years, for example in the July AGM's interim reports, etc.

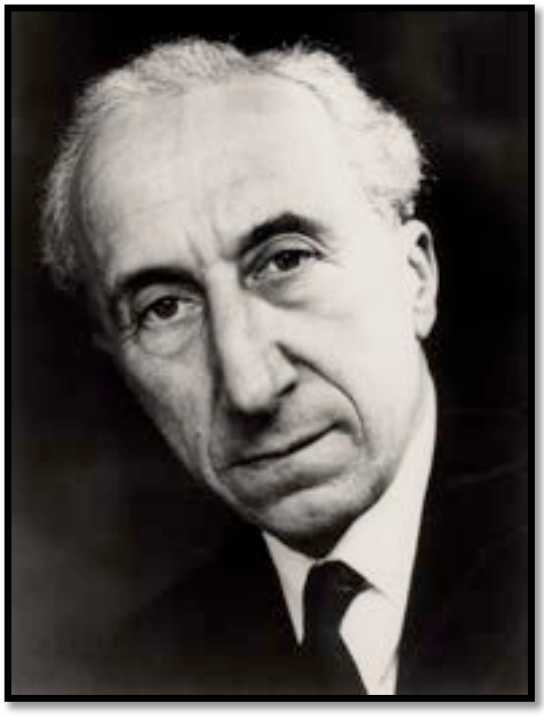
Although the SNU Annual Reports show the lowest amount of churches during the war years as 401 in December 1940, it may have dropped into the 300s earlier in the year. Figures from the SNU Annual Reports during the war period are available on request. To conclude, it can be noted:

Year-end 1939: there were 474 Churches and a 15,000 membership

Year-end 1945: there were 460 Churches and a 14,924 membership

By the end of 1946 there was an increase to 486 Churches and a 16,446 membership

So no substantial long-term losses during the war years



More on Charles Ivan Quastel in the next issue

ERNEST THOMPSON



The editor referred to in the above article was Ernest Thompson (c.1905-1968), who had succeeded former SNU President Ernest Oaten in 1945 as editor of "The Two Worlds". Thompson had founded the Newcastle Psychical Research Institute in 1945; at this time he was President of Heaton National Spiritualist Church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He was also the founder of the Manchester Psychical Research Institute and founder President of the Spirit Electronic Communication Society.

In October 1946 Thompson instigated a National Education scheme for the Spiritualists' National Union. By July 1949 Thompson had written and completed 150 Lecturettes (approx. 200,000 words) and had also prepared the comprehensive syllabus that provided the framework of the SNU education courses. As editor of "The Two Worlds", then based at Manchester, he also published his Lecturettes in this weekly paper and created a firm public awareness that "Education is the Greatest Need of Our Movement".

In 1950 he marked November 18th as Education Day.

He was the second worker to have earned the highest and most prestigious award by the Union in the form of a Fellowship (FSNU), received in 1949. Mr. A.T. Connor, a leading figure in the Lyceum Movement, was the first to achieve this award in 1948 for his thesis on the Seven Principles; he was the Hon. Secretary of the SNU and BSLU Joint Education Scheme under the style and title of the "National Spiritualist College", which was accepted at the 1925 Bristol AGM and established in July 1926. For further information see "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 4, July 2015: "Early S.N.U Education History".

Ernest Thompson donated numerous items to the Britten Memorial Museum, for example a spirit painting through the mediumship of David Duguid, done in five minutes in complete darkness independently of the hands of the medium. Information on David Duguid can be found in "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 4, July 2015: *Trance & Direct Spirit Art – David Duguid*.

It would appear that the donation of the Isa Northage–Dr. Reynolds laboratory slides was by Ernest Thompson.

CHARLES I. QUASTEL

SNU President 1958-1965 & 1968-1970

The last issue of "Pioneer" featured former SNU President Charles Quastel, who highlighted the problems between Christian and Rational Spiritualism within the SNU – Quastel made his views quite clear:

Briefly, I believe that one's religious origin or, indeed, the type of church body to which one belongs, does not matter as long as the religious views upheld and expounded by the individual can be fully identified with our Seven Principles.

To add extra principles of belief, such as certain 'Greater World' principles, is a matter for one's conscience, but the S.N.U. church platform must not be used for the expression of these other beliefs.

We have certain beliefs which are fully contained within our Seven Principles, and it is those beliefs and no others which we should officially present.

Thus, I reiterate my opinion that within the S.N.U. there should be no leaders calling themselves Christian, Jewish or any other type of Spiritualist.



"Pioneer" quoted from the 1950 AGM at Gateshead under the newly-elected President, Percy Wilson: "The long expected battle, between those who favour the propagation of Christian Spiritualism from S.N.U. platforms, and those who wish to keep Spiritualism free from Christian dogmas, broke out at the Sunday morning session."

We can note below from the "Two Worlds", July 16th 1960, that further problems arose at the 1960 Portsmouth AGM under the presidency of Charles Quastel.

SNU Minister Harry Edwards, although not present, caused another storm, as he considered himself to be "a Christian in the fullest sense of the word." Edwards had never made a secret of his religious beliefs but to some Union Spiritualists the question was naturally raised as to why a 'Christian Spiritualist' was an SNU Minister![4]

[4] Spiritualist Ministers go back to WWI or possibly further. Former SNU President Ernest Oaten claimed exemption from military service on the grounds that he was a minister of a religious denomination. He was charged on July 6th 1918 for failing to accept military service; the case was fought through the lower to the High Courts of Justice. The first *official* Spiritualists' National Union Ministers were appointed around 1938; for further information please see "Pioneer", Vol. 1, No. 2, January 2014: "Who were the first Ministers of the Union?"

Behind the scenes in Harry Edwards storm at SNU conference



THE controversial issue as whether you can be a Spiritualist and a Christian flared up again, as we reported last week, at the SNU annual conference. Harry Edwards became the centre of a storm. One delegate quoted a statement made by the world-famous healer six years ago that he considered himself to be "a Christian in the fullest sense of the word."

In this delegate's view, such a belief was inconsistent with the Seven Principles which every individual must accept before becoming a member of an SNU church.

The delegate queried whether Edwards should be allowed to remain an SNU minister. A resolution that the SNU council should reconsider his SNU ministry was defeated in a ballot in which 45 voted for it and 68 against it.

The origin of the six-year-old article in which Edwards had stated his view was given in our last issue. In January 1954 he wrote to "Everybody's" to "take strong exception to the sentence, 'There are non-Christians of whom Harry Edwards is one,' " which had appeared in an article on unorthodox healing.

In Jesus' footsteps

Edwards added: "I do not belong to the Church of England but I am a Christian—a Christian Spiritualist. We try to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and to carry out his commandment to 'heal the sick.' I also believe that spiritual healing is greater than any one religion."

Some years ago it was reported that the healer was offered an important post in the Church of England if he were prepared to repudiate his Spiritualism. He declined.

In all these controversial discussions, like the one that raged at the SNU conference, it is essential that participants should define their terms, for they do not agree on the meanings of the words they use. Do Christians agree on their definition of a Christian? Do Spiritualists agree on their definition of a Spiritualist?

Trouble with pioneers

Without taking any sides in this particular argument, it is not inconsistent, as was stated, and as we understand the position, for an SNU member to accept the Seven Principles and believe in what he regards as "the leadership of Jesus."

The original introduction of the Seven Principles, some 90 years ago, caused a furore. For the purpose of churches owning property it was necessary to define the religious conditions on which Spiritualism was based. The Seven Principles were the answer, but there is even dispute as to who was responsible for them.

Many of the early pioneers were opposed to formulating any set of principles which in time might become crystallised into dogmas and creeds, seeing that they had turned their backs on all conventional theology. These pioneers saw Spiritualism‘s future only if it were a movement which accepted constant inspiration and progressive revelation.

Nevertheless, to comply with the legal requirements, the Seven Principles were finally accepted, with the proviso that every individual had complete liberty of interpretation.

The controversy flared up again in the 1920’s when at an SNU conference, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle pleaded for the addition of an Eighth Principle, one accepting the leadership of Jesus. He was surprised by the vigorous opposition.[5]

Ever since it has been understood that the Seven Principles are a minimum, not a maximum, and that churches could add others if they so desired. Thus within the SNU, there are affiliated churches, like the one at Wimbledon, for example which announce that they accept the leadership of Jesus.

Such additions, it has always been held, are a matter for the conscience of the people concerned.

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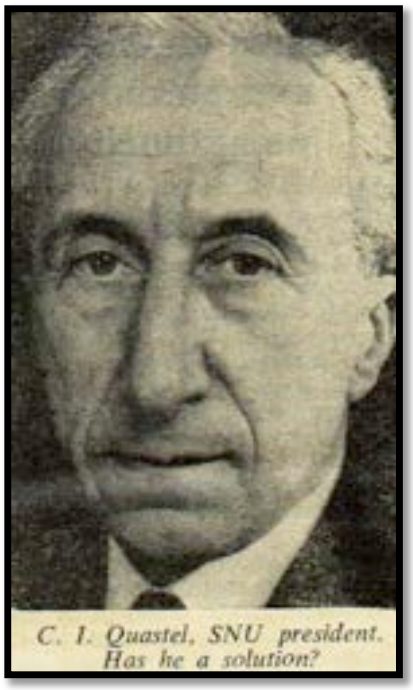
The “proviso that every individual had complete liberty of interpretation” gave SNU Spiritualists the freedom to include a belief in Christianity; liberty of interpretation was not part of the Memorandum or the Articles of Association. The phrase “liberty of interpretation” could be used in such a way as to distort the essence of our Principles and in 1988 the Union withdrew ‘liberty of interpretation’.

The “Union pointed out that ‘Personal Responsibility’ covered each individual’s right to think for his or herself, whereas the Churches did have to stay within the cover of the Memorandum and Articles without personal interpretation.”[6]

Prior to the July 2nd and 3rd 1960 AGM at Portsmouth the “Two Worlds”, June 18th, published a brief statistical account of affiliated churches and membership for the forthcoming conference. In the last issue of “Pioneer” it noted during the WWII years: “Year-end 1939: there were 474 Churches and a 15,000 membership – Year-end 1945: there were 460 Churches and a 14,924 membership – By the end of 1946 there was an increase to 486 Churches and a 16,446 membership.”

[5] See for further details “Pioneer”, Vol. 2, No. 6, November 2015: “Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U. and his Propaganda Work”.

[6] ‘100 Years of National Spiritualism’, by Jean Bassett, published 1990. For further information see “Pioneer”, Vol. 2, No. 2, March 2015: “Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?”



C. I. Quastel, SNU president. Has he a solution?

S.N.U. IS STILL LOSING CHURCHES AND MEMBERS

THE Spiritualists' National Union's annual report, published last week, shows a decrease of 21 churches and 1.311 members.

Affiliated churches totalled 449 compared with 470 the previous year. The 1958 figure of 17,023 church members dropped to 15,712. Numbers have been falling since 1954, when there were 498 churches and 17,211 members.

Church associate members have decreased by over 700, from 2,244 to 1.511—in 1954 the figure was 2,409. There was a slight fall in Class B members, those who subscribe direct to the SNU, from 1,490 to 1,472—the figure six years ago was 1.652. The number of kindred associated bodies reduced from 12 to eight.

Income falls

"Only in South Wales was the membership figure maintained," says the report. The London District Council has the largest number of churches, 75, followed by the Northern DC, 52.

Membership losses are reflected in the SNU's income. Additional work carried out during 1959, involving increased expenditure, coupled with a slightly diminished income, caused a much larger deficit than for 1958.

To make up for last year's deficit of £1,770, as against £1,064 for the previous year, it was necessary, states the SNU, to withdraw a considerable portion of its cash investment in its building fund pool. It records with regret that churches' annual subscriptions dropped by more than £200.

These figures will be considered when the SNU holds its annual general meeting at Portsmouth on July 2 and 3.

One motion to be debated by delegates is directed to improve the platform standard. It suggests an oral test to be made of mediums and exponents who have not passed through the SNU education scheme.

Another motion calls for a research committee to work on scientific lines to bring good repute to psychic phenomena which by their nature have been "much maligned and misrepresented."

The conference will not only have a mayoral welcome but a civic reception on the Saturday night.

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We now reach the conclusion of our study of Charles Quastel, born circa 1903, who developed trance mediumship in his twenties. The article published below is taken from the "Two Worlds", July 5th 1958:

Profile of new S.N.U. president

HE MADE HIS NAME AS A REBEL

CHARLES I. QUASTEL, the first Jew to become president of the Spiritualists' National Union, owes his rise to fame to being a rebel. As nobody else is nominated for this office, he automatically becomes the SNU's 22nd president at its annual conference to be held at Norwich this week-end.

For the past six years he has been vice-president, preparing for the highest honour the Union can offer.

Quastel is an example of what in other walks of life would be called the poacher turned gamekeeper. A more fitting comparison is to describe him as a modern Moses who aims to lead his organisation to the promised land.

Quastel made his reputation on the floor of SNU conferences. He first arrived, completely unknown, as a delegate representing his Sheffield church. Soon he was an outstanding figure at these annual meetings.

The reason? His fiery, uncompromising attitude, plus his frank, vigorous criticism of the SNU officers and council where he thought he detected weaknesses in administration or policy.

It is human nature for delegates at annual conferences to enjoy the spectacle of someone from the floor attacking the executive on the platform.

Quastel's annual performance was scintillating. It was never dialetical or done merely for effect. He had something to say. And he said it in a voice which thundered its wrath like the Old Testament prophets.

Indeed, had he grown a long white beard and worn a mantle, it would not have been difficult to regard him as the possible reincarnation of a Bible prophet, or perhaps overshadowed by one of these ancient vessels of God.

It was not surprising that a stir went through conferences, with old hands pointing him out to new ones, as Quastel rose to his feet to make his criticisms with fervour and eloquence.

He always opposed what he regarded as the commercialisation of Spiritualism. He was impatient with those of sectarian outlook who, in his view, were attempting to dilute the universal religious appeal that Spiritualism makes.

Occasionally it seemed as if he were arguing for a "closed shop" in the Union, as for example his forceful plea, "The SNU church platform must not be used for the expression of beliefs other than the Seven Principles."

Later this became modified to urging that Union churches should give preference in their engagements to Union mediums and similarly that these mediums should give priority to SNU churches.

It is not surprising that the man who had embraced Spiritualism largely because of racial persecution in early life should be anti-orthodox in his thinking and a Spiritualist without a qualifying prefix.

Quastel, believing that the SNU is the spearhead of Spiritualism in this country, has pleaded for the appointment of whole-time paid Spiritualist ministers and mediums, a dream that is still far from realisation. Nevertheless, through the years, the visionary has persisted in dreaming dreams.

His great hope, he said, was the establishing of a world Spiritualist union essentially religious in character, with the Seven Principles as its basis. This was mistakenly regarded as criticising the International Spiritualist Federation because some of its member-countries do not accept Spiritualism's religious implications.

Quastel, internationalist in outlook, visualises the forward march of Spiritualism as a universal religion making its unique contribution to the brotherhood of man.

He must have been in a dilemma when he was nominated to serve on the SNU council. After all, it is difficult to be fiery when you have to deal with administrative problems. His gifts were more suitably expressed in the thrust of controversy rather than in the deliberations of the council chamber.

But the call had come. He accepted nomination and was elected. It was obviously irksome for Quastel to sit on the platform with the rest of the council and to be at the receiving end of criticisms from the floor of the conference where he was always more at home.

Destiny, as so often happens, with an ironic twist had placed him in the position of defending the council which he had so often belaboured. His defence was able but never as fiery as when he had been on the other side of the fence.

A schoolmaster by profession it was natural for him to work on committees dealing with education and exponents.

In recent times he has been a critic of some aspects of spirit healing. Few guessed the reason. He has been a practising healer with several striking successes to his credit.

In all the controversies in which he participated with impassioned ardour, even those who differed with him recognised the honesty of mind and singleness of purpose which animated his opinions.

The youth who turned his back on orthodox Judaism will now guide the destiny of Spiritualism's national organisation. When he became vice-president, the writer of this profile, in congratulating Quastel, jokingly said, "Your troubles will begin when you are president."

It is hoped that these words are not prophetic. If they are, Quastel, the man with a mission, will prove equal to the task.



SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

"100 Years Anniversary of his Acceptance of Spiritualism"



Doyle's interests in Spiritualism and psychic matters date back to the 1880s; in 1893 he became a member of the Society for Psychical Research. However, it would not be until 1916 that he would publicly identify himself as a Spiritualist, a mission he would strongly advocate until his death on July 7th 1930. Further details on Doyle's activities during the years 1887 to 1920 are revealed in a new book by Matt Wingett, 'Conan Doyle & the Mysterious World of Light'.[4]

At the time of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's death he was Hon. President of the Spiritualists' National Union. After his death we can note in the minutes of an SNU Council meeting held on October 25th 1930:[5]

"It was resolved that the name of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle be retained as Honorary President in spirit life, and to elect Mr. Hannen Swaffer as Honorary President, and Lady Jean Conan Doyle as Honorary Vice-President of the Union."

Today Sir Arthur still retains this honour within the Union – Hon. Presidents-in-Spirit – alongside Emma Hardinge Britten, Hannen Swaffer, J. Arthur Findlay and Gordon Higginson.

Below gives the reader an insight into Doyle's 'New Revelation', which is taken from the "Two Worlds", November 9th 1917, page 416:

SIR A. CONAN DOYLE AND HIS CONVERSION.

THE following is a report which appeared in *The Northern Daily Telegraph* of Friday, October 26th, 1917. As it contains some points which are open questions to many earnest Spiritualists (which have been dealt with by not a few contributors to THE TWO WORLDS), we deem it wise to print what Sir Conan said, thus (as is the custom of this journal) supporting the free and open consideration of points which are matters of considerable differences of opinion among some classes of Spiritualists. Sir Conan evidently ranges himself on the side of those broad-minded and clear-visioned Spiritualists who take sane and wide views of the facts they are familiar with, and who

[4] The book's preface is written by Leslie Price and published in Psypioneer, Volume 12, No. 3, May-June 2016.

[5] The "National Spiritualist", December 1930, page 140: "Precis of Minutes of General Council held at National Spiritualist Church, Smethwick, October 25th, 1930." G. F. Berry, General Secretary.

are not afraid to speculate upon their relations to religion, science, ethics, philosophy, and the problems of our daily lives.

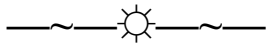
The report says:—

Lecturing before the London Spiritualists' Alliance last night on "The New Revelation," Sir Arthur Conan Doyle said the subject had engaged his attention more than any other. If it had taken him a long time to arrive at the conclusions he held, it was because psychical research involved questions which were complex, deep, and difficult. When he finished his medical education he was a convinced materialist, and was of opinion that the whole analogy of nature was against the theory of the survival of personality after death. He was a theist, but did not believe in an anthropomorphic deity. He had looked upon Spiritualism as the greatest nonsense. He traced the steps by which he had been brought to change his views—his personal experiences of psychic phenomena and the views of great men like Crookes, Wallace, and Flammarion. The replies of spirits given through table rapping were not always stupid. In one case he got this reply to a test question: "It is the religious frame of mind, not the critical, we wish to inculcate."

No other religion was so strongly supported by the testimony of able and learned men as was Spiritualism. The existence of fraudulent mediums was not surprising, seeing that many were paid by results and that in any case mediumship was a physical gift and had no necessary relationship to morality. The war, by compelling the re-assessment of values, had made him realise fully for the first time the importance to everyone of a study which aimed at the breakdown of the wall between two worlds. Through Spiritualism a new revelation was in process of delivery. It was perhaps still in the John the Baptist stage, but certainly a body of fresh doctrine had already been accumulated, mainly through automatic writing, but partly also from direct voices and other sources, which told us of the life of the soul on the other side. It was fatal to no creed except that of materialism, but Christianity, like everything else, must change or perish. Change had already perhaps been delayed too long.

Christianity was failing because too much was made of the death and not enough of the life of Christ. The new doctrine taught that passing was easy and painless. The spirit body was analogous to the earth body. There was a period of oblivion or sleep before entering on the duties of the spirit life, which was a pleasant condition in the world beyond, from which no one wished to return. Hell dropped out, but purgatory was justified. The world beyond was no vague region of floating emotion, but a definite reality attested by a body of evidence nobody could reject.

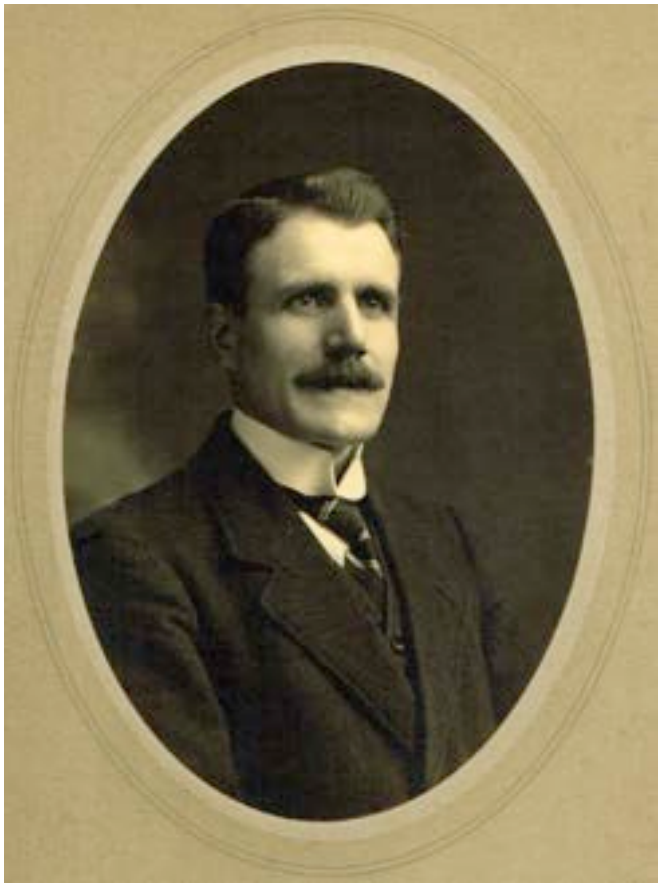
Sir Oliver Lodge, who presided, said revelation was that which we had not yet obtained directly from the evidence of the senses, which, like all else in process of evolution, were still imperfect, and were not in themselves sufficient to explore a spiritual and mental universe. The materialists failed when they professed to lay down the law on a subject of which they knew nothing.



JOHN MACINTOSH STEWART

***President** of the Glasgow Association, **President** of the London District Council, **President** of Croydon Church and **President** of the Spiritualists' National Union*

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The name John Stewart is largely unknown today, although his dedicated service to National Spiritualism was immense, spanning over twenty-five years. He is featured in the series "The Effect of the Vagrancy & Witchcraft Act – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union", which concluded in the last issue of "Pioneer". Below is taken from the "Two Worlds", May 18th 1949, which gives a brief overview of some of his work:

MEET THE S.N.U. NATIONAL COUNCIL

Mr. John M. Stewart has a most outstanding record of work on the National Council of the Spiritualists' National Union. Our memories of the fine work done for the Freedom Committee, for which he has acted as Secretary since its formation in I943 are still fresh. He was the 'key man' of the arrangements in connection with the re-formation of the International Spiritualists' Federation, acting as Secretary for the Bournemouth Conference in I947, and also for the London Congress in 1948. As Chairman he has guided the activities of the Education and Exponents' Committee for several years.

He was born in Glasgow on the 24th September, 1883, and was first attracted to Spiritualism by a lecture given to the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists, becoming a member in 1901.[8]

[8] Stewart was brought up in the faith of the Church of Scotland, but at the age of 16 he set out to formulate for himself a philosophy of life. In his quest he visited mostly every denomination in Glasgow and ultimately found his way to the Spiritualists' Hall. A lecture given to the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists by Dr. John C. Kenworthy was Stewart's first introduction to the movement, which later became his main interest in life. Stewart joined the Glasgow Association in 1901 and eventually found complete conviction through the mediumship of David Duguid, Mrs Mellon, Mrs Wriedt and others. See for further information Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 10, October 2011: "The Glasgow Association of Spiritualists & Historical Notes".

In 1903, he was appointed Secretary of the Glasgow Association, and took a prominent part in the formation of the Scottish Spiritualist Alliance, acting as Secretary for 8 years. In 1913 he succeeded Mr. James Robertson as President of the Glasgow Association.[9]

The Lyceum side of Spiritualism has always held a warm corner in the affections of Mr Stewart, and for many years he was the Conductor of the Glasgow Lyceum, later serving on the B.S.L.U. Management Committee.[10] His work in the Civil Service involved a transfer to London in 1923, where he was instrumental in forming the Croydon Church. Later he took an active part in the work of the London District Council, and was elected President in I934, serving in that office for 6 years. On the National Council he served as Treasurer for ten years (I928-I938), and in 1941 succeeded Frank Blake as President until I943. By the next A.G.M. he will have served the National Council for 21 years. A splendid record!

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First Croydon Spiritualist Society

Many of the Spiritualist churches were established by the work of the early societies, which are often overlooked. The Croydon Spiritualist Society was formed in around 1905. Early societies had difficult times trying to rent premises. It appears that Croydon Spiritualist Society originated in Katherine Street, with a room holding around forty or so people. They moved to another building at the back of some shops in Lower Addiscombe Road; at this time a committee was set up and officers appointed for the first time. The founder of the Society, Mr W. H. Thornton, was elected President, with Vice-Presidents Mr John Edwards and Mr C.J. Stockwell.

A circle was formed for the development of mediumship; so successful was the society that people were being refused admission for lack of space. By 1913 they had moved from George Street to Elmwood Hall, Elmwood Road, West Croydon, a much larger building in a select part of the town, with good acoustic properties and seating for around 300 people. The President was now Mr Percy Scholey, a well-known London platform worker of reportedly fine ability as a speaker and clairvoyant. A choir was formed under the direction of Mrs Scholey, a circle formed for the purpose of developing its own workers, not for phenomena but for philosophy. A healing circle was introduced after the morning Sunday service. In an interview with Horace Leaf ("Two Worlds", February 1913) the President, Percy Scholey, was asked about philosophy:

> "Properly speaking," he replied quickly, "there is no more beautiful philosophy under the sun than that which we are out to teach–the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the immortality of the soul, and a path of eternal progression for all. It is the broadest of philosophies. I can realise no grander ideal than those four principles of the Spiritualist faith."

[9] He relinquished this position in 1916 when he went on 'active service' and Mr Peter Galloway was appointed in his stead. When Mr Galloway passed to the higher life John Stewart again assumed office and took a leading part in the opening of the James Robertson Hall in 1923, which was the realisation of the Association's long-cherished ideal of a home of its own.

[10] It was in this Lyceum that Stewart met the lady who subsequently became his life's partner. He married in 1909 and had a family of two boys and two girls.

First Croydon National Spiritualist Church

As indicated, Stewart was a founder member of Croydon National Spiritualist Church; former SNU President Ernest Oaten conducted the dedication ceremony at Bedford Park on Saturday June 9th 1934 at 3.30pm. We can note on the photograph shown below Ernest Oaten on the right and the Church President, John Stewart, on the other side of the door (hands clenched).

Stewart notes on the front of the Souvenir Programme:

A brief history of the Croydon National Spiritualist Church



THE church was formed eight years ago, the opening meeting being held on the 14th March, 1926, in The New Gallery, Katharine Street, at which, Miss Estelle Stead was the principal speaker. So successful were the early meetings, that by the end of the year 1926, the membership had risen from 20 to 70 and despite the heavy initial expenses, the sum of £50 was set aside as the nucleus of a Building Fund. Even greater progress was made during the year 1927, which closed with 100 members on the roll and with sufficient funds in hand to purchase the site in Bedford Park on which the present church is built. In the year 1928, efforts were made to raise the sum required to build the church, for which plans had been prepared, by Mr. Jarman and passed by the Town Council, but unfortunately, a division took place in the membership and a portion left to form a new church at Ruskin House, Wellesley Road.



The work was continued at The New Gallery during 1929, but the limitations of our tenancy handicapped the various activities of the church so that early in 1930, it was found desirable to remove to the Broad Green Hall, Handcroft Road. Difficulties were also encountered over the trusteeship of the land in Bedford Park which delayed progress during the years 1931 and 1932, but these were ultimately overcome in 1933 and the question of building the church was again taken up. For this purpose efforts were made to secure an amalgamation with the two existing Spiritualist meetings at Bedford Park, but without success and it was then decided to proceed with modified plans subsequently drawn up by Mr. Jarman. Arrangements were made with the Pooling Committee of the Spiritualist National Union for an advance of £900 and the balance of the purchase price was raised by donations and loans from church members and their generous friends, who wish to remain anonymous. A joint trust is being drawn up with the Union, which will secure the church definitely for Spiritualism.

J.M.S.

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The benefits of Union affiliation!

After the war years problems arose for the Church and by the early 1950s it had to be closed owing to serious structural damage caused by subsidence. It was in this Church in 1950 that the young future SNU President, Gordon Higginson, made his southern debut. Six years later, on Saturday June 9th 1956 at 3 pm, Gordon opened the new Church at Chatsworth Road, Croydon, under the presidency of Bertie Hardwick.[11] Below is a quote from the Souvenir Programme:

> From the early days of struggle to meet the mortgage repayments on a loan of £900; on through the War years, Croydon Church steadily progressed, and by soon after the end of hostilities it could claim a membership nearly 200; was free of debt; had a credit balance in the Bank; supported local charities, had the Mayor grace its platform at a Civic Hall Meeting and was unable to accommodate all the people that were desirous of attending the Sunday Service.
>
> The future seemed more than secure. However, ominous cracks appeared in the walls and the building took a decided tilt. The combined effect of bombing and soil subsidence was taking its toll, and with the withdrawal of Insurance cover the Church in Bedford Park closed its doors to the public
>
> Thanks to the kindness of The Society of Friends and The Free Christian Church, Croydon was able to continue its existence in premises rented by these two august bodies. However, the need for its own building was an ever pressing one, and after much searching for a suitable central site, a General Meeting of members decided to buy the derelict Grove House in Chatsworth Road, together with its freehold site for the sum of £1,400.
>
> It was indeed with regret that the beautiful old Grove House could not be restored and adapted to the needs of the Church, for its flight of Portland stone steps to its west front, its paved entrance hall and noble staircase with carved mahogany balustrade, its sculptured marble chimney piece, its oak panelled walls and carved enrichments were things of real beauty, being reminiscent of craftsmanship fast dying and never to return. It had housed that local "character" Mr. Chollett who used to fire a pistol at 10 p.m. from the balcony to warn anyone lurking in the grounds that they would meet armed resistance.
>
> Regretfully Croydon Church learned from its Architect that restoration was impossible at the funds that were available, and the site was cleared to make way for the present building.
>
> This has been erected by Messrs. Adams Bros. (Contractors) Ltd., at a price of £8,000. Practically the whole of this sum being loaned from The S.N.U. Building Pool. There is no doubt that the efforts needed to meet the heavy commitments that lie ahead are considerable, but Croydon Church is confident it is capable of meeting and surpassing these difficulties.

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[11] Bertie Hardwick, known as 'Bert", was a masseur and chiropodist.

A year earlier the foundation-stone of the Church was officially laid:



Left is John Stewart in the white mac and on his left shoulder is Harold Vigurs; the lady on his left shoulder is Elsie Hardwick, her husband in front of her; in the dark coat is the Church President, Bert Hardwick, and on his left shoulder is former SNU President Harry Dawson

On July 7th 1956 President Hardwick (1948-1957) applied to register Croydon National Spiritualist Church as a place for religious worship and on September 6th 1956 the Church was registered.

The Church website notes:

> "Practically the whole of this sum was loaned from the SNU Building Pool. The Building Fund Pool 20 year advance was repaid by 1972 (within 16 years) and from that date all monies received by the Church have been for its maintenance and upkeep. The Church now has brand new chairs and velvet curtains throughout. Structural alterations in 1976 provided much needed washing facilities, a larger kitchen and the room for Speakers was completely refurbished from the generous bequest from Mary Vigurs and is now called the Vigurs Room.
>
> The Hardwick Room houses the library and is to the memory of the President of the Church who saw through all the planning and building of the church, Bert Hardwick. Unfortunately, he was only able to see the fruits of his labours for two years. At the

beginning of 1981 his daughter Inez, at one time leader of a flourishing Lyceum, passed to Spirit and books are to be added to the library in her memory.

Harold Vigurs was President from 1957, E.S. Jeffries from 1970 until December 1973, when on his resignation, Wilfred Watts was elected President. On his resignation due to ill health in 1998, Mrs. Mollie McManus was elected President and remains in office to this day. Under her stewardship there have been many improvements to the building including redecoration, replacement double glazed windows, central heating, new toilet including disabled facilities, cavity wall insulation, a new modern kitchen, carpets laid throughout the church and a book stall selling second hand books has been established."



Croydon Spiritualist Church today is still affiliated to the Union.

Services are held on Sundays and Wednesdays at the following times:

Sunday 11:00am & 6:30pm

Wednesday 7:45pm

Special Events, details of speakers/mediums, etc. can be found on its website at:

http://www.croydonspiritualistchurch.org.uk/index.html

Special thanks is given to Alan Seymour CSNU LSSNU, the Church's Vice-President for the past 18 years and a member of the Church for 28 years, for his invaluable help in the construction of the article. Thanks are also due to the Church's President, Mrs Mollie McManus OSNU LSSNU, for checking out the old Church archives. Alan advised me that their Church membership is currently at around 75.





Croydon Spiritualist Church

Croydon Spiritualist Church, Chatsworth Road, Croydon CR0 1HE

In 1953 the "Two Worlds", July 25th, announced John Stewart's retirement as published below. Stewart had given many years' service to Croydon National Spiritualist Church; he became its President in 1930 and continued for over a decade. The Church minutes for December 31st 1953 state that John Stewart was their Hon. President:

> "Our sadness at the retirement of Mr. & Mrs. John Stewart to Pevensey Bay is somewhat tempered by the assurance that their removal from Croydon will in no way break their association with the church. They are continuing in membership and on important occasions will make every effort to be with us.
>
> Mr. John Stewart, Hon. President and founder of Croydon Church, has also acted in the advisory capacity as Warden. […]
>
> We take this opportunity of wishing both Mr. and Mrs. Stewart good health and every happiness in their new home."

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Pioneer retires from active service

FAREWELL TO JOHN STEWART



THE Spiritualist movement is going to lose the services of John M. Stewart, one of its national figures for many years. Next week he and his wife are moving to Pevensey Bay, Sussex, where they have built a bungalow.

John is relinquishing all the offices he holds. He has given this movement yeoman service, particularly on its freedom and parliamentary committees which were responsible for getting through the House of Commons measures which gave Spiritualism relief from the antiquated Acts that robbed them of religious liberty.

HE LED CAMPAIGN

John was the spearhead of the campaign. He interviewed M.P.s, got them organised into a group of active participants, working as a team towards victory. It was due to his charm and engaging personality that he enlisted the help of M.P.s who were not even Spiritualists. Indeed the man who brought in our Bill was a Methodist.

John has filled with distinction the highest offices that organised Spiritualism has to offer. He has been president, vice-president and treasurer of the S.N.U. and president of its London District Council.

In 1937, when the International Spiritualist Congress met in Glasgow, he was responsible for organising a "London week" which enabled delegates from abroad to see everything the capital had to offer.

After the war, he took a leading part in reviving the International Spiritualist Federation. He was organising secretary for the first post-war Congress in London in 1948.

TRIBUTE TO HIS WORK

When 30 years ago he came to London from Scotland, he helped to start a new society in Croydon. The flourishing National Spiritualist Church in that district is a monument to his labours. He has been a tower of strength on the board of the *Two Worlds*.

Brought up in the strict atmosphere of a Church of Scotland family, John became dissatisfied with the orthodox teachings he heard every Sunday. After his father's passing when John was 17, he set out on his own spiritual exploration. None of the religious denominations attracted him.

He attended Spiritualist meetings and found its philosophy so reasonable that he became a Spiritualist even before he had any evidence. When this came, it was convincing. Through the direct-voice mediumship of Etta Wriedt he received convincing proof from his father, mother and an aunt.

SWEDISH SPIRIT VOICE

At this seance, one sitter conversed with a spirit communicator in Swedish. John's wife is a Swede and she was able to follow the conversation.

He met his wife at a Spiritualist Lyceum in Glasgow and as a result has always been interested in this youth movement. All his children were brought up in it.

In his early investigation 50 years ago, John attended remarkable seances with Mrs. J. B. Mellon, the materialisation medium.[12] There was sufficient light for the sitters to see spirit forms materialise and come out of the cabinet well away from the medium. She was English, but her guide was an Aberdonian and spoke in a broad Scots dialect. Sitters could see the guide materialise and the medium at the same time.

John also attended seances with Charles Bailey, the Australian apport medium. Live birds and fishes were brought into the room by spirit operators. Occasionally figures materialised and left impressions of their hands on plasticine moulds.

SCOTS' "GRAND OLD MAN"

In Glasgow, where he lived for many years, John always turned for advice to James Robertson. He was known as the "grand old man" of Scottish Spiritualism.

On one occasion when Tom Tyrrell, the famous clairvoyant, visited the Glasgow Spiritualist Association, the largest S.N.U. church in the country, Robertson was his chairman and John was in the audience. Tyrell described how he saw a spirit form take a mantle from Robertson's shoulders and place it on a man in the audience. This was John, whom the medium had not met.

[12] This is the well-known physical medium, Annie Fairlamb, who married James Barr Mellon in 1878.

Shortly afterwards Robertson passed on and John was called upon to succeed him as president of the Glasgow Association, a position he held twice.

NO THOUGHT OF SELF

For half a century he has laboured unceasingly without thought of self and never seeking the limelight. He has addressed hundreds of meetings at which his calm logic and his dry Scots wit have captivated the audience.

He has always been a living embodiment of the song, “Smiling Thro’ ”—no matter what difficulty or problem has arisen, John has always smiled his way through.

In his well-deserved retirement, John will be able to draw on many happy memories. He is a man with hundreds of friends and no enemies. He inspires affection from everyone he meets. Even those who disagree with him pay tribute to his honesty of purpose.

SNU AGM 70 YEARS AGO

Harold Vigurs was known as a fine orator; the following is a verbatim report of Vigurs' Presidential Address at the 1947 SNU Bournemouth Conference, as published in the "Two Worlds", July 18th 1947, pages 226-227 & 230.

Vigurs stresses a: *"Fatal Weakness of Spiritualist Churches – Warning to Spiritualist Leaders"*



INFLUENCE WANING IN SOME AREAS

A. H. L. VIGURS, IN HIS PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH AT THE BOURNEMOUTH S.N.U. CONFERENCE ON SATURDAY SOUNDED A CALL TO THE SPIRITUALIST CHURCHES AND SOCIETIES IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND, PARTICULARLY IN LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE, WHOSE INFLUENCE HAS WANED OVER THE YEARS. ONCE THE STRONGHOLDS OF SPIRITUALISM, THESE AREAS ARE NOW IN DANGER OF BECOMING THE BACKWATERS.

HE URGED THAT YOUTH SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO TAKE CHARGE AND THAT OLD MEN AND WOMEN SHOULD NOT CLING TENACIOUSLY TO OFFICE.

VIGURS ALSO CRITICISED THOSE WHO "HANKER AFTER THE DOG COLLAR OF THE PRIEST AND COVET THE TITLE OF REVEREND." SPIRITUALISM, HE DECLARED, "SEEKS NO AUTHORITY, NO DRESS, NO TITLE."

THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUALISM

BUT S.N.U. IS NUMERICALLY STATIC!

FULL REPORT OF PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT S.N.U. ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

When we meet in Conference, it is pleasant to reflect upon the influence Spiritualism has exerted in nearly every department of human activity. We are a progressive movement, we are not tied to a static revelation in history; we are not governed in our ideas by the rulings of any Council; for leadership, we look solely to our friends in spirit. Our earnest endeavour is to let the dead past of our mental world bury its own dead and to keep the mind ever fresh from outworn ideas, that it might receive the impress of that larger vision which our spirit friends are ever anxious to give. With no small measure of satisfaction we have seen how, in modern religious thought, the message of Spiritualism has modified the former conception of heaven and hell, and how redemption has come to be regarded as the outcome of effort, made by the individual for his own salvation: our principle of personal responsibility has gained and is gaining wider and wider acceptance. We have made our contribution to political thought, and there is a growing recognition that man's physical requirements are not his only needs, and that he must have social conditions that will allow him to find and also to develop his spiritual nature if his larger happiness is our true objective.

Fundamental Ingredients of Society

In the realm of our social entertainments, this growing influence can also be seen, and to-day it is a commonplace to find a psychic theme portrayed on the stage or at the cinema. Spiritualism is more than news value; it has become a fundamental ingredient of our social structure. At moments such as these, we remember with gratitude, the constant and loyal efforts made by our spirit friends to correct errors in human thought, and where the channel is truly open, to give growing revelation. New thought always demands courage to meet the prejudice of outmoded convention and to-day we pay tribute to those pioneers who, faithful to their witness from spirit, scorned delights and endured contumely, that we might be able to meet as we do in public conference to-day. We have indeed good reason to be proud of the contribution we have made to human thought; but when we examine our organisation, we are forced to the conclusion that the influence of this great wave of reconstructive thought, has, in the main, passed us by, for our numbers in membership remain roughly the same. This progress in social evolution has not been accompanied by any substantial influx in our membership.

Not Progressing as we Should

As an organisation, indirectly we exercise considerable influence; numerically we are static; we are not causing people to wish to link up with us in active membership.

This is not healthy. Moreover we have evidences that not only are we not progressing as we should, but that in some areas we are even declining. What I regard as a major tragedy for our Movement has taken place during the last year. Unfortunately it is not a lone experience. One of our Churches, in an industrial town in the north, has been sold for commercial usage; the Church, as such, has gone out of existence. This Church was strongly linked with some of the founders of our Union. A group of early pioneers laboured well and eventually were able to secure a well built stone Church, close to the centre of one of our industrial towns. The Church was not vested in the Union, either in joint trust or sole trust. It was held by local trustees alone, and now those trustees have sold the building. They did not ask the National Council or the District Council concerned for help in running the Church or for advice as to selling. They acted on their own initiative and the matter first came to the notice of this Union when the sale had been effected.

Anaemic Condition of Membership

Subsequent enquiry shewed that the membership had dwindled to just about twelve, all of whom were over 60 years of age. The time came when the President was no longer able to carry on, and when he tendered his resignation, the Secretary also tendered his. The Trustees then found that none of the members of that Church were prepared to assume office; such was the apathy that existed in that Church. Some excuse can be found for those members, individually, because of their age, and the dilemma in which the Trustees found themselves can be understood. I still maintain however that it is a major tragedy for our Movement to think that one of our affiliated Churches can get into such a parlous state without an opportunity being afforded to the parent body to revive it. This tragedy however is one of the facts of our history and we can only minimise the loss as we faithfully and accurately diagnose the causes that led to this anaemic condition in membership and then take action to prevent the possibility of any recurrence of such condition. One has only to glance through the TWO WORLDS publications of about fifty years ago to appreciate how the prominence in our Movement, that then belonged to parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, has now departed, and unless we take active steps now, even those areas which to-day seem so progressive may in their turn, become subject to this same apathy and retrogression.

Drained of Younger Members

Seven years is a long time in the history of a Church and during the last seven years most of our Churches have been drained of their younger members. When they return they will often come back to a new generation; a generation that knows not Joseph.

Moreover they themselves will have changed. In the Forces they will have made new contacts and probably have assumed new responsibilities, and when they return there will be a tendency to seek fresh outlets for communal activities that accord with the experiences gained whilst with the Forces. Sometimes I am afraid these fresh outlets do not fit in with the more mature atmosphere of some of our Churches. Any Church which has a membership of which the youngest is sixty is in a very bad way, and there is a very clear indication that real leadership in that Church has been stifled for many years. Our message is virile; it makes its appeal to the young, provided that younger mind is welcomed and encouraged to take its share in managing the affairs of the Church.

A Pointed Analogy

I was once talking to a friend who had a very brilliant record during the recent war. I will refer to him as Col. 'W.' I asked him what was the biggest lesson he had learnt whilst he was with the Army. "Actually" he said, "I did have a very big lesson; in fact the biggest I have ever had in this life." He explained to me that even before the war he had been drawn to the Army as a career. At Sandhurst, he just revelled in military studies. Apparently he had no time for theatres or pictures; he spent every available moment studying military matters. When it came to the examinations, he passed with flying colours. He was top and easily top of his year. His record attracted special notice. He mentioned these things to me just to shew me that all his interest was in soldiering; for the time being it represented all his life. During the war he gained very rapid promotion until he was in command of a Regiment. The time came when they were training for the landing to take place later on the beaches of Normandy. "I managed to get the Regiment to take on my enthusiasm," he told me. "I got them all on their toes. Soldiers do not mind discipline provided everything is clear cut and there is no muddle. They like things well organised and soon they entered into the very spirit of the training. I got really proud of them and I knew that they were better than any other Regiment in the Division. I welcomed inspections from Brigade. It did not matter whether it was a kit inspection or a particular exercise; whether we were informed or not; my men were really good."

Badly Trained

"One day I got a message asking me to report to the Brigadier the next morning at 11-30 a.m. and I expected the usual eulogies about the Regiment which I felt were fully earned. In due course I reported. 'Good morning W" said the Brigadier, 'Can you guess what I want to see your about.' I suppose it is about the Regiment, Sir,' I replied. 'Quite right, quite right,' and then imagine my surprise when he said, 'Col. W., I am very concerned about your Regiment. It is no earthly use to me. It is the worst in the whole Brigade if not the Division.' That was one straight between the eyes. All I could do was to falter lamely, 'But I thought Sir, that you were very pleased with our last exercise. .' 'Yes, Yes, I know. The training seemed excellent. Everything went off without a hitch; but I have no illusions. You see, W., when I asked the Orderly Officer certain questions, you were there and with your prompting, I got all the right answers. When I went out in the field and talked to one of your sergeants, you turned up and again I got all the right answers. And so it was wherever I went. You, Col. W., were always there. I know that you know your stuff thoroughly, but your Regiment is absolutely of no use to me. What do you think is going to happen when we get on the beaches if you get hurt and have to be sent back? With you there, I know all would be well, but without you all would be Hell. Your Regiment would be a damned nuisance. Nobody would know exactly what to do and I should have to draw them out of the line and replace them. No, Col. W., your regiment is very badly trained and I am going to send you away for a month. You will report tonight

at—for a course in—.' 'But Sir,' I interposed, intending to tell him that I had taken that course and that it would only be a waste of time. 'I know, I know, W, but you are going to take that course. Take your fishing rod as well. I don't care if you don't attend a single lecture; you have got to stay away from the Regiment for a full month. There is a train you can catch at — and I am sending you back by my chauffeur. He will wait while you pack your bag and then will run you to the station. He can then report to me whether you are safely on the train. Now go and have a well earned holiday and don't come back until I send for you'."

Fatal Weakness

"Well, orders is orders. I had that holiday and had some nice fishing. You know how dumb we used to think all 'Brass Hats' were. Well this old boy knew his stuff. He was right, absolutely right. When I thought the thing over, I had to admit that I had carried the Regiment. I did it all, and the old boy was right. I thought that I had impressed him, but he had seen through the whole game and spotted the fatal weakness. When the month was up, I received orders to report to the Brigadier. There was more than a twinkle in his eye when he told me that I should find the Regiment very much changed. 'Now, W., you are going to build up a new regiment, and it will be the finest in the Brigade.' As I was leaving, after giving me his best wishes in my new task, he added, 'Look here, W., a Commanding Officer is no good unless the Regiment can carry on just as well without him.' I found that Regiment in a very sorry mess. The discipline had gone to pot. Nothing undermines morale so much as muddle, countermanded orders, and arrangements improvised at the very last moment. The Regiment was just chaos and I had got to rebuild on sound lines."

Lesson for Spiritualism

What was required for D. Day, can give us seriously to think as far as our own planning arrangements are concerned. You and I are not efficient officers of our Churches of our District Councils or our National Council, unless those bodies can function just as well if we are unable to be present. Whether we preside or do secretarial work; whether we keep the accounts or run the library; whether we conduct a discussion group or run a developing circle; whether we give psychic readings for our church or diagnose in the healing circle; our constant aim must be to see that we train others so that, should we not be available, the work of the Church, or the Council will not be impaired. We are none of us so important that somebody else could not be trained to do the work as well.

Too often in the past, under the driving influence of a live President or Secretary, or the grateful enthusiasm of a generous medium, a Church has grown and exerted a strong influence in our Movement, and when that individual has been removed, that influence has waned. We are only successful in our leadership when the organisation can carry on as well whether we are present or not. If we are not always alert to pick out suitable material that we can and do train to deputise in our stead, we are failing in our responsibility to our spirit friends, and our service to our cause becomes mainly the expression of an egotistic urge rather than the unfoldment of a spiritual development through service. Only the mental desire body seeks expression of itself; even though that expression be the extolling of the wish to serve others. The spiritual urge is selfless and indeed prefers others, especially when worthy. The touchstone of true leadership is the unfoldment of the spiritual self, where the individual, as such, is lost in the whole, and where the whole individual effort is to enable the Church to carry on its ministry apart from any personality. As we value the Cause more than our individual contribution, so we progress until we, through our efforts, are enabled to stand aside and see the work we have done carried on—more ably, by younger hands we have trained. Truly we shall learn as Milton taught us: "They also serve who only stand and wait."

Our Duty is to Stand Aside

Rigidity in holding on to Office is one of our limitations and sources of weakness. Rigidity of outlook is another. We are apt to forget that each new generation is more than a generation ahead of us. Educational methods and facilities are far ahead of what they were in our youth, and each generation seeks its own expression of truth. What has served you and me, will no longer meet the needs of to-day; for youth to-day builds where you and I left off. That is the natural outcome of that progression that we extol so freely; which we see so readily in others but so rarely perceive when the crest of the advancing wave sweeps forward leaving us stranded in its wake. Our duty is to stand aside and allow the rising generation to express our Spiritualism in their own terms. Things that you and I value, have not the same value to youth, and we, in our leadership, must be big enough to stifle our own personal inclinations and to foster this new expression until it is strong enough to carry the main burden of our Church work. Ours should be the hands in reserve; ready to give support and to sustain, and only to direct if the emergency arises.

Relics of a Fading Tradition

With advancing years, we all tend to live more and more in the past; in the good old days; and sometimes prefer the forms and values of yesterday to the fearless thought and creative speculation which characterises the evolving spiritual life. So to-day, in certain quarters, we see a tendency amongst a few to value the shadow of yesterday more than the substance of to-day. They hanker after the dog collar of the priest and covet the title of Reverend. He who is borne of the spirit needs no ordination, for his life embraces spirit, and his service must needs manifest that ‘spirit. The dawn of our Spiritualism is chasing away the dark shadows of a materialist world and dispersing the mists of theological dogma. This dawn is putting the light of natural revelation in the heavens and is colouring with roseate hues, this physical world in which we live. This beauty is the outcome of natural law and not ordination. Let us preserve the healthy quest for greater knowledge of the laws of spirit, confident that that knowledge, dedicated in service to our brother man, needs no sanctification or ordination. The pathway of spirit never divides us from our brother man; the clerical robe and the title of Reverend are relics of a fading tradition which tend to keep us apart.

Man is a Spirit

I have been talking as though we are growing old in Spiritualism. Let us remember and take heart that there is no growing old in spirit. Spirit knows no age and is concerned solely with the progressive expansion of consciousness. Too often we hear that our mission is to prove by proper evidences, individual survival. This may be our immediate aim, but it is certainly not our ultimate objective. That objective is to bring home to man the consciousness that he is spirit. In the religious sense, we are experiencing the birth of a new age. Individual experiment has displaced authority based upon belief alone, and as our Churches meet this new approach, so will they not be abandoned to the languishing care of the over sixties. In this connection both our speakers and our sensitives need to modernise their technique. Proving of survival is not enough.

It is but the doorway to spiritual unfoldment. Study groups, good though they be, are still not enough; for they deal with mental questions but to propound further questionings. Man will not be happy, and at home in his Church, until his mental understanding is happily married to a spiritual discernment.

We need Fellowship

We are not so much in need of more service and better evidences of survival, good as these may be; we need opportunities when man can enjoy fellowship with his brother man. Fellowship of happy social intercourse in the every day walks of life. Fellowship in those

mental realms where his problems can be handled sympathetically and resolved. Fellowship in spiritual companionship, where as Spiritualists, more evolved through development, we can by volitional effort surround our brother man with those uplifting forces which are calculated to induce that inner peace which is beyond all price, and so pave the way for the awakening of the new spiritual consciousness of the individual.

Spiritualism must never be separated from living; it must always be fuller and better living. It must permeate the workshop and the home alike and never be divorced from the practical problems of both. It seeks no authority, no dress, no titles; it seeks but to serve ordinary men and women in their home life. It helps the individual to distil the lesson from experience and with that greater wisdom which belongs to spirit, encourages the young and virile mental life to a fuller opportunity. Ever such is the mission of our spirit friends; theirs to co-operate with us in spiritual experiment, ours through experiment to grow in spiritual understanding.



Alfred Harold Leonard Vigurs – Died 1970
SNU President 1943-1948

Spiritualists' National Federation

Let us again say our aim is to attain "Unity with Liberty." In joining the Federation no society loses its independence, or has its property interfered with in any form whatever. We therefore urge societies and workers to join the Federation, and assist our efforts to give Spiritualism a bodily existence, and make it a power in the land for good.

The fourth Spiritualists' National Federation Conference was held at the Town Hall, Sowerby Bridge, on Saturday and Sunday, July 1st and 2nd, 1893. Our early Conferences were opened in such great splendour:

> "… in perfect weather, a large number of Spiritualists assembled at the Town Hall and, To the inspiring strains of a first-class brass band, paraded the principal streets of the town. The procession was headed by the Executive of the Federation, a splendid banner, and the smaller children of the Sowerby Bridge Lyceum were all dressed in white, and carried bunches of and other ornamental devices done in flowers and evergreens, which were greatly admired. Bannerettes were displayed in different parts of the long line of processionists made up of contingents from Halifax and West Vale Lyceums, delegates, associates, and visitors from various parts of the country—Brighouse, Huddersfield, Slaithwaite, Bradford, Leeds, and other places in the district being well represented. Between three and four hundred persons took part in this portion of the proceedings. The band ceased playing shortly after the procession had been set in motion, as a funeral party came past. A somewhat striking and appropriate incident—for do we not proclaim "There is no death our friends return; they live and love us still." Oh, if the mourners; only knew! A large number of spectators assembled in the streets and looked on with appreciative and admiring eyes. Spiritualism in Sowerby Bridge, by the sturdy and sterling character of its representatives has commanded respect from the townsfolk. The day for jeering has gone by for ever.

Our First National Hymn Book

It would be at the 1893 Conference under the Presidency of James Robertson of Glasgow that James Morse motioned the subject:

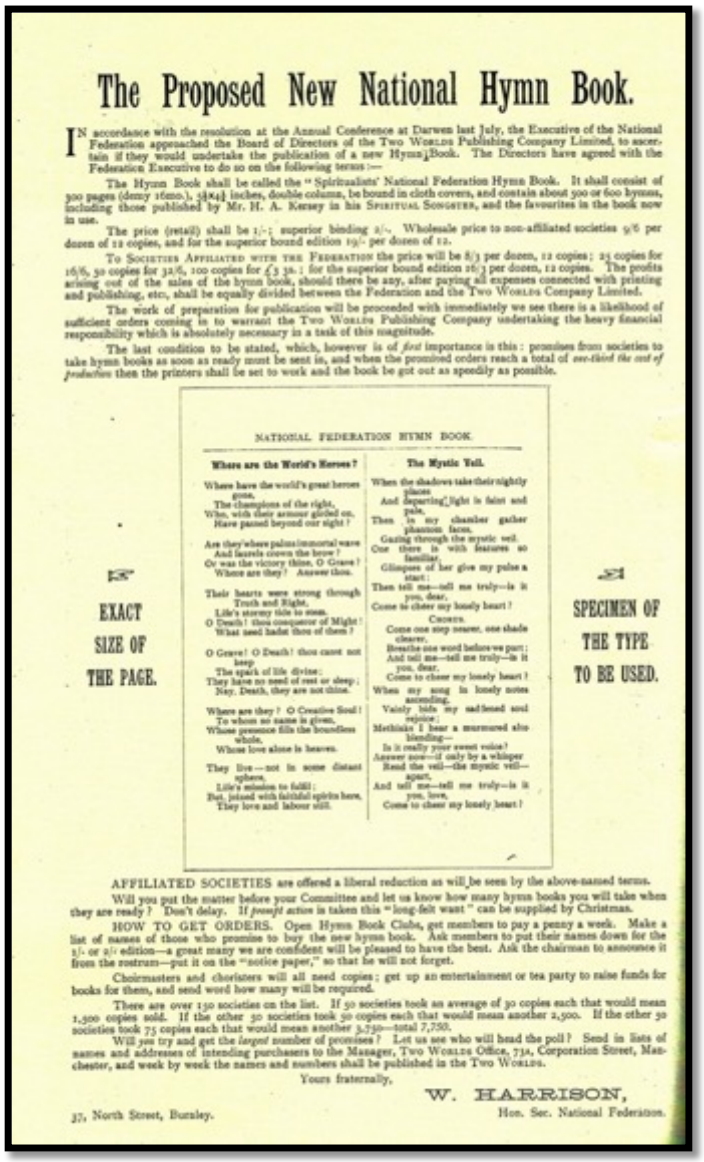
> Mr. J. J. Morse then moved Motion 5: "That a committee of selection of hymns for a National Hymn Book be appointed by this Conference, and be empowered to raise funds, and if sufficient money be forthcoming, to publish the same at the earliest opportunity."—Adopted by the Executive. Mr. Morse said the fact that we had too great a variety of hymn books and that we want a hymn book at a moderate cost was generally admitted. Mr. Duckworth thought a hymn book *should* be sent out by the Federation, so that the cause might have *one* book. The motion was carried and a committee (Messrs. Wallis, Morse, Chiswell, Holt, and Johnson) was appointed.

At the following 1894 Conference held at Darwen under the Presidency of Peter Lee little advance had been made at this time:

> "Rising out of the minutes of the last Conference, questions were asked as to what the National Hymn-book Committee had done. It was pointed out that although a Committee had been appointed, no secretary had been named, and everybody's business had been

nobody's. As a large sum of money would be needed, and the Executive had no funds to draw upon, nothing had been done. The materials for the hymnbook were in hand, but the difficulty as to meeting the cost of printing prevented action being taken. The outcome of the discussion was that Mr. J. J. Morse (London) proposed that the Special Hymn-book Committee be empowered to treat with *The Two Worlds* Publishing Co., Ltd., regarding the publication of a National Hymn-book, and the General Secretary be instructed to call that Committee together."

In the following year, 1895, progress was made in the task of choosing hundreds of hymns and finance. From May1895 the "Two Worlds" published a draft of the proposed National Hymn Book.



The Proposed New National Hymn Book.

IN accordance with the resolution at the Annual Conference at Darwen last July, the Executive of the National Federation approached the Board of Directors of the Two Worlds Publishing Company Limited, to ascertain if they would undertake the publication of a new Hymn Book. The Directors have agreed with the Federation Executive to do so on the following terms:—

The Hymn Book shall be called the "Spiritualists' National Federation Hymn Book. It shall consist of 300 pages (demy 16mo.), 5¼x4½ inches, double column, be bound in cloth covers, and contain about 500 or 600 hymns, including those published by Mr. H. A. Kersey in his Spiritual Songster, and the favourites in the book now in use.

The price (retail) shall be 1/-; superior binding 2/-. Wholesale price to non-affiliated societies 9/6 per dozen of 12 copies, and for the superior bound edition 19/- per dozen of 12.

To Societies Affiliated with the Federation the price will be 8/3 per dozen, 12 copies; 25 copies for 16/6, 50 copies for 32/6, 100 copies for £3 3s.; for the superior bound edition 26/3 per dozen, 12 copies. The profits arising out of the sales of the hymn book, should there be any, after paying all expenses connected with printing and publishing, etc, shall be equally divided between the Federation and the Two Worlds Company Limited.

The work of preparation for publication will be proceeded with immediately we see there is a likelihood of sufficient orders coming in to warrant the Two Worlds Publishing Company undertaking the heavy financial responsibility which is absolutely necessary in a task of this magnitude.

The last condition to be stated, which, however is of *first* importance in this: promises from societies to take hymn books as soon as ready must be sent in, and when the promised orders reach a total of *one-third the cost of production* then the printers shall be set to work and the book be got out as speedily as possible.

NATIONAL FEDERATION HYMN BOOK.

Where are the World's Heroes?

Where have the world's great heroes gone,
The champions of the right,
Who, with their armour girded on,
Have passed beyond our sight?

Are they where palms immortal wave
And laurels crown the brow?
Or was the victory thine, O Grave?
Where are they? Answer thou.

Their hearts were strong through Truth and Right,
Life's stormy tide to stem.
O Death! thou conqueror of Might!
What need hadst thou of them?

O Grave! O Death! thou canst not keep
The spark of life divine:
They have no need of rest or sleep;
Nay, Death, they are not thine.

Where are they? O Creative Soul!
To whom no name is given,
Whose presence fills the boundless whole,
Whose love alone is heaven.

They live—not in some distant sphere,
Life's mission to fulfil:
But, joined with faithful spirits here,
They love and labour still.

The Mystic Veil.

When the shadows take their nightly places
And departing light is faint and pale,
Then in my chamber gather phantom faces,
Gazing through the mystic veil.
One there is with features so familiar,
Glimpses of her give my pulse a start:
Then tell me—tell me truly—is it you, dear,
Come to cheer my lonely heart?

CHORUS.

Come one step nearer, one shade clearer,
Breathe one word before we part:
And tell me—tell me truly—is it you, dear,
Come to cheer my lonely heart?

When my song in lonely notes ascending,
Vainly bids my saddened soul rejoice:
Methinks I hear a murmured sad blending—
Is it really your sweet voice?
Answer now—if only by a whisper
Rend the veil—the mystic veil—apart,
And tell me—tell me truly—is it you, love,
Come to cheer my lonely heart?

EXACT SIZE OF THE PAGE.

SPECIMEN OF THE TYPE TO BE USED.

AFFILIATED SOCIETIES are offered a liberal reduction as will be seen by the above-named terms.

Will you put the matter before your Committee and let us know how many hymn books you will take when they are ready? Don't delay. If *prompt action* is taken this "long-felt want" can be supplied by Christmas.

HOW TO GET ORDERS. Open Hymn Book Clubs, get members to pay a penny a week. Make a list of names of those who promise to buy the new hymn book. Ask members to put their names down for the 3/- or 2/- edition—a great many we are confident will be pleased to have the best. Ask the chairman to announce it from the rostrum—put it on the "notice paper," so that he will not forget.

Choirmasters and choristers will all need copies; get up an entertainment or tea party to raise funds for books for them, and send word how many will be required.

There are over 150 societies on the list. If 50 societies took an average of 30 copies each that would mean 1,500 copies sold. If the other 50 societies took 30 copies each that would mean another 2,500. If the other 50 societies took 75 copies each that would mean another 3,750—total 7,750.

Will you try and get the *largest* number of promises? Let us see who will head the poll? Send in lists of names and addresses of intending purchasers to the Manager, Two Worlds Office, 72a, Corporation Street, Manchester, and week by week the names and numbers shall be published in the Two Worlds.

Yours fraternally,

W. HARRISON,
Hon. Sec. National Federation.

37, North Street, Burnley.

It can be noted in the draft:

"IN accordance with the resolution at the Annual Conference at Darwen last July, the Executive of the National Federation approached the Board of Directors of the TWO WORLDS Publishing Company Limited, to ascertain if they would undertake the publication of a new Hymn Book. The Directors have agreed with the Federation Executive to do so on the following terms:—

The Hymn Book shall be called the "Spiritualists' National Federation Hymn Book". It shall consist of 300 pages (demy 16mo.), 5½ x 4½ inches, double column, be bound in cloth covers, and contain about 500 or 600 hymns, including those "published by Mr. H. A. Kersey in his SPIRITUAL SONGSTER, and the favourites in the book now in use.""[17]

—~—☼—~—

[17] This was published in December 1891 and used by Spiritualist societies, Lyceums, public meetings and home circles, etc. It contained 176 songs, with music and sol-fa vocal score added – forming a musical supplement to the Lyceum Manual. By H. A. Kersey & S. M. Kersey. It was published in cloth binding at 4s. 6d for a single copy, with cheaper terms for multiple copies for societies and Lyceums.

In the December 27th 1895 issue of the "Two Worlds" came this notice:

SPECIAL NOTICE.

THE NEW HYMN BOOK OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL FEDERATION.

THE large number of hymns required, and the pressure of work at this busy season upon the printers, have rendered it impossible to get this book out before Christmas, as we had hoped to do. The work will, however, gain in completeness by the slight delay. It will be ready early in the new year, and will consist of 320 pages, and containing over 700 hymns. The One Shilling Edition will be bound in Strong Cloth Covers, and will be the best and cheapest book ever published in the interests of Spiritualism. The Two Shilling Edition will be bound in fine leather, limp covers, with the words "Hymn Book" in gold letters on the side. Both editions will have coloured edges.

To meet the wishes of friends, a still better binding in morocco, with gilt edges, will be done for Three Shillings each.

IMPORTANT TO SUBSCRIBERS.

To help meet the cost of production remarkably low *subscription prices* have been offered to societies affiliated with the National Federation. Now that the book is almost ready those subscription rates will not hold good, and societies wishing to avail themselves of those favourable terms *must* write and forward orders *and cash* at once. All orders booked to affiliated societies *this year* will be executed as soon as the books are ready, at the advertised *subscription* rates, but cash must now be sent in as speedily as possible.

TERMS TO SOCIETIES AFFILIATED WITH THENATIONAL FEDERATION, ON AND AFTER JAN. 1, 1896.

For the Cloth Bound Edition (1s.)—12 copies, 9s.; 25 copies, 18s. 6d.; 50 copies, £1 16s.; 100 copies for£3 11s.

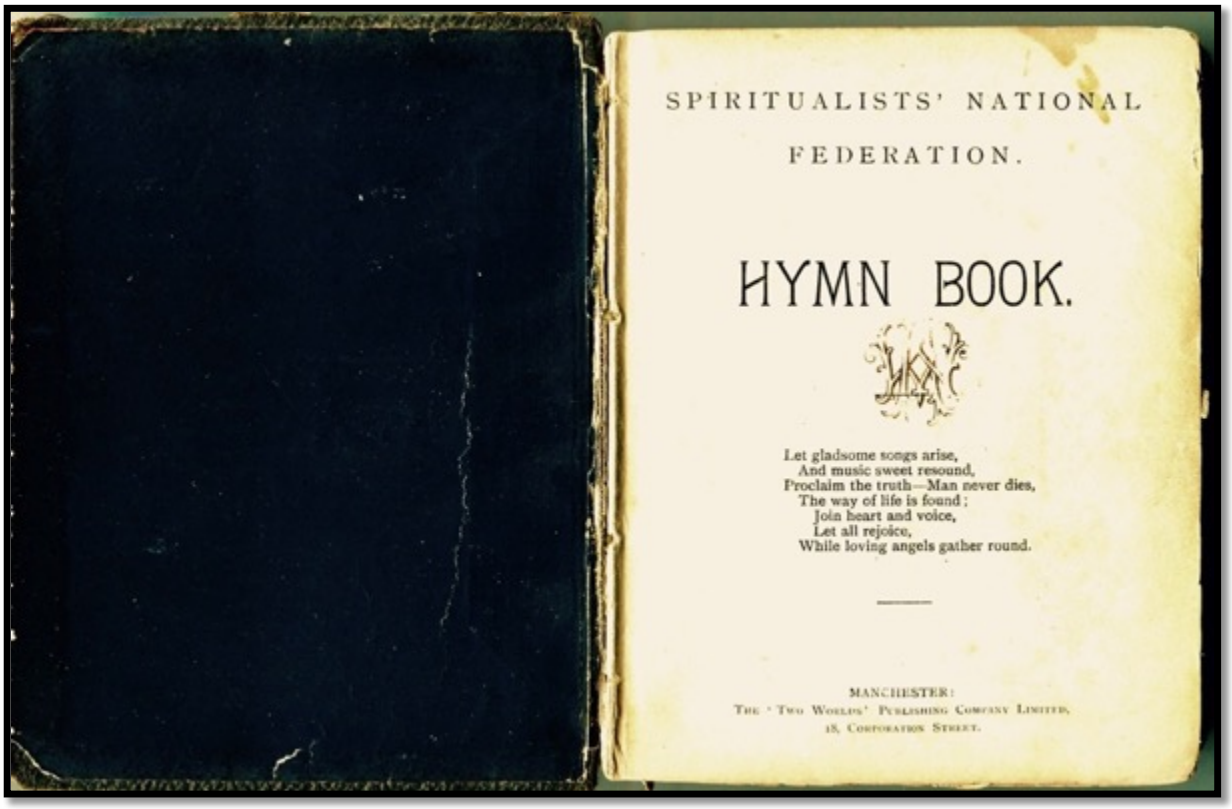
For the Leather Bound' Edition (2s.)—12 copies, 18s.; 25 copies, £1 17s. 6d.; 50 copies, £3 14s. 6d.; 100 for £7 8s. *Carriage forward in all cases*.

It appears that by May 1896 the hymn book was available from Edward Wallis, editor and office manager of the "Two Worlds"; the journal published on May 22nd:

SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL FEDERATION HYMN BOOK

THE NEW HYMN BOOK is a marvel of merit and cheapness, so it would be well for all Spiritualists to possess a copy. The print also is good, which is not usually the case with cheap books. The selection of hymns is almost, if not quite, all that could be desired; and the few to which some would take exception are just those which others would pick out as being of special interest. There is a brightness, cheeriness, and hopefulness all through, which is just what a hymn book should be. The absence of all theological teaching—except the fundamental truths that God is, the soul's immortality, and "the communion of saints"—should make it acceptable to all shades of religious opinions and beliefs. The old familiar hymns which have become as household words to Spiritualists are all in, and many more besides. There are hymns adapted for every occasion, and all one's varying moods find expression—even the most despondent, but they, like the rest, conclude with and inspire hope.

The contents included contributions written by well-known Spiritualists like William Denton, W. J. Colville, Edward Wallis and James J. Morse, etc. There was a total of 747 hymns and a section for a funeral service, graveside, etc. In more recent years SNU Ministers conducted funerals using the service by J.J. Morse, "When the spirit bids adieu to mortality"; this can be read at the end of an article on former SNU President Percy Wilson published on the President's page.[18]


SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL

FEDERATION.

HYMN BOOK.

Let gladsome songs arise,
And music sweet resound,
Proclaim the truth—Man never dies,
The way of life is found:
Join heart and voice,
Let all rejoice,
While loving angels gather round.

MANCHESTER:
THE 'TWO WORLDS' PUBLISHING COMPANY LIMITED,
18, CORPORATION STREET.

Copy in the Britten Museum & Library
Donated by Nellie Holliday, Armley SNU Church

Below is a quote from the Preface:

> THE rapid increase in the number of Spiritualists and in the size of the audiences attending our Sunday services, rendered a larger hymn book for our movement a necessity. To meet this want, the Spiritualist National Federation decided to act conjointly with the TWO WORLDS PUBLISHING CO., LTD., and the present volume is submitted to the friends of Spiritualism in the hope that it will be found serviceable and satisfactory.
>
> Its compilation has been a labour of love, falling mainly upon Mr. E. W. Wallis, who, among his manifold duties has found time to gather and arrange many favourite hymns, together with a number of new ones, and "revised versions" of such as were familiar from old associations, but unsuited to the new thought of our cause.
>
> Efforts have been made to secure variety and consistency. To present as many of the aspects of Truth and Love as possible, and yet avoid the extremes of Orthodoxy or Agnosticism.
>
> Our thanks are due to all those friends who have contributed to these pages, and especially to Mr. R. Phillips, Mr. John Page Hopps, Mr. Wesley Noakes, Mr. Gerald Massey, Mr.

[18] SNU website: http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/presidents

Thos. Shorter, Mr. J. Mc.Williams, Mr. E. Adams, and several others for original poems, and permission to use hymns already published elsewhere.

At the seventh 1896 National Federation Conference, held at Liverpool under the Presidency of A. J. Smyth, there was a report of good news:

> Mr. E. W. Wallis, as sec. of the Hymn Book Committee, sent a written report, which was read, to the effect that more than a third of the first edition of the Hymn Book had been sold, and that if societies continued to take it up in the same manner by the next Conference a second edition would be required.
>
> This was received and adopted with applause.

At the following 1897 Conference under the Presidency of Joseph Armitage at Blackburn we are given a breakdown on costs and issues sold, which must have been pleasing to all involved.

HYMN BOOK COMMITTEE'S REPORT

> Ladies and Gentlemen,—As Secretary of the Hymn Book Sub-Committee (and also as Manager of the Two Worlds' Publishing Co.), I am pleased to be able to report that 10,000 hymn books were printed, of which at the end of May last nearly 7,000 had been bound, and upwards of 6,300 had been sold.
>
> The cost of production up to May 31 was £270 8s. 7½d. for printing and binding alone. (This fact should be noted and borne in mind by those who are advocating another and larger type edition, which would require much more paper, and therefore make a larger and more expensive book) Nothing was charged for the work of compilation, and only £11 for all advertising done, making the total cost £281 8s. 7½d.
>
> All bills have been paid from the cash received from sales (except £l 7s. 6d. due for binding), and as the total receipts from sales was £285 17s. 8½d., there is a clear profit balance (after allowing for the £l7s. 6d. due for binding, as stated) of £31s. 7d. in hand, together with some 600 bound books in stock—worth £30 6s., and 3,000 books, unbound, worth at cost price £34 7s. 6d. Should these books be all sold (as I have no doubt they all will be, and most probably *before the next Conference*, if every Society will adopt them and push the sales)—should they all be sold, we may reasonably expect a clear profit of some £70 or £80 to be divided between the Federation and the Two Worlds Publishing Co., Ltd., who have done the work so agreed.—E. W. WALLIS.

The Spiritualists' National Federation was reconstituted in 1901, becoming known as the Spiritualists' National Union. The Conferences and the Annual General Meeting were mostly arranged for the first weekend of July. All unreferenced quotes in the above article are taken from the Conference reports published in the "Two Worlds"; for quote dates or further information please contact the editor.



THE PRESIDENT'S BADGE

SNU Presidents

Robert A. Owen
1925 – 1928



David R. Bruton
2010 -

History was continued at this year's Spiritualists' National Union AGM held at the Holiday Inn, Runcorn on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th July 2017 – President Bruton proudly wore the President's Badge of Gordon Higginson. Gordon was the second SNU President to die while in office, the first being Frank Blake (1938-1941), who died on March 1st 1941.

After Gordon Higginson's death on January 18th 1993 his President's badge was kept by his friend and successor as SNU President, Eric Hatton (1993-1996). After Eric's death on November 6th 2015 the badge was returned to the Union.

Following July's AGM President David Bruton ordained SNUi Chairman Arthur Plumpton on July 27th in the Sanctuary at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall. After the service David passed on the badge to be safely held and displayed in the Britten Museum & Library at Stansted Hall.

I later contacted David to ask if he knew the actual origin of the President's badge. He was only aware that it was worn by Gordon, adding that it was generally thought the badge was made for Gordon's term of office (1970-1993) around forty years ago. David also noted from the back of the badge that it was made in York; the inscription today is far from clear to read. I photographed the badge for our archives and with further conversation with David it was further revealed and unknown to everybody that the 2017 AGM was in fact a historic event, with our President wearing the badge!

The reverse side of the badge stated:

PRESENTED TO THE
S. N. U.
BY MR & MRS HENRY RICHARDSON
OF YORK
IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF BLESSINGS RECEIVED THROUGH
SPIRITUALISM

—~—☼—~—

The history of the President's badge is indeed solved. It was not forty years old, as previously considered, but ninety years old almost to the day of the 2017 AGM!



At the twenty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Union, held at Caxton Hall, Westminster and the Artworkers' Guild, Queens Square, Southampton Row, London, on July 2nd and 3rd 1927 respectively, SNU President Robert A. Owen was presented with a new President's badge. For many years, a farthing coin[1] was the symbol of office carried by the President of the Spiritualists' National Union; the story was already recorded in the Pioneer and partly quoted below:[2]

PRESENTATION OF A NEW PRESIDENTIAL BADGE

One of the most interesting events of the Conference took place on Sunday morning, July 3rd, when Mr. and Mrs. Richardson, of the York Spiritualist Church, presented the Union with a gold President's Badge. The Badge is in blue enamel on gold, with the name of the Union round the edge, the centre design showing the Setting Sun over the Book of Nature, with the words Light and Truth standing in relief. The back is suitably inscribed to commemorate the gift. It has a bar above on which is inscribed the word President.



Mrs. Richardson, in making the presentation, said that two farthings were once found in the collection at an annual meeting. She had discovered that one of them was put in by a resident of York. Whether the actual coin, which had served as a President's Badge for many years, was the York coin, she did not know, but it was appropriate that since the humblest coin of the realm had come from her city, a gift of the pure metal, gold, should also come from that ancient city, so closely identified with the introduction of Christianity into England. Mr. Richardson took up the thread and expressed the pleasure it gave him to have the honour of bestowing upon the Union some token of adornment to mark the growing honour and dignity of the great Movement of Spiritualism.

By the unanimous desire of the Conference Mrs. Richardson pinned the badge on the coat of Mr. Owen, who had been elected the previous day to the office of President for the third year in succession.

Mr. Owen returned thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Richardson for their generous gift; Mrs. Raymond and Mrs. Greenwood heartily supporting.

G.F.B.[3]

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

[2] See Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 2014: "Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists' National Union" and Vol. 3, No. 5, October 2016: "The 'President's Farthing'".

[3] George Berry, former SNU President (1920-1922). In 1922 the Union's General Secretary, Mr. Yates, was taken ill and the Union asked Berry to take up his position. He resigned as President to take up the position of SNU General Secretary, which he held from 1922 to 1932. He then continued as Organising Secretary and was the first

At the 1928 Annual General Meeting of the Union, held at Barry, Wales, July 7th, Robert Owen noted in his President's address on this day that he had completed 20 years' service on the Council, further stating he had decided on this occasion not to accept nomination for President and Vice-President, although he would continue as a member of the SNU Council.

It can be noted in some of the AGM reports that the retiring President passes on the Presidential Badge, which would have served:

Robert Owen
Ernest Keeling
John McIndoe
Frank Blake
John Stewart
Harold Vigurs
Lorraine Haig
Percy Wilson
Harry Dawson
Charles Quastel
John Winning
Charles Quastel
Gordon Higginson

It appears that with the sudden death of Gordon Higginson the badge was not passed down in the traditional way. Given his long term in office, the historic significance and origin of the badge was probably lost. President Bruton informed me, "I know Eric wore it when he became Honorary President of the Union;" what is clear is that President David Bruton has restarted, albeit unknowingly, the tradition of wearing the *original* President's Badge in the official role of SNU President – I have no doubt President Bruton, when the time comes, will pass the badge on to his successor.

I will take this opportunity to give a brief profile of our former President, Robert A. Owen, which is taken from the "National Spiritualist", September 1929, No. 63, Vol. VI:[4]

> Mr. Robert A. Owen was born at Bootle, Lancashire, Oct. 27th, 1881. His father was a native of North Wales. Robert was educated at St. John's Church Day School, which he left at at the age of 12 years to become a wage earner. When 9 years of age, he was brought into contact with the Lyceum at Daulby Hall, Liverpool and there began the life-long friendship with his colleague, Mr. A. Keeling. In these early years the gifts of clairvoyance and clairaudience were developed, and helped to bring conviction to his parents of the reality of a life beyond the tomb.
>
> In 1896, a Spiritualist Society and Lyceum was opened at Bootle, and young Robert transferred his membership to the new Lyceum. Here he graduated in the various offices of both Lyceum and Church. The Church was closed within a few years, and Mr. Owen went back to Daulby Hall, where he remained until his removal to Dublin in 1924.
>
> An ardent spiritualist throughout his life, Mr. Owen saw the birth of the South West Lancs and Cheshire Group in July 1904. He was appointed Secretary, a position he held for many years. When the Lancashire District Committee came into existence, Mr. Owen was elected its President, which he retained until his removal to Ireland.

President of the International Federation of Spiritualists (ISF). Under his presidency in 1925 the Council adopted the Sunflower Badge as an "International Spiritualists' Badge".

[4] See Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1, "The First SNU Journal".

He was elected to the National Council in 1908, and only retired this year after filling in succession the office of Vice-President, 1923–25, President 1925–28, and one year as Ex-President of the Union. He has thus completed 21 years, successive service on the National Council.

His interests have been particularly directed to organisation, propaganda, finance and education. As secretary of the Organisation Committee he was instrumental in getting a census of the Churches and their activities. Out of these labours there came the institution of two-fold membership, the Study Groups Scheme, and re-drafting of Rules for Churches, District Councils, and for the National Council.

He has been no less active in the Lyceum movement. He became District Visitor in 1904, and held all offices in the Liverpool Lyceum District Council. In 1907 he became Secretary of the United Lyceum District Council, and later its President. In 1908 he was elected to the Management Committee of the B.S.L.U. and was Vice-President prior to his election as President in 1911. Later in 1919, he became Treasurer to the Union, holding that office until his removal to Dublin.

This article, I believe, emphasises the importance of recording our history in the Britten Museum & Library and in publications like "Pioneer".

Otherwise the story of the "President's Badge" today would have remained unknown!



President David Bruton at the 2017 AGM wearing the "President's Badge"

Early Spiritualist Sunday Services



It is difficult to say when the very first Spiritualist Sunday Service took place but we know that the first successful attempt took place in London. The founder editor of the "Medium and Daybreak", James Burns, with the American medium James Martin Peebles (1822-1922), established Sunday services in London. Burns states in his journal on January 30th, 1874:

> "During the autumn of 1869 I was strongly impressed with the necessity for the establishment of a free platform for the advocacy of Spiritualism in London on Sunday evenings. I was on the outlook for a suitable hall, and would have made the attempt had my health permitted. It appears that the impression was a true prophecy, a habit of mind which is usual with me; but I was not to be the chief actor. About Christmas-time Mr. Peebles returned from the East, and he was impressed with the same necessity. We strolled out together and found the Cavendish Rooms a suitable place for making a commencement."

It was during these Sunday services that Mrs Emma Hardinge Britten delivered four of her Principles; please see "Pioneer", Vol. 1, No. 4, July 2014: "How Many Principles Made up Emma's "Creed of The Spirits"?"

It can be noted in "The Spiritualist", May 25th, 1877:

SUNDAY SERVICES IN SPIRITUALISM

> The rate of progress of Spiritualism in the provinces has been increased in several towns by means of regular Sunday services, and the question may well be raised why some not be started in London. The last which were carried on in the metropolis with any success were those at the Cleveland Hall, in which Mrs. Honywood took such an active and creditable part;[11] the admission was free, there were collections at the doors, the moderate balance of expenses was covered by subscriptions, and a variety of speakers occupied the platform.
>
> The next attempt failed, partly because free admission was prohibited, and the English public will not tolerate enforced payments for admission to religious services; another source of failure was that the same speaker was engaged night after night, till the listeners were wearied by the sameness; a third source of failure was that normal speakers were shut out, and that the expenses were heavy because every meeting was carried on under the auspices of a paid speaker.
>
> The success of the Sunday services at Liverpool for so many years has been due to the alternation of good normal with good trance addresses; the former being delivered free of charge considerably lightened each expenses of the meetings. In some respects trance addresses are not equal in quality and interest to those delivered in the normal state by intelligent and cultured men and women; but trance addresses are sometimes superior in ideality.
>
> Several intelligent Spiritualists would give Sunday evening addresses if invited. Mr. D. H. Wilson, who is now on his way back to London from Biarritz, once offered to deliver one; Dr. Maurice Davies, Mrs. Lowe, and others, might be invited to do the same; sometimes Mr. Morse and Mr. Colville might be engaged to give trance addresses. Collections at the doors would more than clear the expenses, because now London

[11] Mrs Honywood was a well-known Spiritualist who sat and reported on D.D. Home and was involved with the early psychic artist Georgina Houghton. She helped financially to support the Sunday Services.

Spiritualists can accommodate a good audience on their own premises without going to the expense of hiring a hall. At present metropolitan Spiritualists attend the church of Mr. Haweis more than any other,[12] there being no Sunday discourses in connection with Spiritualism at all approaching his in quality; still, we have all the materials among ourselves for good Sunday services: why should they not be used?

—~—☼—~—

James Burns later wrote, shortly before his death, in his journal, "Medium and Daybreak", May 4th, 1894:

SUNDAY SERVICES

The Institution originated and carried on Sunday services for ten years. They began in 1870 at Cavendish Rooms, with Mr. Peebles. Then came Mrs. Hardinge in Cleveland Rooms, and Mrs. Tappan in St. George's Hall and elsewhere. In those days these were great events, but they would not amount to much now. At the end of a series Mrs. Tappan and other workers fell away, and I was left with a debt of £30, which I made up by phrenological weekly meetings.

A year later the Spiritualists' National Federation, reconstituted in 1901 and becoming the Spiritualists' National Union, addressed some of the issues of presentation, for example:

Too long have we been satisfied with dull and dingy rooms in the back streets of our towns and cities; too long have we tolerated totally unqualified speakers and improperly conducted meetings, that cast a reflection upon our cause and discredit their promoters

The paper published below is taken from the "Two Worlds", July 19th, 1895:

Prepared to be read before the Spiritualists' National Federation Conference, Walsall, 7th July, 1895, by A. J. SMYTH. Hon. Sec., Birmingham Spiritualists' Union, and published by request of the Conference.[13]

The Best Mode of Conducting Sunday Services

RESPONDING TO YOUR REQUEST for a paper on this subject, we, in the midlands, are not insensible to the compliment, nor, indeed, to the responsibility of discharging this task under the penetrating rays from such a galaxy of northern lights. We are not slow to discern the worthy and invincible characters of so many Lancashire pioneers, nor the great significance of this representative, gathering, to which we extend the heartiest welcome, and readily join in your deliberations. Though divided by space in our respective spheres of action, we are united in purpose and sympathy. Urged forward by the same potent truths on the one side, and met by a bold negation or cankering error on the other; repelled, discredited, and thwarted in our efforts, we have often felt how lamentably inadequate have been our means and methods, in proportion to the work that remains to be done. From our several fields of labour, and, at least, of partial conquest, we now meet to combine our forces, mature our plans, and strengthen the bulwarks of our movement, whereby our position may be more secure, and our future operations more extended and effectual. Our "Sunday services" constitute, perhaps, the most important

[12] Haweis was a clergyman who strongly supported Spiritualism from the pulpit, as did Rev. C. Maurice Davies, who had repeatedly, on the platform and in the press, certified the reality of the phenomena. It is reported that neither of them had the slightest degree of ill-treatment by their ecclesiastical authorities.

[13] Mr A. J. Smyth was President of the National Federation in 1896 and died in October 1913, aged 60.

factor in our organic development. The "best mode of conducting" them is the special theme to which we invite your consideration. The title implies that there are several modes, and the "platform records," as well as recent discussions, plainly show that a variety of methods are employed, and a still greater variety of opinions exist.

These differences are not only natural, but essential, to all reformatory, healthy and progressive movements, and although we shall press, and continue to press hard, for the adoption of method, order and consistency (summed up in the one word "organisation") we would not, if we could, eliminate this diversity of opinion. Hopeless, nay contemptible, is that movement, that church or sect, religious, social or political, that would seek to enforce a rigid compliance with final and authoritative standards, and I take it, that nothing would more dangerously jeopardise our position, close the source of our strength, blight inspirational genius, and check spontaneous action than to enrol all mediums, speakers and workers into one monotonous conformity. The peculiar nature of mediumship, with its ever evolving originalities and unexpected manifestations, coupled with the complex and comprehensive problems of Spiritualism, cannot be narrowed and contracted into an *arbitrary* mould, or mode, without frustrating its aims and crippling its outspreading branches of growth and power. Let me then crave your indulgence, while indicating the general bearing and manifold objects of Spiritualism.

Had we a special doctrine to formulate, a creed to establish, our task would indeed be comparatively easy. But the subject, for the presentation of which you are seeking the best mode, deals with nothing less than the principles of life and the source of being. Spiritualism traverses the arcana of Nature and penetrates the archives of eternity; from science, with its crucibles for matter, to divinest spirit essence. Our seers behold a spiritual universe of unspeakable splendour, while our devotees labour for the elevation of our down-trodden race from a brutal and degrading slumdom. It is iconoclastic and revolutionary, yet it is constructive and peace-making. It is a sworn foe to blind belief and superstition, yet it proclaims a gospel of the unseen. It fights despotic powers with an unyielding tenacity, ye tit cherishes love for all humanity. It seeks to dethrone false gods, and expose sham religions, yet is profoundly reverential and exalts goodness. It opens wide the portals of freedom of thought and cosmopolitan associations, yet is most exacting in its psychological requirements. The superficial and half-informed, who cannot read between the lines, declare its pretentious an incongruous medley, without rhyme or reason, but here lies the secret of its strength. While it baffles and eludes the grasp of its adversaries, its own plan is being unconsciously outwrought, and withal it is amenable to an orderly, consecutive, and harmonious presentment.

Could we but recognise and apply Nature's divine principles of unity and diversity in their true proportions we should then establish organisation combined with liberty, which, thus rightly balanced, would ensure perfect harmony. Here lies the cause and the means of removal of many troubles.

Too much unity of organisation excludes diversity and liberty, while excess of the latter dissipates our strength and runs our efforts to waste instead of fruit. Or to put it in other words:—

1. Our *ideals* should embody *distinctive principles*; 2, Our principles should be formulated in definite methods; 3, Our methods should be consistent and practicable.

We may rail against formula, creed, and organisation, but we cannot move a step without them. We want, however, to reverse the old order and make our creeds subordinate to our ideals! To refuse organisation and ignore method for fear of being enslaved is at once a confession of weakness in yourself, and a mistrust of others. Are our ideals too big for our brains, that they are quite unmanageable? Are our teachings at

such a grandious pitch of superlative splendour that they cannot be reached by constructive methods? The point at issue is: Shall we have well ordered and fully equipped societies, with well-appointed officers, committees, stewards, specified objects, rules, and business regulations, with pre-arranged programmes of the several sections of work? Or, shall we rejoice in what we choose to call "individual freedom" and personal independence, relying upon the all-sufficient (?) resources of our own consummate skill and foresight, kick over the harness of discipline and constitutional procedure, and leaving the duties of societary work to haphazard and chance? As well might we ask which will wield the greatest power and influence, a disorganised mob or a well-trained army?

Spiritualists as a body are at present irresponsible and unprotected. Societies and speakers stand almost singlehanded and unsupported. The ranks, aye, eve our platforms, are open to the unscrupulous designs of all sorts and conditions of men. But, if I mistake not, we are on the eve of important changes. The time is ripe for a bold and decisive step, with added powers, to our *national organisation*, and notwithstanding the qualifying conditions I have advisedly set forth, I urge upon you, the *representatives of societies*, with all the emphasis I can command, the imperative necessity for the *unification and elevation* of this Spiritual movement.

Too long have we been satisfied with dull and dingy rooms in the back streets of our towns and cities; too long have we tolerated totally unqualified speakers and improperly conducted meetings, that cast a reflection upon our cause and discredit their promoters. While we encourage the humblest effort in the private home, where true sincerity and devotion prevails, let not the half-developed medium nor the coarse pretender be flaunted in public; but let the grovelling quack who fishes for fees, and the mercenary trader who seeks to puff his wares and nostrums from a spiritual platform, be effectively routed out. Let honest, earnest, and cultured speakers and mediums who devote their time and ability to the cause at the sacrifice of other prospects be properly paid, and a wholesome standard of efficiency be maintained; aye, let us respect our cause and esteem our truths so highly that we decline to sully them by permitting their presentation in any other than such fashion as will command the respect and confidence of all thoughtful and well-intentioned people.

Since writing, thus far, I have received a letter from Mr. Frazer Hewes, president of the Nottingham Spiritual Evidence Society, in which he says:—

I certainly think it ought not to be any longer possible for a medium, because he or she *is* a medium, to walk upon our platforms and give us away in the eyes of the public, as *many of them do* at present. There are a number who are developed neither morally, intellectually, nor physically enough to occupy such an important position, and I think the suggestion recently made to me by a worker, a very good one, viz.—that spiritualists of known good character, experience, and good judgment, should act on a committee of inspection, and report upon the qualification of every medium in the land, and publish a list of those who pass muster.[14]

With this I quite concur, as an immediate remedy, but something more searching, and a surer guarantee of actual knowledge and fitness, is needed. An examination on the lines of the Fowler Institute, might meet the case, before a Spiritual University has become a fact.

[14] This was mooted at the next 1896 Conference - please see "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 4, July 2015: "Early S.N.U Education History".

The "Ideal Religious Service," recently sketched by Mr. Wallis, has deservedly met with general approval. It was admittedly "less concerned with the *method* than the *spirit* of the service." To us is given the work of supplying the machinery, and I fear our time has hitherto been too largely occupied in excavating and clearing the foundation in order to fix the plant. The methods of an established society would scarcely be applicable to propaganda meetings, whose speakers and plans should be adopted according to the calibre of the people and requirements of the locality.

To a "stiff necked" people, without a sense of spirituality and freedom of thought, let such iron-willed veterans of our fraternity as friends Johnson[15] and Swindlehurst[16] open their cannonade, followed by questions and discussion to break down the orthodox conventionality let the chairman supply a few well-selected incontrovertible facts, and in due season let the gentler influence of some such trance speakers and clairvoyants as Mrs. Green and Mrs. Groom be brought to bear, and the whole capped by a magnificent oration from such speakers as Mrs. Britten, Mr. Morse, or Mr. and Mrs. Wallis.

But you are anxious to know of the best methods that might be approved in the "best-governed city of the world." I shall suppose that your society is thoroughly representative, vigorous, and progressive (therefore aggressive), keenly alive to its duties and obligations from every standpoint; that it possesses a general Information Department, worked in sectional order, offering facilities for all classes of inquirers, conducted by responsible officers of society, consisting of:—

1. Investigators' circles that deal with all the several phases, with only well-developed mediums.
2. Circles for the development of mediumship.
3. Courses of explanatory lectures.

Your Sunday services would then be relieved from the overstrain and confusion that so often arises through trying to crowd too much into it. It is impossible to cater for all and everything in one meeting; to give a reading, personal experience, invocation, trance address, psychometry or clairvoyance, questions, and discussion is to give a surfeit rather than an appetite. Let there be a little less, and let that be better done. Sunday services should be specially arranged for a family congregation, where husband, wife, children, and friends could mutually participate in the proceedings in a reverential and orderly manner. The noisy, demonstrative, and irrepressible members are best with an assembly of agitators, for they do not enter into the true spirit of a religious service as do the quiet and reflective, who are repelled by discordant discussions. An open service for sundry speakers may not be out of place occasionally on a Sunday morning, or written questions with a really competent speaker.

These several modes have done, and are doing, good service in their way, but for the most part we are reluctantly obliged to say are rough, bald, irregular, uncultured, and slip-shod, and at this present moment are shutting out many worthy people who would gladly join our ranks, and bring their family, if the conduct and tone of our services were compatible with our principles. I have no original or startling scheme to spring upon you that will revolutionise the movement. I abhor conventionality, yet I do like order. Religious services the world over are interspersed with music, singing, and exhortation,

[15] William Johnson, an early pioneer for National Spiritualism and organisation amongst Spiritualist Societies, and a founder of the SNU. Johnson was the last National Federation President and the first SNU President responsible for adding our Seven Principles to our constitution in the changeover of Federation to Union in 1901.

[16] James Swindlehurst, an early pioneer of National Spiritualism, holding various executive positions in the National Federation. At the 1895 Conference he was appointed Organising Secretary and frequently engaged in propaganda work for the Spiritualists' National Federation, etc.

and you scarce need me to tell you how many minutes to occupy for each, or what you shall sing and say. You know that your speakers should be engaged and advertised in advance; that your programme should be judiciously blended and balanced with normal and trance speakers of both sexes; that your stewards should be at their posts quite fifteen minutes before the commencement of service, to see that everything is in order; to conduct strangers to their seats, supply them with hymn books, monthly printed programmes of all meetings, to display and sell the literature. That the speaker should have a chairman to his liking, and the organist play his voluntary until the platform is occupied. A full choir fills the hall with a melody of music. The chairman, who will always be necessary with trance speakers, gives a well-selected and effectively rendered reading, and here, by the way, the movement could do with a specially compiled book for Sunday lessons. Another hymn, followed by invocation, and address of forty minutes' duration, chairman's announcements, comments, the collection, hymn**.** If clairvoyant descriptions are given, and in my opinion they should not be oftener than once a month, and then only with thoroughly developed mediums, the address should be shortened so as to close the service at eight o'clock.

Your Lyceum meetings in the morning or afternoon, so eloquently pleaded for by Mr. Kitson, should find a place in connection with every society, where all that is beautiful, bright, poetic, and invigorating should be taught.

However, there were other issues with the Sunday services. Mediums like Emma Hardinge Britten, James Morse and Mrs. Tappan – better known as Cora L. V. Richmond – were trance mediums and did not demonstrate evidential mediumship at the Sunday services. Some considered that evidential mediumship like clairvoyance should not be demonstrated at Sunday Services.

to be continued

Early Spiritualist Sunday Services – continued…

In the last issue of Pioneer we covered "The Best Mode of Conducting Sunday Services" and published a paper:

Prepared to be read before the Spiritualists' National Federation Conference, Walsall, 7th July, 1895, by A. J. SMYTH. Hon. Sec., Birmingham Spiritualists' Union, and published by request of the Conference.[16]

Pioneer received a lot of positive feedback from this article, which noted:

The "Ideal Religious Service," recently sketched by Mr. Wallis, has deservedly met with general approval. It was admittedly "less concerned with the method than the spirit of the service."

The article, "Ideal Religious Service", was published in the "Two Worlds", May 17th 1895, pages 302-305. It is of historical interest as to how our National Spiritualism was built in its public presentation of its philosophy. This is six years before the Spiritualists' National Federation was reconstituted, becoming the Spiritualists' National Union; so, prior to the introduction of our religious basis today:

The primary object of the Spiritualists' National Union is to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of the religion and religious philosophy of Spiritualism on the basis of the Seven Principles.[17]



It is interesting to note that although at this time Emma Hardinge Britten's Principles were not under consideration by the Federation there is a distinct flavour which runs through the ideas of an Ideal Religious Service within the Spiritualists' National Federation.

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

[16] Mr A. J. Smyth was President of the National Federation in 1896 and died in October 1913, aged 60.

[17] SNU Yearbook 2017.

AN IDEAL RELIGIOUS SERVICE FOR SPIRITUALISTS AND INQUIRERS.

By E. W. WALLIS.

—~—☼—~—

AS I AM TO SPEAK of religious services, I may be permitted to use as my text the following words from our good friend, Thos. Shorter:—

> That religion which most truly reveals to us the character of God; which gives us the clearest insight into our own spiritual nature; which finds us at our greatest depths; which meets most fully our souls needs; is the religion which proves itself to be the truest, and therefore the best.

Speaking for myself Spiritualism best fulfils the requirements set forth by Mr. Shorter, and is therefore the religion of my life.

There is an idea abroad that Spiritualists concern themselves mainly (if not exclusively) with seance-holding and hobnobbing with the "familiars" of mediums, vulgarly called "spooks," that they have no philosophy, no religion higher than "dancing tables," and are loose in their moral relations. Now this idea, like most popular notions, is very wide of the mark; but it exists. I have heard hundreds of people exclaim after hearing or reading a lucid exposition of our philosophy and teachings, "I had no idea Spiritualists believed that"; or, "If that is Spiritualism—I am a Spiritualist." Let me quote a few words from A. E. Newton, written upwards of a quarter of a century ago:—

> Spiritualism, in its broad sense, as a philosophical system, embraces whatever relates to spirit, spiritual existences, and spiritual forces; especially all truths relative to the human, spirit, its nature, capacities, laws of manifestation, its disembodied existence, the conditions of that existence, and the modes of communication between that and earth-life.

Take also this definition from Dr. J. M. Peebles, the spiritual pilgrim:—

> Spiritualism, in the general acceptation of the term, implies a recognition of God as the infinite spirit-presence of the universe, and of a *present* as well as past intercourse and communion between the inhabitants of earth and those peopling the world of spirits. It is a fact, and a life; in method it is phenomenal and philosophical.

M. A. Oxon truly said:—

> In days when a fading faith has relaxed its hold on human life, when religion as a binding power, is losing much of its vitalising influence and becoming less and less a factor in the formation of the national character, we are being by the mercy of that God whose response is never wanting to the aspirations of his creatures, brought face to face with the reality of our true spiritual existence.

An editor of a non-Spiritualist paper recently stated:—

> By every reasonable consideration, the belief which we call Spiritualism must be included among religions. It has become the rule of life to many thousands of intelligent people, earnest men and women, good citizens.

These extracts point to the fact that Spiritualism has a much wider application and a deeper significance than the simple act of intercourse with the departed. Let us not, however, despise the "dancing tables" nor the "rappers"; those same movements and messages have opened for

us doors into the unseen, have enabled us to identify the communicants, and given the basis of FACT to the philosophy—substantiating the intuitions and hopes of man by demonstrating that he is a spirit and enjoys continued conscious and progressive life. They carry us forward a stage, and enable us to comprehend the outworking of consequences on the spirit plane of existence. Thus the despised and rejected phenomena become the cornerstone of the Temple of our Faith and worship. The fact that man alone has ideals: that he alone is capable of interpreting the phenomena and entering into the purposes manifested in Nature and Humanity, is not only prophetic of his ultimate triumph, but is *evidence* of his spiritual nature. Religion, I contend, is the natural expression of man's consciousness of relationship to and dependence upon the Divine Spirit in feelings, thoughts and actions; his love for the beautiful, the true and the good manifested in his desires and endeavours to become all that his ideals of perfection present to him as the object of his life. Principal Caird truly says:—

> The religious impulse, the aspiration after God and after union with Him as the soul's true life, is grounded in the very nature of man as a rational and spiritual being. . . My life as a rational and spiritual being would be impossible, and my relations to Nature and Society would be baseless—save on the pre-supposition of an Infinite and Absolute Intelligence on which all finite thought and being rest.

Religion has also been defined "as the verification of the spiritual in human life." "For spiritual development religion claims a spiritual environment." I boldly claim that Spiritualism *has* verified the spiritual in human life; it has revealed the spiritual environment of man as a perpetually present fact, in a manner never attempted before. "It offers 'the substance of things hoped for (eternal life and spiritual communion) and the evidence of things unseen' (the world behind the veil)," and therefore Spiritualism is both fact and philosophy: science and religion. It is a knowledge and an inspiration: a revelation and a baptism. As Spiritualists we have a duty to perform, a truth to proclaim, a message to deliver, a path to open up, guests to receive, a life to live, a service of Love to render. Hence the necessity for an Ideal and for efforts to *realise* the ideal life—for *collective* as well as individual endeavours to lighten the path for those who sit in darkness, or mourn in the shadow of death: to recall the wanderer to the paths of wisdom and right, and help the weak ones who fall beaten in the strife.

It has been well said that "ideas rule the world"; that thoughts are-as real as things; nay, that things but imperfectly represent thoughts. Spiritualism stands for the Divine Ideal: for the man-spiritual; man the learner, worker, and lover; for progress here and hereafter. It teaches that to be good and to do good; to become better and more useful is the business of our life. It is not good for us to be too much alone. We are apt to grow morbid, selfish, isolated, proud, and opinionated. We need to mix with our fellows, it does us good to assemble for social intercourse, and we are equally benefited by association for spiritual fellowship and communion. Too much introspection and meditation are as dangerous as too little. Cloistered virtues are not usually robust; they seldom stand the strain when put to the test. Spiritualism proclaims the harmonial development of man on all planes of expression. It is as religious to be healthy, hopeful, happy and helpful as it is to pray, sing or preach. If I have read the message of the spirits at all clearly, their call is to life—full, free, buoyant, rounded and faithful—their behest is, "Be thyself, true to thy highest thought, and ready to march forward day-by-day to self-possession and obedience to the Right and True."

The world has witnessed many religions: many strivings of man to serve the gods, but the new gospel is "Render service to man, and thus do the will of God." Every altar, temple, ritual and theology has been man made; every act of homage or reverence was prompted from within. Idols represented man's ideals. Sacrifice, praise and prayer, uncouth or cultured, gave expression to the soul's cry for mercy, help, light and love. The birth place was ever the same—the human heart. All religious aspirations and intuitions are the out-breathings of the God-consciousness within us. As our needs become more clearly comprehended the great throbbing

heart of humanity will beat and burn with higher aims, more intelligent conceptions, and loftier purposes.

The same spirit that moved good men and women in all ages prompts us to search for and reverence the True, the Good, the Pure, and the Beautiful. We struggle to the light and cry for aid; we bend our energies to the task of combating error and overthrowing sin; we grapple with doubt and darkness, and seek to rescue the fallen and set free the captive, *because* we *must*, it is the command laid upon us, the Divine decree written in our spiritual constitution. It is the method of our education for the attainment of the purpose of our existence. The old gospel of fear (the doctrine of human depravity and divine fury) has no message for us. Our spiritual philosophy finds no flaw, no failure, no caprice, no vengeance—law and beneficence reign supreme. Order and harmony prevail, beauty is displayed in all form, and an anthem of praise reverberates throughout the universe. We need the trained eye, the listening ear, the interpreting mind and the responsive spirit, and then we feel there is—

One God who ever lives and loves—
One God—one law—one element:
One great supreme far-off event,
To which the whole creation moves.

The "Larger Hope," now budding on the Christian Tree of Faith, has blossomed in beauty and borne for us the fruit of Knowledge of continued conscious and progressive existence. Death has no terrors—we hear the joyous songs of the emancipated ones, and we too strive to sing a new psalm of life and love and gladness.

If religion is man's higher-self grown active and dominant; the going forth of the Divine *within*, seeking the Divine without; the cry of the child for its parent; the question man puts to the Universe, "What am I?" and answers in the very breathing it, then has Man-the-Spirit grown conscious of his birthright (sold for the mess of theological pottage) and regained his inheritance by second birth into spiritual liberty.

We take possession of "the promised land" by proving our fitness to enter upon its eternally progressive career of attainment of the ideal pure and perfect.

We know that Inspiration is a perennial stream flowing as full and free to-day as ever; that modern prophets speak as the spirit gives them utterance; that clairvoyant seers discern and describe some of the mighty host of witnessing spirits around about us. We know we cannot seek in vain, that every question can be answered, and the hungry heart can be filled, and we need a service to which we can invite the sad, the suffering and the weary that they, too, may delight in the liberty of the spirit, grow strong in the light of love, that they may look within and trust the God-powers of their own nature, aspire to gain the heights of strength, conquest and wisdom, and receive the answering baptismal outpouring of Love and Intelligence.

"We need a religious service for Spiritualists" because it is unwise to put new cloth into old garments; because the world has need of prophets and seers as in the past; because traditions limit, formality fetters, and the spirit that moves humanity to-day is freer, fuller and more distinctly *human* than in any preceding age; because ours is a gospel of life, not death, of reliance upon and love of truth, of progress here and hereafter, of self-cultivation, and the exercise of spiritual "gifts and graces."

It is almost ten years since M. A. Oxon said:—

> Some of us desire very much that there should be some available form of religions service expressive of our faith, which we could attend for worship, for instruction, perhaps for direct and elevated communion with those who have gone before.

For upwards of twenty years Spiritualists all over the country have been holding public religious Sunday services until we now have about two hundred meeting places, in which the Spiritual religion is proclaimed to congregations which will probably total, almost any Sunday evening, about 10,000 persons. Practical efforts have thus been made to provide for the religious wants of Spiritualists and Inquirers. The success of those endeavours varies I admit, and there are not a few complaints made because of lack of culture, ability and spirituality among workers and speakers; but we are all striving to learn, and experience is teaching us the better way to supply the conditions required for spiritual development. It is proverbially easy to find fault, but will those who see what is lacking, who feel the need for more efficient service, do their utmost to supply the deficiency? Helpers are wanted who will work for the ideal?

First and foremost it seems to me, our Ideal service must be *to others—not for ourselves* while the people die for lack of knowledge: not for ourselves while hot tears fall and hearts are torn with anguish: not for ourselves while sin-sick and suffering ones go blindly groping in darkness: not for ourselves while poor, oppressed and outcast brothers and sisters lack food and sell themselves to greed and sensualism: not for ourselves while false theology blinds the eyes and palsies the heart of so many thousands, darkens the present with dread, filling the future with horrors and enthroning as the God of their worship, a despotic, jealous and vengeful Deity.

By angel hands to us has been entrusted the spotless banner of the new dispensation of Spiritual Truth. Surely we should set it proudly floating in the breeze in its purity, a challenge to all the world!

From the unseen we have received that pearl of great price knowledge—certainty regarding the hereafter—surely it is the least we can do to give it the most perfect setting? Surely the consecration and presentation of the best we have and are is not too much to render in this Divine service! Our advocates, teachers, mediums, exponents call them what you will—should surely be capable, spiritually minded, earnest, cultured and devoted, that the best possible conditions may be offered to advanced and enlightened inspirers, and that they may do themselves and the great theme of their inspirations justice in the minds of their hearers.

Our religion does not *bind us back*; the "dead hand of the past" does not fetter our freedom. No *written* word weighs upon us with false authority. We follow Truth, and *re-read* the everlasting problems-of-being in the light of the newest facts, and the knowledge of Life and Immortality brought to light by angel ministry. We are free to stand erect, conscious sons of God, knowing that the body is His temple for our use; we dare to think, decide, and act for ourselves. We own no man or spirit *master*, but lovingly accept the kindly aid of sympathetic and wise preceptors in or out of the body. I think that the Ideal religious service is the one that best enables us to discover truth, to wisely apply knowledge in our daily life, to proclaim the truth by example, influence, and precept.

In these days, when such stress is laid upon "environment," we must surely recognise that if we cannot succeed in transforming the homes of the people, to make them perfect and artistic, we may at least try to make their "home" for Sunday services beautiful! Our temples should be noble in architecture, well ventilated, lighted, clean and warm, with good acoustic properties, adorned with statuary, paintings, and where possible, flowers and shrubs. If harmony is heaven's first law (and Spiritualists should surely realise how necessary it is for securing good conditions and spiritual results), then our Ideal service should include the finest instrumental and vocal music attainable. The choral services of the Churches have met a want for their worshippers and we too must supply the needs of men. Congregational singing of hymns of praise and thanksgiving, well selected and appropriate solos, duets, anthems, glees and psalms could and should form part of our service.

We should assemble for mutual encouragement to hearten one another in good works, to foster the aspirational mode of spirit-expression and lay ourselves open for, and become receptive to, inspirations and baptisms of power and love from the ministering ones. We should send forth "the soul's sincere desire," and rise on the wings of true prayer into accordant and responsive relations with the ever-present Divine Spirit. Individually, this should be our mood when we enter the Spiritual Temple, and the speaker when invoking Divine aid and Spirit ministrations should feel the needs of all and strive to breathe their cries to the unseen. Readings, culled from the world's best teachers, thinkers, spiritual leaders and poets, of an instructive, helpful and harmonising character should be given at each service. No reading should exceed ten minutes, and if two are given in one service fifteen minutes for both would ordinarily be sufficient. These would need to be judiciously selected, and should be read with proper care and emphasis and elocutionary effect either by the officiating speaker or the chairman. The address, as a rule, should not exceed forty or forty-five minutes, and in my opinion, should be expository, practical, human, suggestive, sympathetic, consolatory, thoughtful, aspirational illustrative, spiritual, constructive, comforting, educational, exalting and loving.

Our present method of frequent change of mediums or speakers, while it affords variety, does not I think tend to stability. Our societies are too much like bodies without a head; they lack a centre or rallying point, and little or no opportunity is offered to speakers, normal or inspired, for consecutive constructive work. Worse still, there is hardly any possibility of the formation of those associations, relations and attachments which bind preacher and church together; which win for the teacher the lasting esteem and love of his hearers, and afford scope for mutual helpfulness. We are too diffusive, we squander our means and our people; above all, we dissipate those very sentiments and emotions which we seek to foster. A *good* man (or woman) will recommend the principles he or she may advocate—character, earnestness, fidelity, honour and goodness in any public worker will cause people who admire those qualities to respect and rally round him, and it is not necessarily the most educated, fluent, or eloquent orator who wins the heart and elevates the moral and spiritual tone of the listener. After all it is this *human* relationship—this touch that makes us kin—that links us heart to heart and makes us true friends and comrades, united in sympathy, service, desire and endeavour, life and love.

In connection with every meeting place there ought to be ladies and gentlemen, either appointed or volunteers, who would act as stewards, give a welcome word and smile to visitors, conduct them to a seat, lend them a hymn book, minister to their comfort, and make them feel that they have gone into a friendly human family, not among a lot of intellectual icebergs or frozen respectabilities. Four walls do not a prison make, neither is a palace of necessity a *home*. Home is where the sweet love emotions prevail, where courtesy, mutual affection, consideration and patience preside, where each one holds the other in dear esteem and delights in serving—aye—"in honour preferring one another," and in such an atmosphere the truest religious service and the sweetest spirit intercourse and *spiritual communion* can take place. My ideal of a religious service is where spirit responds to spirit, thought answers thought, and love-links hold hearts together in sweetest harmony.

The service which meets the needs of the Spiritualist will in the main meet the needs of the Inquirer, for he too wants to know and needs to be spiritually harmonised and enlightened. But he asks more at our hands. He says: you tell me there are no dead, that the departed return, that mediums are spirit-guided, that *my* dear ones can come back. Your talk is good and sounds well, but is it true? give me evidence; not faith, but fact.

This leads to the vexed question, should clairvoyance be exhibited at our Ideal service. I say emphatically "Yes"—if it is clairvoyance. Let the messages be given, the descriptions of the spirits be made, and if possible the facts and names stated which prove identity. Then our

claims are substantiated and the inquirer does not go empty away. I have a great deal of sympathy even with Spiritualists who *long* for the touch of the vanished hand, the sound of the voice that is still, the sign or message from the loved one behind the veil. What a glad thrill it gives us even now to receive a greeting from, or have a clear description of, an old friend. No time is too sacred for real spiritual intercourse and no hour is secular enough for impudent fraud or vulgar pretence. In the Ideal Service I have in mind mediums whose gifts have been well and wisely cultivated will have their place as speakers and seers. The evidence real evidence, will accompany the spoken word, and the tears will be wiped away and the broken hearted will be healed and comforted. Suppose ten minutes or a quarter of an hour were devoted, after the address and following some beautiful singing, to "descriptions" of a clear and definite character. The service need not last more than an hour-and-a-half, but if only one or two visitors go away convinced that the "seer" has really discerned and faithfully delineated their dear departed; if but a few words of love in the well-remembered and characteristic manner; if but a few facts have been given of a convincing character they *are* facts. In no other service will the inquirer get such a response to his cry, and we should be careful lest we grow too proper and punctilious and respectably conventional, and shut the opening door in the face of the spirits who would return and the mourners who would gladly receive them. Let us at least keep the gates ajar and if possible fling them wide and wider open by the intelligent study, development and exercise of mediumship in its highest and most spiritual forms. MORE and BETTER mediums are needed for our Ideal service.

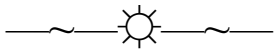
I would not depreciate the value of clear and forcible arguments, of intellectual acumen and sound logic, of brilliant oratory and well rounded periods, of grammatical excellence and defensive, critical, sarcastic, expository ability and skill, all these are useful and necessary in their place, but after all that is truly spiritual which helps us, and that helps us which touches the source of our emotions, desires, and purposes. We are all very human. Life is full of burdens, crosses, losses, griefs, heartaches, and sorrows, and one wants a refuge—a haven of calm, a home of charity and love, a well-spring of strength and comfort. Our *ideal* service, it seems to me, must be *spiritual*—should supply us with healing for the mind, balm for our oppressed spirits, light on the path of life, and practically offer the invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," not the rest of inaction, but the rest of change of occupation and restoration. Our Spiritual Church should correspond to the pool where the angels visit us, and by stirring the magnetic and spiritual waters afford us renewed health, so that we go forth invigorated and capable. I am more concerned about the *spirit* of our service than about the methods—they will come. It seems to me we need to clearly work up to the ideal that our services are to help us to be better men and women, kindlier, sweeter and wiser: more tolerant, patient, sympathetic and helpful, less harsh and condemnatory, more forgiving and fraternal: for we shall all have to learn the lessons here or hereafter, and why not *now*?

I think if we once get "into the spirit" and respond to the spirit of a spiritual Spiritualism our services will *of necessity* become more orderly, more devout and worshipful, more cultured and dignified, more religious and inspiring. It seems to me that the *ideal* of our service *must* be SERVICE: to sow seeds, and ourselves be exemplars of the better way. Everything depends upon the MOTIVE. Purity and earnestness dignify even inefficient service: Love is the solvent of bitterness and strife. If we are single-minded and have at heart the good of others, our Temple will be one of Harmony, our altar will bear the offerings of Love and Good will, our sacrifice will be the acceptable service rendered to others, and our psalms will be the spontaneous songs of gladness of the spirit recognising its Divine origin and destiny of endless progress. Spiritual things will be spiritually discerned, wrongs will be righted, errors outgrown, follies repented, and hearts re-united; the purpose and beauty of life will be revealed and the Wisdom and Love of the supreme made manifest in view of the final Perfection and happiness of all.

Science herself would lose her fearless love of truth, were it not that religion fed its secret springs; social reform would lose its motive and inspiration, literature and art their beauty, and all human life its sweetest and tenderest grace, did not religion evermore create the insatiable hunger after perfection in the soul of man. Bright, cheerful, ennobling, stimulating, emancipating, religion is the greatest friend of humanity, ever guiding it upward and onward to the right and the true—aye, and to all we yearn for, if, as we believe, the right and the true are indeed the pathway to God.

Worship God by doing good:
Works, not words; kind acts, not creeds:
He who loves God as he should,
Makes his heart's love understood,
By kind deeds.
Be it thine life's cares to smother,
And to brighten eyes now dim;
Kind deeds done to one another
Unto God are done, my brother,
Unto Him!

—*Selected.*



New Year Greetings from our President

January 1928 – SNU President Robert Owen's New Year's Message:[1]



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

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

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

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

[1] Published in the "National Spiritualist", the official journal of the Spiritualists' National Union Ltd.; please see the first volume of Pioneer for information on the "National Spiritualist" journal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With fraternal greetings to all at home and abroad.

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



It can be noted in Pioneer that it was during Robert Owen's Presidency (1925-1928) that the first official President's badge was presented to the Union in 1927. For many years a farthing coin[2] was the symbol of office carried by the President of the Spiritualists' National Union; the badge was misplaced for some years but, thankfully, was found and worn by SNU President David Bruton at the 2017 AGM.

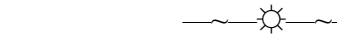
See Vol.4, No.4, August 2017 for the full story.





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

THE PRESIDENT'S BADGE AND FARTHINGS AGAIN!



It's always nice to receive feedback on the various Pioneer articles. Some of the research and subjects are open-ended, rather like a jigsaw puzzle, with vital pieces of information not yet uncovered or lost. I wrote an article on the President's badge, which was published in Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 2014. This noted that SNU President Robert A. Owen had been presented with a new Presidential badge at the twenty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Union, held at Caxton Hall, Westminster and the Artworkers' Guild, Queens Square, Southampton Row, London, on July 2nd and 3rd 1927.

For convenience, I publish the statement again:

> The report below is taken from the first official journal of the SNU, the *National Spiritualist*, August 1927:
>
> **PRESENTATION OF A NEW PRESIDENTIAL BADGE.**
>
> One of the most interesting events of the Conference took place on Sunday morning, July 3rd, when Mr. and Mrs. Richardson, of the York Spiritualist Church, presented the Union with a gold Presidential Badge. The Badge is in blue enamel on gold, with the name of the Union round the edge, the centre design showing the Setting Sun over the Book of Nature, with the words Light and Truth standing in relief. The back is suitably inscribed to commemorate the gift. It has a bar above on which is inscribed the word President.
>
> Mrs. Richardson, in making the presentation, said that two farthings were once found in the collection at an annual meeting. She had discovered that one of them was put in by a resident of York. Whether the actual coin, which had served as a President's Badge for many years, was the York coin, she did not know, but it was appropriate that since the humblest coin of the realm had come from her city, a gift of the pure metal, gold, should also come from that ancient city, so closely identified with the introduction of Christianity into England. Mr. Richardson took up the thread and expressed the pleasure it gave him to have the honour of bestowing upon the Union some token of adornment to mark the growing honour and dignity of the great Movement of Spiritualism.
>
> By the unanimous desire of the Conference Mrs. Richardson pinned the badge on the coat of Mr. Owen, who had been elected the previous day to the office of President for the third year in succession.
>
> Mr. Owen returned thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Richardson for their generous gift; Mrs. Raymond and Mrs. Greenwood heartily supporting.
>
> G.F.B.[14]

[14] George Berry, former SNU President 1920-1922.

Later, in Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 5, October 2016, a profile of SNU President Harry Dawson (1953-1958) was published, and quoted from a profile originally published in the "Two Worlds", April 7th 1956:

> "So he set out upon the road that was to lead him to the highest office among the Spiritualists of Britain—and an inheritance of one farthing. For many years that most humble of coins was the symbol of office carried by the president of the Spiritualists' National Union—the post now held by the salutary septuagenarian of whom you are reading."

I noted: "*Can any reader shed any more light on this historic farthing, which once served as the 'symbol of office'?* [15]

Then in Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 4, August 2017, it was reported:



History was continued at this year's Spiritualists' National Union AGM held at the Holiday Inn, Runcorn on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th July 2017 – President Bruton proudly wore the President's Badge of Gordon Higginson. Gordon was the second SNU President to die while in office, the first being Frank Blake (1938-1941), who died on March 1st 1941.

After Gordon Higginson's death on January 18th 1993 his President's badge was kept by his friend and successor as SNU President, Eric Hatton (1993-1996). After Eric's death on November 6th 2015 the badge was returned to the Union.

Following July's AGM President David Bruton ordained SNUi Chairman Arthur Plumpton on July 27th in the Sanctuary at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall. After the service David passed on the badge to be safely held and displayed in the Britten Museum & Library at Stansted Hall.

I later contacted David to ask if he knew the actual origin of the President's badge. He was only aware that it was worn by Gordon, adding that it was generally thought the badge was made for Gordon's term of office (1970-1993) around forty years ago. David also noted from the back of the badge that it was made in York; the inscription today is far from clear to read. I photographed the badge for our archives and in further conversation with David it was further revealed and unknown to everybody that the 2017 AGM was in fact a historic event, with our President wearing the badge!

The reverse side of the badge stated:

PRESENTED TO THE
S. N. U.
BY MR & MRS HENRY RICHARDSON
OF YORK
IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF BLESSINGS RECEIVED THROUGH
SPIRITUALISM

Thus the original badge presented to the Union in 1927 was now safely reunited with the Union; at the time of the article it was ninety years old and worn by many of our Presidents, holding immense historic value to the SNU.

—~—☼—~—

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

A happy end to the lost President's Badge! I then received an e-mail regarding the Pioneer article just referred to by Stephen Taylor which is quoted below:



"I was fascinated to read in your excellent 'The Pioneer' about 'The President's Farthing' because it does at last shine some light on a mystery that has puzzled me for quite a few years now but also opens up a few new mysteries, I feel.

Briefly, my godfather Harold Barnett was ordained as a Minister by Gordon Higginson on 3 December 1972 at College Road Church in Doncaster. Picture 1 shows them shaking hands after the ordination but there are a couple of things to notice about the picture.

Firstly, Gordon wore the 'President's Badge' on a blue sash around the neck with a solid connecting piece between the banner and the medallion, as can be clearly seen if you zoom in; this was, I recall, how he thought the badge was intended to be worn, since he thought it far too large for the lapel.

Secondly, Gordon asked that my godfather don his 'Sunflower' medallion with a blue sash for the ordination, because, as I recall, he did not seem to care for the purple sash that the Minister's medallion was historically presented with.



Picture 2 shows both the Minister and Sunflower medallions (not shown), as well as the other object that was stored in the box with them, a 1916 George V farthing, which I have tried to show in better detail.

Until reading your writings I had never had a clue as to what this coin was doing in the box, and I cannot say if Gordon gave it to my godfather, but it does seem more than a little coincidental that such an old farthing should be in there as well."

Editor's note:



The original 1927 report clearly states that it was a badge which was presented to the then President Robert Owen; today it is still a badge insomuch as it has a pin to attach to the lapel. I guess it could have been worn or adapted to be worn "on a blue sash around the neck", as shown in the ordination of Harold Barnett conducted by Gordon Higginson in 1972.

It certainly appears to be the original badge, with its shape, etc.

The most important and interesting aspect of the e-mail is: did Gordon pass on to Minister Harold Barnett the "President's Farthing", carried by the previous Presidents of the Spiritualists' National Union as "the symbol of office"?

The Constitution of the Spiritualists' National Federation

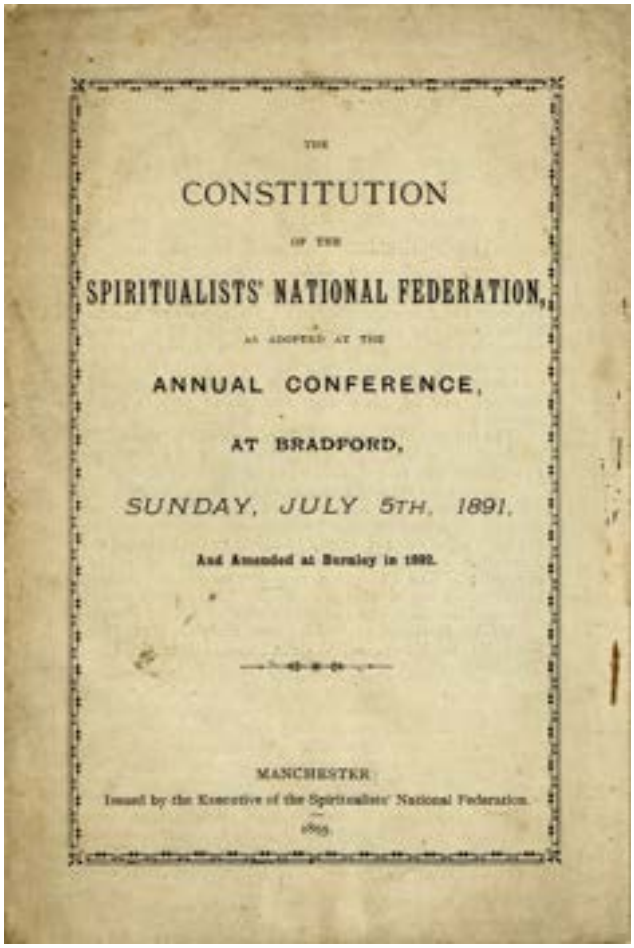
Pioneer has covered much on the formation of the Spiritualists' National Union. Vol. 1, No. 1, August 2013, brought attention to the "National Conference of British Spiritualists", held on July 6th, 1890 at the Assembly Room of the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester. In the following July this became the "Spiritualists' National Federation", as detailed in the article below.

Pioneer has addressed some of the advancements made within the National Federation:

> The formation of the early education—certification of speakers/mediums etc., this was approached at the Seventh Annual Conference of the Spiritualists' National Federation held at Daulby Hall, Liverpool on July 4th & 5th 1896 under the presidency of A. J. Smyth. Please see Vol.2 No.4 July 2015.
>
> The formation of the National Federation Fund of Benevolence founded by Mrs Minnie Harriet Wallis which continues today.[5] Please see Vol.1 No.3 April 2014.
>
> The introduction of our first hymn book is given in Vol. 4 No.3 June 2017: "Spiritualists' National Federation – Our First National Hymn Book".
>
> In 1901 the "Spiritualists' National Federation", was re-constituted becoming the Spiritualists' National Union. The transition was rather complicated and took over five years from when Thomas Todd first broached the matter at the 1896 Federation Conference until the Federation was wound up and its affairs handed over to the Union at the July 1902 Federation Conference. This is detailed in Vol.3 No.1 February 2016: "National Federation to National Union".

Below is published the Constitution of the Spiritualists' National Federation, "as adopted at the Annual Conference at Bradford, Sunday, July 5th 1891 – And Amended at Burnley in 1892". This was issued by the Executive of the Spiritualists' National Federation in 1895 at Manchester:

> This organisation consists of affiliated Spiritualist Societies and Associate members. Its objects are to unite Spiritualists and strengthen the movement by an annual moveable Conference; by propaganda work in new districts; by co-operation with existing Societies to spread the truth; by the distribution of literature; by public and semi-public meetings, and by such other methods as may be found necessary.


THE

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL FEDERATION,

AS ADOPTED AT THE

ANNUAL CONFERENCE,

AT BRADFORD,

SUNDAY, JULY 5TH, 1891.

And Amended at Burnley in 1892.

MANCHESTER:

Issued by the Executive of the Spiritualists' National Federation.

1895.

[5] Fund of Benevolence (FOB): https://www.snu.org.uk/appeal/fund-of-benevolence

The support of all sincere Spiritualists will be thankfully received. The Hon. Sec. will gladly supply all information to inquirers who enclose a stamped envelope for reply.

Societies are earnestly requested to affiliate, terms being a subscription of not less than one penny per member per annum. Spiritualists may become associate members on payment of 2s. 6d. per annum, subject to the action of the Executive, and shall be entitled to vote at the annual conference. The Federation year commences in July, and subscriptions are payable in advance. This applies also to Associate members who pay *no*t *less* than 2s. 6d. per annum.

Mr. W. Harrison, 37, North Street, Burnley, is the Hon. Sec.; Mr. R. Fitton, 44, Walnut Street, Hightown, Hon. Treasurer.

~—☼—~

THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL FEDERATION.

"Organisations we must have for work: let them be a thousand times multiplied. We must unite, or do but little of what is so much needed. Let it be a union of free men for the enlightenment and up-building of mankind."—WM. DENTON.

Every movement that has made its mark on the pages of history was at first a "forlorn hope"; advocated by isolated individuals who met with scorn and persecution. Then, when numbers increased, bands of earnest and enthusiastic workers began to be formed; they became too numerous and too powerful to he laughed down or ignored, and their enemies began to leave them severely alone.

This stage is always a most trying one for the new movement. Opposition supplies a spur, but indifference, or neutrality, leaves the workers without foes to fight, and necessitates a new course. They must demonstrate that they are *builders*. They must prove that the new ideas can be practically applied in daily life. The scattered forces must be gathered, a plan, and unity of aim and action, must be manifested. The ability of the workers must be displayed in the new direction of *con*structive work—of organised systematic efforts, with a common purpose—a coherency of ideas and methods must be developed. The new cause is on trial. If its friends and advocates can demonstrate its right to survive—by its fitness to meet man's needs and benefit the race—then those who hold aloof will be won to its support and the third stage, viz., that of an established and recognised body is achieved, and the hostility and indifference, or friendly neutrality, give place to active participation and sympathetic support.

Modern Spiritualism has outlived the first stage—*real* antagonism is practically a thing of the past.

We are passing through the second and critical period, and have to prove ourselves capable of self-government; that our Spiritualism is a vital power for good. That we are earnest, determined, and capable. That our principles not only benefit us, make us better, wiser, and truer; but that they are capable of universal application, and will render services of good to humanity. That, indeed, *because* we are Spiritualists we are reformed and reformers—co-operating harmoniously that truth may prevail, knowledge increase, and spiritual progress be effected.

The third stage is rapidly opening out.

Societies of earnest and self-sacrificing Spiritualists have been formed which are becoming educational centres of spiritual activity, and the movement is attaining the importance, proportions, and dignity of a *national* character.

Already for some years a National Federation of Spiritualists has existed. Several very successful representative annual Conferences have been held of delegates from affiliated Societies and of Associate members, and a good deal of propaganda work has been performed to spread the light and consolidate the movement.[6]

The Federation is an organisation for *work—not* a theological institution. As will be seen by the Constitution, it consists of duly constituted Societies and Associate members—namely, sympathetic and earnest Spiritualists, who desire to support the effort now being made to unite the Spiritualists of the kingdom into one fraternal co-operative body.

Union, with liberty, for the good of humanity, is practically the object of the Federation. And all Spiritualists who have the welfare of mankind at heart—who desire that the facts of spirit-communion should be known and enjoyed by all men, and the comforting and salvatory influence of the ministering spirits, together with the enlightening and stimulating power of the Spiritual philosophy, be experienced by the millions who are to-day in darkness, ignorance, and the fetters of fear—all who desire to see Spiritualism a strong and compact movement—a mighty power for good in the community, are sincerely urged to become associate members, and strengthen the hands and encourage the hearts of those who have so zealously and effectually laboured to unite our scattered forces, to help the weak, and foster a spirit of amity and brotherliness in the greatest movement of modern times—THE NEW SPIRITUAL DISPENSATION which is destined to become the RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

Much good work has already been accomplished. The enthusiasm displayed at the last and most successful conference encourages the Executive to confidently appeal for liberal donations and earnest support. "Organising workers" will be appointed and sent all over the country as missionaries carrying the glad tidings "there is no death" to many a sad and suffering soul. A beginning has already been made, and much good may be done in this direction. A paid Secretary is needed who can devote his whole time and energies to the work, correspondence, and organising labours, but more and ample funds are required to effect this desired change, and other important duties which the growth and exigencies of the movement make imperative if it is to be carried—-and it *must be*—to a successful issue.

Spiritualism is the work of the spirit world; we are striving to faithfully follow the light and leading from the other side, and are assured that the unseen hosts who promoted this work of Federation will not let it languish, but will move the hearts and prompt the acts of generous friends, impress them with the magnitude and importance of this National work, and inspire them to aid the Executive by providing the financial assistance that is required for *con*structive work in the cause, that we may fight with God and the Angels for Humanity and the Truth.

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[6] 'The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union' is serialised in Psypioneer, starting in the August 2012 issue, which also includes the article by James Morse, 'The Nationalisation of Spiritualism'.

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.—TITLE.

The name of this Federation shall be: THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL FEDERATION.

ARTICLE 2.—OBJECTS.

The objects of this National Federation shall be—

I. An annual movable Conference.

2. The uniting of Spiritualist Societies and Spiritualists in a Federal Union.

3. The printing, publishing, and distribution of literature suitable for general and special purposes.

4. The engaging in missionary work to extend the cause in new districts, and revive it where it has lapsed, and, on the DIRECT REQUEST of societies, to afford such aid as the circumstances call for, and the means of the Federation permit.

5. To keep a roll of mediums and speakers, societies, and secretaries.

ARTICLE 3.—MEMBERSHIP.

Membership in this Federation shall be composed of—

1. Societies.

2. Associates.

Societies may become affiliated with the Federation, subject to the approval of the Executive, by applying to the secretary. Societies shall be represented at the annual Conference by their duly elected delegates, in the proportion of one delegate to fifty members or part thereof. Said delegates, in conjunction with the associated members, shall elect the officers, and conduct the business of the Conference.

Associate members can be enrolled upon the recommendation of two recognised Spiritualists, subject to the action of the Executive, and shall be entitled to vote at the annual Conference.

ARTICLE 4.—HON. DELEGATES.

The Conference shall have power to invite any visitors present at the annual Conference to participate in the deliberations thereat, without the power to vote. Such invitations to be duly moved, seconded, and voted upon in open Conference.

ARTICLE 5.—OFFICERS.

The officers of this Federation shall be a secretary and treasurer, to be elected annually.

ARTICLE 6.—GENERAL COMMITTEE.

The Conference shall elect a General Executive Committee of fifteen persons, seven to retire one year and eight the next. Retiring members shall be eligible for re-election. The General Executive Committee shall be elected from the members of affiliated societies, and the associate members of the Federation. The said committee shall elect its own chairman at each of its meetings. Nominations for the vacancies on the Executive Committee must be made in writing, and sent to the secretary at least one month prior to Conference. No society shall have more than one member on the General Executive Committee, and not more than one person of a household shall be eligible from the associated members at one time.

ARTICLE 7.— FINANCE.

The finances shall be raised as follows:—

Societies shall, on joining the Federation, contribute a sum of not less than one penny per member per annum. Members of affiliated societies may become associates of this Federation on payment (in advance) of half-a-crown per annum.

Associates, not members of affiliated societies, shall, on joining the, Federation, pay a minimum annual subscription (in advance) of half-a-crown.

Donations, in aid of the Federation's work, will be thankfully received. Further funds shall be raised, as needed, by any other methods the annual Conference shall decide.

ARTICLE 8.—DEBATE.

As the Conference is a deliberative body, each speaker shall be limited to one speech on each subject, not exceeding ten minutes, except the mover of a resolution, who shall be allowed fifteen minutes, with the right to five minutes for reply.

Only delegates and associates shall be entitled to vote.

No associate or society shall be privileged to vote, unless their annual subscription has been paid fourteen days before the date of the Conference in each year.

ARTICLE 9.—AUDITORS.

Two or more auditors shall be chosen from among the delegates to audit the accounts of the Federation, with full power to call for all books, vouchers, papers, and information necessary for their purpose.

ARTICLE 10.—BUSINESS AT THE CONFERENCE.

The order of business at the Conference shall be:—

1. Opening exercises.
2. *Pro tem*. appointments, if necessary.
3. Report of committee of reception upon credentials of delegates.
4. Read minutes of last Conference.
5. Secretary's report.
6. Treasurer's report.
7. Special Committee's report.
8. Deferred business.
9. Motions on the agenda.
10. Election of Federation officers and committee for the ensuing year.
11. Election of president, place and date of next annual Conference.
I2. Election of speaker for next conference, evening meeting.
13. Open Council.
14.. Votes of thanks to retiring officers and committee, and notices of motion for next Conference.

ARTICLE 1I.—PROCEDURE.

The business of the annual Conference of this Federation shall be confined to the items upon the printed agenda paper, and such other matters as may directly arise therefrom. All notices of motion for the agenda to be sent to the general secretary two clear months previous to the Conference, and publicly announced by him in the

Spiritual press at least four weeks prior to the annual meeting.[7] The ruling of the president to be final.

A tea party and social shall be held on the Saturday preceding Conference day each year, and auditors, subcommittee, etc., be requested to perform as much of their duties as possible on that day so as to expedite the business on Sunday.

ARTICLE I2.—REVISION.

This constitution shall only be revised upon a motion, signed by the mover and seconder, which must be sent to the general secretary three months before the date of the Conference, that copies of the same can be published in *the Spiritual press* at least two months prior to the meeting of the Conference. Such motion shall only be effectual when carried by a vote of two-thirds of those present entitled to vote thereon.

[The above is the constitution amended in accordance with the resolutions passed on Sunday, July 3rd, 1892, at Burnley.]

Good work has been accomplished with a small income. The balance in hand is small. The Federation is now a really *representative* and responsible body of tried and trusted workers, worthy of confidence and support. Friends of Spiritualism, those of you who have means at disposal on behalf of this work for order, unity, and co-operation *within* our ranks, and promulgation and defence of our principles outside, will you not, by such *donations* as you can afford, strengthen the Federation, and provide the Executive with the needed funds?—W. HARRISON, 37, NORTH STREET, BURNLEY.[8]



[7] The National Federation and, later, the Spiritualists' National Union; Conferences, AGMs and Federation/Union business were published freely in the "Two Worlds".
The first 1890 Conference *pro tem* committee was significantly made up with the Officers and Directors of "*The Two Worlds*" Publishing Company Ltd, Manchester, including its Chairman/President, Dr William Britten, Treasurer Thomas Brown, Secretary Edward Wallis, and its editor, Emma Hardinge Britten (not a director). Emma had significantly supported a national organisation for several years. They nominated the veteran Spiritualist, John Lamont, of Liverpool as their first Conference President/Chairman. The *pro tem* committee would become the first Executive Committee of the newly-formed Spiritualists' National Federation.

[8] Spiritualists' National Federation and Spiritualists' National Union Secretaries, please see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 5, October 2014: "General Secretaries of the SNU – National Secretaries".

When the spirit bids adieu to mortality

by J. J. MORSE

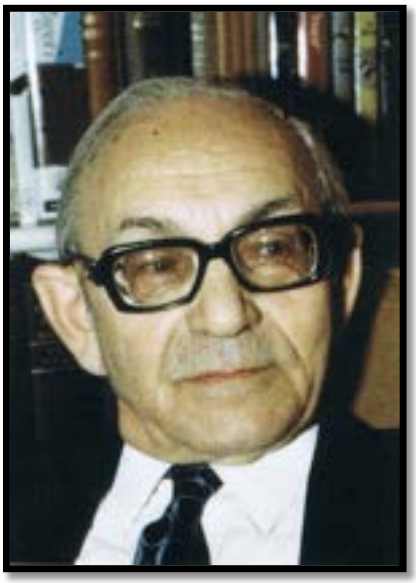
The silver cord is loosened, the golden bowl is broken. The bond has been freed. Never again shall the flesh be the prison-house of the soul now released

James Morse needs little introduction to the pages of Pioneer, as one of the movement's finest pioneers, particularly within the Spiritualists' National Union. In the early years, when it was still the Spiritualists' National Federation, it introduced the first national hymn book. It was at the 1893 Conference, under the Presidency of James Robertson of Glasgow, that James Morse first motioned the subject:

> Mr. J. J. Morse then moved Motion 5: "That a committee of selection of hymns for a National Hymn Book be appointed by this Conference, and be empowered to raise funds, and if sufficient money be forthcoming, to publish the same at the earliest opportunity."—Adopted by the Executive. Mr. Morse said the fact that we had too great a variety of hymn books and that we want a hymn book at a moderate cost was generally admitted. Mr. Duckworth thought a hymn book *should* be sent out by the Federation, so that the cause might have *one* book. The motion was carried and a committee (Messrs. Wallis, Morse, Chiswell, Holt, and Johnson) was appointed.

For further information please see Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 3, June 2017: "Spiritualists' National Federation – Our First National Hymn Book". At the back of the hymn book it has a section, "Comforting Words for Funerals". During the Federation years Morse wrote a funeral service which he most probably used at his friend Emma Hardinge Britten's funeral; this funeral service continued within the Spiritualists' National Union, used by their Ministers.

Maurice Barbanell was one of the Union's first Ministers circa 1938; please see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 2, January 2014: "Who were the first Ministers of the Union?"



Barbanell conducted the funeral service of our former President, Percy Wilson (1950-1953), who died at the age of 84 on April 30th 1977. The service took place on Friday, May 6 at Oxford Spiritualist Church, 39b Oxford Road, Cowley, at 3 pm, and at Headington Cemetery at 4 pm.

Barbanell used the funeral service written by James J. Morse: "When the Spirit Bids Adieu to Mortality". Barbanell noted that the former President much admired Morse's service and also Percy's connection with Morse. Percy's wife wrote in his Psychic News obituary:

> "Winifred wrote that Cora Tappan opened the Sowerby Bridge Spiritualist Church, W Yorks, and Percy's grandfather presided at the ceremony. Percy received his spirit name at the same church from the guide of another famous medium, J. J. Morse."

Barbanell wrote in the "Two Worlds", February 1977 issue:

AS promised I conducted the cremation service for an old friend, the healer George Jessup. He is the second member of Hannen Swaffer's home circle to pass to the higher life. The first was Nettie Abrahams, whose cremation service I also conducted.

I take no credit for the fact that non Spiritualists always volunteer how impressive and uplifting they find these funeral services because of their marked contrast to the sterility of orthodox ones.

I use what I consider the ideal one written over 60 years ago by J. J. Morse, a former editor of this magazine who was also a brilliant trance medium. I reproduce it with a very few revisions so that you can read the heights of inspiration and beauty achieved by a man who had practically no education.

M.B.

When the spirit bids adieu to mortality


J. J. MORSE.

For use at the house

IN the fullness of time comes the harvesting. The golden sheaves are garnered, and the husbandman rejoices that his labour has not been in vain. He thanks the giver of all good whose laws have thus fulfilled His purposes.

We are ears of corn in the fields of life, ripening for the Great Reaper to gather us in for the harvest home in the sweet homeland beyond.

Man, too often ignorant regarding his heritage of continued existence, sees but gloom and sorrow in death. He notes the drooping of the young, the failing of early prime, the steadily advancing snows of age. His heart aches, the brevity of life seems so pitiful, the dread ending so swift that, in anguish, he asks, "What is there beyond?"

He muses that if life be all, then all too brief is life. The little span of three score years and ten scarce affords him time to know he truly lives. Youth and age alike ever feel the coming of the white angel all too soon. But, truly, God knows best, for assuredly His will and wisdom rule all things wisely and well.

Death is the gateway of life. In very truth to die is to gain. In all ages the eye of faith has caught glimpses of the serener regions of the life beyond. Prophets, poets, seers and soul-illumined thinkers of all lands have upheld the hope of immortality, while visions, trances and open visitations from the spirit realms have added knowledge to faith, giving man the certainty that death does not end all.

But human life is not all suffering and strife. To each of us comes something of gladness and sweetness. The tender ties of blood bind hearts in loving unison, while those still holier links of human love hold us firm and true to each other when trials and disappointments fret us almost beyond endurance.

Our children comfort us in age, soothing our pains of body and mind. Tenderly they minister to us when the spirit bids its adieu to mortality as it goes to realise its greater freedom.

Sad it is when death comes to the accompaniments of pain and anguish, but then sweet are the ministries of those nearest and dearest to us.

Let us then give thanks with heart and soul, for the love that blesses and soothes in our hour of separation.

But a greater comfort is ours in the certain knowledge that death, as men call it, is truly a part in the great plan of life. As the rose buds and blossoms, making summer airs fragrant and the days beautiful, so, in due time, the human spirit buds, blossoms and is made ready to be transplanted to the more congenial life of the Summerland beyond. To die is as natural as to live.

As the bud contains the potentiality of the flower, so we each contain the finer elements which are fashioned into our supernal forms. Those forms, fashioned in life, are liberated by death that they may evermore grow beautiful under the clearer skies of the spheres of glory and light towards which each and all of us are surely tending.

How can we say there is no death? Because those whom we once counted dead are oft about us, not as phantoms of our dreams or articles of our faith. They are realities, the arisen ones of our hearts and homes, the friends of former years, parents, children, the loved and the loving.

Today, as of old, the gates are ajar. Messengers come and go. Loved ones come to the aching and hungry-hearted to console them, to add further proof of life hereafter to those who already hold such testimony, to cheer those who have it not. Tears may flow. We are but human, for the great poet has truly said, “One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.”

Not cleansing fires, but cleansing tears remove ills and hatreds, cleansing our minds, our loves, freeing us from the impurities of unkindness and uncharitableness. The tears of joy are also shed, of joyful thankfulness that wounds are healed, that the haven has been gained.

The tears that give ease to sorrow, that relieve the overcharged breast, are nature’s means to ease her children’s griefs. Be not ashamed to receive our great mother’s kindly help.

This silent form is to be removed from its accustomed home. One face will be absent from the family circle. There will be a vacant chamber, an unused chair, a voice no longer heard. Reverently take away the discarded garment; quietly bear it to its final resting place.

It is but the casket that hid the beauteous jewel. That which made this form so wonderful, the form we knew so well, has gone. The immortal jewel it contained has now a richer setting, one more fitting to its nature and high destiny.

Bowing to the wonderful mystery of death, yet lifting our faces that they may be flushed with the glory of life, let us rejoice that another has gone a little further along the road our feet are treading.

But the home is not vacant of the presence of the arisen. The dead do not all depart; they are with us often, to help and cheer us on our way. The blessing of heaven be upon us, and the hallowedness of this hour remain a sweet memory for many days to come.

At church or chapel

LIFE and death are the servants of God, love and duty the incentives that link people to their higher selves. A well-spent mortal life is man's best acknowledgement of indebtedness to God and nature.

Now in this place let each search his heart in silence that the good or ill therein may be discerned, that one may be fostered, or the other overcome.

(*Let the company indulge in silent prayer*.)

We have not assembled to grieve, but rather to rejoice that the arisen one has escaped from darkness and found the light. We pay soulful tribute to the eternal power. Within these walls there is no insensate grief, no uncontrollable terror. We know that death is liberation, a step "Nearer, my God, to Thee," an uplift in the divine order of eternal progression.

God's laws heed neither creeds nor rituals. His only ritual is the order of His laws; His church, the universe, its members all mankind; His ministers the souls that are seers, the hearts that live, the minds that serve. His altars are human hearts sanctified by love and service.

In honouring the departed, let us not forget our duty to the living. Unwisely to bemoan our loss is to becloud our judgement. It is not pleasing to the arisen, nor is it helpful to the living.

Rather than unduly lamenting, let us recall the goodness of the departed, that we may emulate it. If we needs must remember their ill, let it be that we may avoid its like in ourselves, and do our best to prevent it in others.

(*Here introduce appropriate personal comments to the arisen one*.)

Out from these walls, for the time being sanctified by our sympathy and love, let us follow this mouldering flesh, that it may be decently returned to the great mother from whose vast stores it was first compounded.

She will resurrect its elements for her further purposes. The late dweller in this silent form will never need it, or its like, again. It has done its work, it has served its purpose.

*(*For cremation services substitute the three paragraphs beginning with the one marked with an asterisk*.)

Committal

LEAVES have their glad recall. Flowers bloom and die, but they come again. Night and silence bring quiet and rest. Death smooths out the creases from the faces of those who have suffered, leaving the face as tranquil as if an angel had said, "Poor, tired frame, be at rest."

With the trees as sentinels we leave this empty tabernacle, while flowers, like silent watchers, keep their guard. Summer suns and winter snows will come and go. Oft our memory will turn towards the grassy mound that presently will rise above the form we leave beneath the earth.

But life is growth and change, as in the great order of the universe. Life never ceases, it only varies in its moods and forms. We know death is but the doorway to a larger life. Up-ward lies the pathway of the deathless soul. Earth and its limitations are left behind, sense and time no longer thrall.

To nature then what nature loaned.

For cremation

*THE life-containing spirit having finally departed from its temporary earthly tenement, the body is now to be resolved into its original elements, for mother earth to use again in her own way.

The one who occupied it will never need it again. It has done its work. It has served its purpose. We are about to hasten and sweeten the process of disintegration by committing it to the purifying flames.

As fire and smoke ascend, so too does the deathless spirit. Earth and its limitations are left behind. Sense and time no longer thrall. To nature then what nature loaned. The body is dead, but the spirit still lives.

After interment

FAREWELL to thee thou raiment of mortality, so wondrously fashioned to serve the purposes of our earthly life, thy task is done. May we who still wear thy semblance learn to use our garment ever wisely and well, that we may return it undimmed by aught dishonouring to our God, our fellows, or ourselves.

All hail to the enfranchised soul that lately left this tenement. Let us, dear friends, rejoice in the knowledge that giveth strength, the knowledge that there are no dead.

The silver cord is loosened, the golden bowl is broken. The bond has been freed. Never again shall the flesh be the prison-house of the soul now released.

I always find it helpful to include in the service these highly appropriate verses written by my wife which she titled, "Some call him Death."

SOME call him Death whose hands efface,
With swift and certain skill,
The lines of pain that marked a face
Now mercifully still.
At the appointed hour comes he,
As envoy of the Lord;
With gentle touch he tenderly
Severs the silver cord.
Arise bright soul with living breath,
Vanished is mortal strife;
Greet then thy friend whom some call Death —
His other name is Life.

Edward Walter Wallis

1855 - 1914



The image of Edward Walter Wallis shown is taken from the "Medium & Daybreak", June 5th 1885. He is without doubt *one* of the truly forgotten pioneers of our movement. He played a substantial part in the forming of a National Spiritualism in Britain, leading to the Spiritualists' National Union. Wallis, like many of our pioneers, was a tireless worker for the establishment of an organised National Spiritualism in this country.

In Psypioneer 2012 I wrote a five-part series titled "The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union"; from Part 1 I quote below the opening paragraphs:[9]

> I have always been dismayed that no serious attention has been given to this history; the task of a national organisation, which started in Darlington in 1865, was immense. At this time it would be fair to say Spiritualism in this country was represented by the *Spiritual Magazine*, a Christian publication which dealt mainly with the facts, but did not take any noticeable interest in the subject as a public movement. The few brief references to early attempts at a national organisation referred to then as "Progressive Spiritualists" mostly a non-Christian group. They were then, and are today, looked upon as failed attempts.
>
> Though these pioneers of National Spiritualism are today mostly unknown, it would be incorrect to state that these noble efforts were in fact "failed attempts". The long chain of events, immense struggles, ridicule and a desire to succeed, give prominence to their final achievement. One of those early pioneers was William Johnson. Decades later he would become the last Spiritualists' National Federation, and the first Spiritualists' National Union President in 1902.
>
> At the annual Conference of Spiritualists, held in Liverpool on Tuesday, August 5th 1873 under the presidency of Mr. Thomas Everitt, a new upcoming physical/trance medium, James J. Morse made his feeling known on the future of a National Spiritualist movement:
>
> > "Mr. Morse expressed himself strongly in favour of national organisation, by means of a union of all the existing associations; and he believed the thing to be feasible. Their work was to show that the cardinal fact of Spiritualism—communication between the two worlds—was absolutely true. There was a sufficient staff of mediums and speakers to do this work if they were organised, well used, and sufficiently paid. He was for avoiding theological and philosophical disputations, and would simply invite the people to come and judge for themselves. The function of the executive would be one of business rather than preaching or teaching. This would

[9] Psypioneer: "The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union". Please see Vol. 8, Nos. 8, 9 & 11 and Vol. 9, Nos. 2 & 5.

ensure a certain amount of harmony. There were reasons both for and against the use of the word "Progressive;" these reasons Mr. Morse placed fairly and forcibly before the Conference. He approved of locating the executive power in London, but the conferences should be movable. He moved: —

"That this Conference, being a representative one, do constitute itself into a permanent national association, and elect, either from itself or from representatives of other societies not present, or by both methods if desirable, an executive head, for the purpose of carrying out the objects decided upon by that body."

An important society did merge from this 1873 Annual Conference of Spiritualists and the word *national* was within its title but it was never representative of a national organisation. The organisation was called "The British National Association of Spiritualists" (BNAS); in Part 2 of the series it can be noted:

The British National Association of Spiritualists had a long history.[10] But in May 1882, BNAS decided to re-constitute the Association under a new Constitution by the name, "Central Association of Spiritualists," taking over the membership and premises of BNAS. Later, at a meeting on October 25th 1883, the Central Association of Spiritualists was dissolved. Stainton Moses moved for the foundation of a new society, subsequently to be called The London Spiritualist Alliance, (LSA). The name was changed to The College of Psychic Science on 31 January 1955 and to The College of Psychic Studies (CPS) in 1970, and remains so today.

We can note in the series that Edward Wallis is working for a national organisation; in 1878 a national network was being established by District Committees, for example in 1877, published in "The Spiritualist Newspaper", February 2nd, 1877:

SPIRITUALISM IN LANCASHIRE. —Mr. W. Johnson and Mr. John Hartley write: —



William Johnson
First SNU President

"Organisation is the basis of all efficient movements, whether social or political. The Lancashire Spiritualists have determined that a more vigorous organising policy shall be commenced at once, for the purpose of enabling every town where there are a few Spiritualists only, to hold regular Sunday services and week-night classes for research and discussion in connection with the subject. There is scarcely a town or village in the district which the Lancashire Committee has not already visited, and sown the first seeds. Organisation would aid the progress of Spiritualism in these places."

William Johnson would become our first SNU President! The "Lancashire District Committee" was the first district association to be formed, at a Conference at Bury in August 1875. Its aim was to promote Spiritualism in new Districts, places of weak or non-existent Spiritualist activity, supply experienced speakers and distribute literature.

[10] The Society for Psychical Research (SPR) was founded on BNAS premises, on January 5th and 6th 1882. The conferences were held at the invitation of Professor Barrett (Dublin), resulting in the formation of the SPR, which was constituted on February 20th 1882. Its appointed Council and committees were partly made up by BNAS officers and Council members.

It is in the conference report quoted below that I first noted the name Edward Wallis. This was the fourteenth Quarterly Conference, held in the Temperance Hall, Grosvenor Street, Manchester, on November 3rd 1878:

> Mr. Wallis stated:
>
> "Mr. E. H.[11] Wallis of London, remarked that he was very much interested in the proposed "Conference Committee," and in all the places he had recently visited he had advocated it, and done his best to persuade the friends to unite in the matter. He had the pleasure of saying that in Leicester, Loughborough, Walsall, Northampton, Mount Sorrel, and other places he had visited, the friends all expressed a desire to unite and help to form the Committee. He felt the need of organisation, and without it the cause would always be chaotic and unsound."

And it continues:

> The newly formed "Midland District Committee" was started off by Wallis giving a series of successful mission meetings in the district. Later that year the Wallis family moved to Nottingham.

For the full report and references please consult the full series referred to.

It can be noted in "Pioneer," Vol. 3, No. 3, June 2018, "The Constitution of the Spiritualists' National Federation", that tribute is paid in the forming of a National Spiritualism which we have today:

> Already for some years a National Federation of Spiritualists has existed. Several very successful representative annual Conferences have been held of delegates from affiliated Societies and of Associate members, and a good deal of propaganda work has been performed to spread the light and consolidate the movement.

One of the most successful British Spiritualist journals is the "Two Worlds"; it was announced by the present editor, Tony Ortzen, that in July 2018 the monthly magazine would merge with "Psychic News". The "Two Worlds" became a monthly magazine in 1960 under the editorship of Maurice Barbanell, who continued until his death in 1981. The "Two Worlds" has always been a purely *Spiritualist newspaper/magazine* since its start in 1887. It was co-founded by Emma Hardinge Britten and Edward Wallis; the first issue was published on Friday November 18th 1887, under the editorship of Emma Hardinge Britten.[12]

In 'After Forty Years: An Outline of the History of "The Two Worlds"', published by the "Two Worlds" in November 18th 1927 and republished in Psypioneer, it can be noted:[13]

> The initiation of THE TWO WORLDS was due in the main to a thought which simultaneously struck both E. W. Wallis and Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, and its object was distinctly stated in its first issue to be "to add to and supplement the work of our contemporaries, and not to supersede or injure it." Throughout the whole 40 years history THE TWO WORLDS has ever maintained the closest fraternal relationships with its Spiritualistic contemporaries, while it has afforded an avenue to every honest Spiritualist to express his hopes, his doubts, his criticisms, and his theories, provided only they were expressed honestly, fairly, and without personalities. From its very inception it has earned and tried to deserve, the title of the "People's Spiritualist Paper."

[11] It should read "E.W. Wallis".

[12] Early editors were Emma Hardinge Britten (1887-1892), Edward Walter Wallis (1892-1898), Peter Lee (1889-1899), Will Phillips (1899-1906), James Johnson Morse (1906-1919) and Ernest Walter Oaten (1919-1945).

[13] Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 5, May 2013.

THE original minute book shows as its first entry that a meeting was convened by invitation at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Britten, on Wednesday August 24th, 1887, Dr. Britten being elected chairman and Mr. Wallis secretary of the meeting. The first resolution stands in the name of Mr. Wallis: "That this meeting is of opinion that the time has arrived when a new and representative paper is needed for the promotion of Spiritualism." This was seconded by Mr. Braham, and after lengthy discussion was unanimously carried. Mr. W. Johnson of Hyde, then proposed that a company be formed with a capital of £1,500, and that the paper should be started if £700 be subscribed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Peter Lee, and carried unanimously. The meeting next appointed a Provisional Committee, consisting of Dr. Britten (Chairman), Mrs. E. H. Britten, Mrs. Wilkinson,[14] Messrs. David Brown. Peter Lee, Braham, George Hill, T. Brown, W. Johnson, E. W Wallis, L. Firth, G. Boys and F. Tomlinson. Mrs. Britten and Mr. Wallis were appointed to draft a prospectus.

Edward Wallis died on January 11th 1914 and almost the whole issue of the "Two Worlds," February 6th 1914, was dedicated to his life and work. Below I have quoted from this issue. The biographical information is fairly long; I have referenced some of the material which has previously been covered by "Pioneer". Apart from the tribute to this fine pioneer the text holds educational value:

A NATIONAL MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE AND WORK OF EDWARD WALTER WALLIS,

A PIONEER SPIRITUALIST, TRANCE SPEAKER, AUTHOR AND JOURNALIST.

Who Served the Cause of Modern Spiritualism Faithfully for Upwards of Forty Years and was Raised to the Higher Life on Sunday, January 11th, 1914 at the Early Age of Fifty-Eight Years.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A WORKER

Birth and Early Life.

Mr. Wallis was born at Teddington, Middlesex, on Saturday, December 8th, 1855, and was the fourth child of a family of ten. His parents were engaged in the grocery business, and were highly respected by all who knew them. His home life was of the usual character. His health did not permit of any indoor employment; therefore, instead of apprenticing him to a watchmaker, it was felt that an outdoor employment would best suit his needs. The result was that he became a "paper-boy" at the bookstall of W. H. Smith & Sons at the local railway station.

He soon advanced in position to "head boy," and at 17 was promoted to clerk-in-charge at Vauxhall Station, London. In 1870 he signed the temperance pledge, which he rightly looked upon in after years as a wise and good thing to do. Two years later he left Smith & Sons, and served at a picture gallery in Pall Mall, London, but the occupation proving distasteful to him, he resigned his position. For some months afterwards he was employed at the establishment (in Oxford-street, London) of Dr. Nichol, at that time a well-known vegetarian, reformer, and Spiritualist. In 1877, having left the above-named firm, owing to it being wound up, he undertook (at the suggestion of Mr. James Bums, who was then conducting the Spiritual Institution at Southampton Row, London) a house to house distribution of Spiritualist literature. He met with many rebuffs, but sowed much good seed.

[14] Emma's sister, Margaret.

He Enters His Work.

About this time the way was opened for him to conduct a missionary tour for our Cause in the provinces, which lasted thirteen weeks. The new recruit was worn out with his labours, and after returning home resolved never again to undertake such arduous exertions.

He next obtained a situation with a Mr. Cotterill, an undertaker, and a Spiritualist, who agreed to allow time for the exercise of his mediumship, which was used on Sundays. At this point arose a matter which is worth far more attention than some captions-minded people in our ranks give to it, viz., the incompatibility of business pursuits with the development of mediumship as a serviceable asset to our Cause. The spirit-friends told Mr. Wallis that they could not use him at all satisfactorily, as he becoming too engrossed with business, and added that unless he was willing to exercise his talents in a broader sphere they would be compelled to retire. The result was that in 1878 he placed himself at the disposal of the Movement, and removed to Nottingham.

Previous Activities.

This narrative must turn back for a little, and deal with work done in the Metropolis. In 1872, whilst visiting his parents he for the first time saw a copy of *The Medium and Daybreak* and as Spiritualist meetings were being held at Kingston-on-Thames, he attended, and was told by a medium, Mrs. Bullock, that he was to fare forth as a disciple of the New Dispensation, which prophecy he received with not unnatural incredulity. It is now a matter of history that the prophecy was literally fulfilled. Mr. W. J. Campernowne, one of the earliest Spiritualists of Kingston-on-Thames, was a staunch friend and supporter of the new worker in those early days.



The sphere of action soon broadened, and when that good-souled pioneer of Spiritualism in the East of London, Mr. R. Cogman, passed away, Mr. Wallis was prevailed upon to assume his work, and thus prevent the meetings from being discontinued.[15]

Cupid Intervenes.

Mediums, like other people, "fall in love," and Mr. Wallis was no less susceptible than others. He became acquainted with a Mrs. Eager, and her daughter, Miss Minnie Harriet, the latter then holding seances at Mr. Burns' Institution. In view of the responsibilities involved in taking over Mr. Cogman's house and meetings, the young couple decided to marry, somewhat in advance of their original intentions. The union

[15] See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 2018: – First Public Developing Circles – Robert Cogman & Mrs. Mary Main.

proved a very happy one right down to its mortal parting, the issue comprised three sons, Bert C., Ernest, and Arthur, who are still in the mortal. Mr. Wallis's married life was a splendid refutation of the slanders that the foes of Spiritualism so glibly utter concerning the lack of moral influence of Spiritualism upon its workers and adherents, for it was literally without spot or blemish.

Nottingham, Walsall, and Glasgow.

As already mentioned, Mr. Wallis removed from London to Nottingham, where he opened a fancy goods establishment. Here again, after fifteen months, the incompatibility of the material with the spiritual reasserted itself. It was impossible to reconcile the twain, and a move was made to Walsall at the suggestion of then Mr., but now Councillor, Venables, the present ex-Mayor of the Borough.[16] Mr. Wallis and his wife were installed as managers of a coffee tavern in the town. Yet again the old difficulty arose. Truly, "a house divided against itself must fall," for the numerous calls to attend meetings and events incident to the duties of a public worker for our Cause prevented due attention to a commercial undertaking of the nature of the one in question, therefore another change was inevitable. Consequently, in response to a warm invitation from the Spiritualists of Glasgow, Mr. and Mrs. Wallis and family removed to that city, where they found a warm welcome and a staunch friend in that noble soul, Mr. James Robertson.[17] A vigorous but futile effort was made to establish a Spiritualist church, but insufficiency of financial support, and a lack of the necessary enthusiasm to sustain the effort, compelled the abandonment of the project. But the workers remained, and did good service during the remainder of the time they resided across the border.

Ascending the Mountain.

Up to this period in his career Mr. Wallis had been ascending the mountain. The road had been rugged, and stones and briars many. The writer of these lines knew something of the struggles and privations Mr. and Mrs. Wallis endured. Pence were as pounds; the cares of a growing family, the cost of their education, and the often unrewarded labour, would have damped a less ardent spirit. In spite of all, the eyes gazed at the mountain peak, and devotion to Truth never wavered. So is it with all dauntless souls who lay their all upon the altar of truth. But the road now became smoother, and patience and merit were to win, as they always do if sufficiently continued. The first upward step was taken by the

Removal to Manchester.

The day of labour in the Scottish metropolis ended, and the pilgrims of the spirit returned to England and made Manchester their future home. At last an enduring field of work was reached, and the results achieved stand to-day as a lasting monument of service to the Cause. But the desire for occupation again came to the front. Mr. Wallis undertook the opening of a depot for the sale of Spiritualist and other literature, and connected there with a lending library. It was the only one of the kind at that time in the North. But events were toward. In answer to a demand, he, in conjunction with Emma Hardinge Britten and others, co-operated in the establishing of THE TWO WORLDS Publishing Company, Ltd., and the publication of THE TWO WORLDS was the outcome of their efforts.

[16] John Venables gave considerable service in the building of the Spiritualists' National Union - he was the Spiritualists' National Federation President in 1901. For further information please contact the editor.

[17] James (Jas) Robertson, Spiritualists National Federation President in 1893. The year 1876 marked the entrance into the movement of Mr. James Robertson, who was destined to do so much for Spiritualism in Scotland. He became President of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists in 1879 and held that office for over 20 years. See Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 10, October 2011: Glasgow Association of Spiritualists.

"The Two Worlds."

In the record of this long and busy public life one thing will always stand prominently out among all other matters. That is the part taken in the formation of THE TWO WORLDS Publishing Company, Ltd., and the establishing of THE TWO WORLDS as a weekly periodical. A number of pressing reasons led to the call for a representative organ of the Spiritualist Movement. There is no need to call any ghosts from their rest, but the need for such a journal as this was imperative. It was due to the initiative of Mr. Wallis that the preliminary meeting for the consideration of the matter was held at his then home at Petworth-street, Cheetham Hill, in this city, at which Mrs. Britten was present to give the benefit of her advice and experience. Mr. Wallis was appointed secretary to the Company in the early Autumn of 1887, and when the paper was started in November of that year he became the general manager. Mr. Wallis occupied these dual positions for several years, and when Mrs. Britten resigned he was unanimously appointed Editor.

It was due to his indefatigable exertions that the Company was put upon its feet, and the paper conducted to success. The struggle was a hard one, the monetary difficulties were great. Financially the road was rough for some years, but energy and perseverance conquered, and losses were at last avoided. The paper to-day stands as a result of those strenuous days, and to Mr. Wallis belongs a very large share of the credit. In the opinion of the writer of these lines, this portion of Mr. Wallis's services to the public work of Spiritualism is the greatest thing he did while in the flesh, and for which a lasting debt of gratitude from the friends of Spiritualism was incurred.

The Spiritualists' National Federation.

The formation of the Spiritualists' National Federation was another of the notable events in the career of Mr. Wallis, for it was in his home at Petworth-street that the matter was initiated. The meeting was held on April 1st, 1890, and there were present Mrs. E. H. Britten, Mrs. M. H. Wallis, Mrs. M. Wilkinson, Dr. Wm. Britten, Messrs. R. Fitton, Peter Lee, Wm. Johnson., Fredk. Tomlinson, J. J. Morse, E. W. Wallis, T. H. Brown, and T. Simkins. Some 8,000 circulars, signed by Mrs. Britten and Mr. Wallis, were issued. The first conference was held in the Co-operative Hall, Downing-street, Manchester, in July of the above-named year. Mr. Wallis ardently supported the project alike by pen and voice and personal service, as the files of THE TWO WORLDS abundantly disclose. Thus his name is inseparably associated with the first real attempt to organise our Cause upon the basis of federal union. In 1898 Mr. Wallis was honoured by being elected president of the Conference for that year. In 1901 the Federation was reconstituted as a legally incorporated body under the present title of the Spiritualists' National Union, Ltd.

The Jubilee Bazaar.

The Spiritualists of Great Britain commemorated the Jubilee of the Movement in 1898 by holding a National Bazaar in Manchester. The idea originated with the Council of the old Federation. Sub-committees were appointed to carry out the details, and Mr. and Mrs. Wallis were speedily deeply immersed in the labour necessary to success. Mr. Wallis threw open the pages of THE TWO WORLDS for recording the amounts donated by sympathising friends, and several funds were opened for contributions in sovereigns, half-sovereigns, five shillings, half-crowns and even single shillings. The publicity accorded the project in THE TWO WORLDS, the strenuous efforts of Mr. Wallis and his wife, backed by the almost herculean labours of Mr. James Swindlehurst,[18] were ultimately crowned with success, for the whole kingdom rallied to the event, which, after all financial

[18] James Swindlehurst, an early pioneer of National Spiritualism, holding various executive positions in the National Federation. At the 1895 Conference he was appointed Organising Secretary and frequently engaged in propaganda work for the Spiritualists' National Federation, etc.

obligations had been met, resulted in a sum of some £600 profit, which amount was used for propaganda work during the following years.

Bids Manchester Adieu.

In May, 1899, Mr. Wallis severed his connection with THE TWO WORLDS, the occasion of his departure being his acceptance of an invitation to go to London as assistant to Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, the then Editor of *Light*. The opportunity was taken advantage of by the Directors of THE TWO WORLDS to take farewell of their excellent co-worker, and to make a presentation to Mr. Wallis and his wife of a silver tea and coffee service, the presentation being made by Mr. Fredk. Tomlinson, the chairman of the Directors. A number of eulogistic speeches were made, containing many expressions of regret at Mr. Wallis's departure. Once again the pilgrims moved on their road, back to their native city, where, as all know now, Mr. Wallis remained until he answered the call "Come up higher" into the great land beyond.

Work in London.

A few weeks after the above-recorded events Mr. Wallis was installed in his new department of labour, which included the hon. secretaryship of the London Spiritualist Alliance. Under the kindly tutelage of Mr. Rogers he rapidly became a valuable recruit, as could not otherwise be the case, for Mr. Rogers was a skilled and able journalist, eminently successful in newspaper organising and direction. In due course he became Associate-Editor, and for a short time after Mr. Rogers' transition he was Acting-Editor, when ultimately the proprietors of the journal promoted him to be Editor-in-Chief, which post he well and worthily filled almost down to the hour of his departure from this sphere of action. Mr. Wallis made many warm friends in London, and was a frequent occupant of the platforms of the Marylebone Association, and of the London Spiritual Mission, and always with acceptance. Other Societies received his services, and he was usually a notable figure in the annual conventions of the Union of London Spiritualists. London Spiritualists paid fitting honours to his memory by attending in large numbers the farewell ceremonies following his departure. He passed "in harness," as he wished.

Other Incidents

As rivers are fed by their tributary streams, so our lives are filled out by minor incidents. Such was the case in Mr. Wallis's career. Not all his journeyings took place within the limits of the United Kingdom. Twice in his progress he crossed the Atlantic Ocean, the first time about 1878, when he travelled alone; the second time in 1898, when he was accompanied by Mrs. Wallis. American Spiritualists accorded both a hearty welcome, and the visits were among the pleasantest memories of their varied travels.

All present-day Spiritualists are familiar with the Spiritualists' National Union Fund of Benevolence, but many may not know the initiators of that fund were really Mr. Wallis and his wife. Originally, when they commenced the work, it was known as the Order of Progressive Spiritualists, in which days the letters O.P.S. were as familiar as are now those of F.O.B.[19] The hope was to found a fraternal order to unite Spiritualists throughout the country. Badges of recognition were issued, in silver and gold, so that members wearing them could readily recognise a Spiritualist while travelling. The attempt to establish the order did not meet with any conspicuously lasting success, but the fund flourished. Mrs. Wallis acted as secretary and almoner for a number of years, and in distributing grants in aid helped to lighten the burdens of many a sick and impoverished worker. Ultimately the fund passed to the old Federation, and then to the existing National Union, and is now

[19] See Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 2014: "Badges, Symbols and Emblems of the Spiritualists' National Union".

admirably administered by Mrs. M. A. Stair, of Keighley, as the sympathetic and earnest secretary, on behalf of the Union.[20]

Mr. Wallis was a prolific writer, and published many pamphlets. They commanded a ready sale. Among them was "Did Jesus Die on the Cross?" (which was answered in the negative), "Is Spiritualism Dangerous?" "Spiritualism and the Bible." "Spiritualism Explained," "Death's Chiefest Surprise." "Spiritual Emancipation by the Elimination of Fear," "Two in One: Sinner or Saint," "Forty Years of Mediumship," etc., while he gave us two books—-one, a very useful one, entitled "A Guide to Mediumship," and a novel called "Spirit Guided."

In former years he was a debater of some power, having dialectical contests with, among others, the Rev. Thomas Ashcroft,[21] Mr. W. T. Lee, and the Rev. Mr. Aked, of Liverpool, and the Rev. Mr. Grinstead, and other persons of lesser note. In such case Mr. Wallis set an example of courtesy and honourable conduct which was not always emulated by his opponents, but showed the natural delicacy of the man. He never descended to the artfulness of the professional debater, but always' staunchly defended his cause as a Spiritualist and a gentleman.

He was a staunch upholder of the righteousness of professional mediumistic work, claiming that the worker was worthy of his hire. As a professional medium he was above reproach. Yet, on the other hand, he never stinted his efforts because they were called for by weak Societies. Many times he assisted a poorer brother, even in early times when material fortune did not smile upon him.

As a speaker he possessed a charm of manner and a gentleness of expression that won a way to the hearts of his auditors. He never denied he was a trance speaker, for he was true to his guides to the last. He laboured for self-culture as well as for mediumistic developments. While not a vigorous speaker on the platform, he was clear and incisive in method. He was of the persuasive rather than the aggressive order of exponent, and his quality improved with the advance of years. He was one of the rapidly diminishing number of the good trance speakers developed in the early days of our Movement. The memories of his service to Spiritualism will always be pleasant to Spiritualists, and his work is the best and most fitting crown to a well-spent life in the service of the spirit world.

The Moral of It All.

In concluding this brief chronicle, let it be asked: What is the moral of it all?

Here was a man of humble origin, scant in educational training, an inconspicuous unit among the teeming millions of these islands. Of humble but honourable parentage, he starts out in the world to earn his living in the manly fashion of a Briton, battling his way with the same quiet determination that characterised his conduct in all he put his hands to. None dreamed of him becoming a household name all over the world, least of all himself. Then comes that wonderful call from the spirit world, and, like Samuel of old, he responded. Amidst discouragement and privations, far more than delicacy permits to recall, he struggled with his cross, for cross it was for the worker of forty years ago. He trusted his unseen mentors, and in the end won his crown of loving recognition. Proving himself faithful in little, he proved himself faithful in much. His life showed what the

[20] See Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2014: "Remembering our old workers" – Mrs. Mary A. Stair and Miss M. L. Stair.

[21] See Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 12, December 2009: Robert James Lees and the Revd Thomas Ashcroft – Stephen Butt.

spirits can accomplish when their efforts are seconded by zeal and faithfulness in those whom they select as their evangels. His life was a lesson to all mediums, aye, and to all Spiritualists also. Some are prone to cast aside the ladder by which they have climbed: he did not. Success did not spoil him, pride of place did not canker him.

Spiritualism to him was the gospel of life. He lived his gospel. Simple in manner, genial in conduct, yet zealous for our truth, he would neither palter with our foes nor compromise with the half-hearted in our midst.

He leaves a legacy of example to be followed; an example that should stimulate all to increased faithfulness to the spirit world; an example that utterly discredits the fatuous criticisms of the unthinking against either mediumship or Spiritualism. Spirit control was to him a means to an end, not the end itself. It meant self-unfoldment, that greater fitness for the work of the spirits could be attained. This is one of the great morals deducible from the orderly use of mediumship. And because of this sterling example Mr. Wallis neither lived nor worked in vain. We are all the richer for his having lived. We are further enriched in his passing, because of the good we remember of him.

Le Envoi.

My task is done. My pen rests. I knew him well, have ate at his table, slept under his roof. We travelled many miles together, and laboured in many a field. It was no light task to take farewell of his poor tired form. But the blessed consciousness that he still lived, and was with us all on that memorable Thursday afternoon, lightened the gloom and brought sunlight into all hearts.

These words are my memorial tribute; they attempt but to tell "a plain unvarnished tale," and they may serve as an honest effort to add to our annals the life story of one of our pioneers. It has all been a labour of love, and as such is offered to the friends of Spiritualism all over the world. To add more would be "to paint the lily and gild refined gold," a task I am not unwise enough to attempt.

The words are of the paper's editor, James J. Morse.

Edward Walter Wallis (1855-1914)



It was also Edward Wallis who worked on our first Hymn Book; see Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 3, June 2017: "Spiritualists' National Federation – Our First National Hymn Book".

100 YEARS AGO



The National Memorial Service

For the Fallen in the War,

Royal Albert Hall, London

Under the auspices of the Spiritualists' National Union, Ltd.

"Light", May 3rd 1919, produced a Special Supplement of the full report of the

"Great Memorial Service for the Fallen in the War"

"*IT is not a Memorial Service, though we call it so. It is rather a joyous reunion*."

Thus did Sir Arthur Conan Doyle happily describe the great meeting in the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday, April 27, when many thousands, gathered together from all parts of England, were present at an assemblage arranged 'by Spiritualists in honour of those who had fallen in the war.'

It was, as Sir Arthur truly said, an event unique in the history of the world.

The impressive speeches delivered, while in keeping with the devotional atmosphere of the evening, had a note of firm certitude. And they carried more than a suggestion of future vigorous action in the furtherance of a great truth.

Below is published Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's full address:

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle said:—Our movement, the greatest movement which has been seen in this world for the last two thousand years, has recently been passing through a crisis of contention and of argument. There are many of the more sensitive souls among us who feel very much that a matter which is so delicate, which concerns those whom we have lost, should be exposed to that unseemly levity which is so often the only weapon with which our opponents can attack us. But none the less we are out to fight. We can only fight, and we can only win by fighting. If you have got a thing which is not true, if you are trying to bolster up a thing you are not certain of, then keep it in the dark, and tell people to keep their hands off. But when you know that a thing is true, and when you know that the whole human race is just yearning for that thing, then I say at all costs to your own feelings you must bring it down into the market-place, you must let people see the length and breadth of it for themselves, and, though they may mock and look at it with ignorance, depend upon it the human race is not really foolish, the human race sooner or later, if you put truth before it, will understand that it is true and will follow it. Therefore, I say, although we have got in front of us now a whole Hindenburg Line of ignorance and prejudice, and plenty of theological barbed wire in front of that, we are going to smash through it, because we have got a cause that cannot be beaten.

Fortunately we are not here to-day to argue or dispute. I get enough of that elsewhere. We are here to greet our dead heroes, those men who cut short their earthly life in order that our earthly life might be tolerable. Only two days ago 5,000 of our brave Australian fellow-subjects marched through the streets of London, receiving from one end to the other the well-deserved plaudits of the Londoners. Then, having done that, they depart to another land to take up their duties in another sphere. Even so to-night far more than 5,000, many tens of thousands of our dead are, I believe, attracted by that spiritual law of sympathy and love down to us to-night. They come to be congratulated, and having been congratulated, for we who represent London and represent those who love them do congratulate them, they go back to that other world and to their high duties in another sphere.

Although we call it so this is not a memorial meeting, for there is something sad in the very word memorial. It is rather a joyous re-union, because those dark days are gone when we used to be taught that we looked after our dead and saw them gradually vanishing away into the mists of eternity without any assurance of how or where we should meet them again. No, thank Heaven, owing to the new knowledge which has come to every man who will only honestly examine it, owing to that new knowledge we know that now we can extend our arms and with smiling faces look up, knowing that we are looking straight into those unchanged faces which once we knew upon earth.

Such a gathering as this is unique in Europe, but it is not unique in the world. I can remember at the end of the Japanese war reading how Admiral Togo went down to some spot—I picture it as a barren place beside the seashore—and standing there alone he invoked his dead seamen who had fought for him in a great battle, he invoked them to gather round him, and, standing there, he told them what the issue of the war had been. He thanked them and told them how far that issue had been due to their own exertions. He said, "You know these things, but it is only out of respect that I, your Admiral, come to tell you." When we have got to the level of Japan in psychical civilisation, it will not be we civilians who will stand here, but it will be those great chiefs of the Army and the Navy who led their men to battle and led them to their death, it will be they who will stand here in a great meeting of this sort and will welcome them and thank them for their services. We know that the Army is largely impregnated with our ideas, It may not be so long before what I say comes true. I know at least one brave Army Commander, the Commander of an Army Corps second to none in the Army, who is as good a Spiritualist as any man in this room. I well know how he would rejoice to stand and address his vanished men,

You may remember that some time ago they had a meeting here to commemorate those of the First Seven Divisions who fallen. That meeting was held in the most religious, the most solemn, the most sympathetic spirit, but none the less it was not held with the practical knowledge and the realism which we have. It was an interesting thing that on the day following that meeting, at a séance where they had the most unexceptionable results, one of their friends who had lost his life with the Seventh Division came back, as he had been in the habit of doing. His first communication when he came back was that he regretted that his friends at the time had not got tickets for the meeting, as they had tried to do. They explained that that was impossible. The dialogue, which was sent to me a few days afterwards by the gentleman who presided at the séance, then went like this:—

They said to the Spirit: "Have you anything more to say?"

The Spirit: "There was too much ceremony."

They said: "Anything more?"

The Spirit: "All of us felt out of it."

They said: “We are very interested; is there anything more?”

The Spirit: “They praised the dead. We are not dead. They do not see us.”

They said: “Then you were disappointed?”

The Spirit: “Yes, a bit.”

They said: “Some people surely felt you were there?”

The Spirit: “Many did, but they were so swamped by the scoffers and the unbelievers.”

They said: “We are sorry.”

The Spirit: “That is all right, that’s nothing.”

They said: “Were most of those who passed away in the Seven Divisions there?”

The Spirit: “Yes, they were there.”

Since then, to-night, at least, I am sure that no fault of that kind could be found by any of our friends on the further side. We know with all our knowledge, with all our intellect, that they have the power to come, and with all our emotions we know that our love, respect, and admiration is the one force in the universe which can bring them here. I have no doubt that at this moment, had we only those eyes of power which are, I believe, gradually developing in the human race, that sense by which all psychic bodies can be known, if we only had that we would realise that this is a double meeting, and that we perhaps are the smaller half of it. We cannot doubt from all that we know of that power of sympathy that they are here—the men who died on the sea, the men who died on the land, and the men who died under the land, and the men, the heroic boys, who, almost before life had dawned upon them, gave their lives in the air for their country. We believe in the depths of our souls that they are here with us to-night, It matters not whether they died in the mud of Flanders, whether they died in the chalk of Picardy, whether it was on the sands of Kut or Mesopotamia or Palestine, or whether they left their young lives among the swamps of Equatorial Africa. They have died at the ends of the earth, but we have the power, by our love, which is a real invocation, to draw them all to us to-night. We know it even as we know the span of that great roof above us.

They have done much for us, and we have to ask what we can do for them. They tell us one thing we can do is not to mourn for them. They tell us that their lives are spent in such ineffable happiness as they never could have dreamed of on this planet, and nothing on earth except their love for us causes them ever to think again of a world which is so immeasurably inferior in happiness and comfort to that which they inhabit. Therefore, they tell us not to mourn, because when we mourn it is the one thing which casts a cold cloud upon their perfect happiness. The other thing they tell us is not to look upon them as things forgotten and done with, to rule them out of life, but, go where we will, in our hearts to carry them with us, remembering that they are there and making them one of the family circle. That also they beg us to do.

There is much which they can help us to do. They can help us above all to do our duty, they can help us to fight a hard battle just as they fought a hard battle, and not to mind what the consequences may be. We have got this battle before us, and everyone can fight it out in their own little circle, fighting it with tact. We do not want to proselytise, but the day of sorrow and trouble is the day when we can approach a friend and perhaps set him on the right path. That is what we have to do—to fight this battle even as they fought theirs. They have won great things by their death—they have won, I have no doubt, a

hundred years of peace in Europe. They have solved a great number of tangled political questions, they have straightened a number of crooked frontiers, they have allowed civilisation to go where barbarism once was unchecked, and, believe me, the greatest thing that will come through the war, the greatest thing that will come from their death is not political at all but religious. Their death has given us a tremendous driving force. The shock of this horrible catastrophe, steadying every man's mind, making him look hard at his old beliefs, has made him say that he has done with phrases and mere wards, and wants to get to the facts, to get something which is solid and certain. It is their death which has caused us to take that line of thought and given us the power by which we may drive that line of thought into the heads of the whole human race and into their hearts. That, I believe, will be the permanent effect of the great movement which has gathered you and me together here to-night.

Miss Winnie Bowden then gave a fine rendition of the song "Vale'' (Farewell).

A CENTURY LATER



History was made by the President of the Spiritualists' National Union, Minister David Bruton, who was invited to represent Spiritualists at the

"Centenary of the Armistice"

For the first time in our history Spiritualists were represented at the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph by SNU President Minister David Bruton on November 11th 2018.



Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith, in his confirmation letter to Minister Bruton noted:[15]

"… I would like to formally confirm that you have been successful in your application to have the Spiritualists included as permanent faith and belief representatives.

"The Spiritualists have a long link to Britain's Armed Forces and I am delighted that the National Service of Remembrance will now be truly reflective of the diverse faiths and beliefs which help to make Britain the great country we are today."



Further, Minister Steven Upton, himself a former member of the Armed Forces, was nominated by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Spiritualists' National Union to accompany its President to this momentous occasion in our history.[16]





ARMISTICE DAY 2018
SNU WEBSITE:

https://www.snu.org.uk/News/armistice-day-2018

[15] President David Bruton, back right of the photograph shown.

[16] Minister Steven Upton is the SNU Education and Exponents Director, Public Relations Officer, Faith Advisor to HM Prison and Young Offenders Service, and Faith Advisor to HM Armed Forces.

THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION & WORLD WAR II

I have been asked several times for the views and direction the Spiritualists' National Union took during the war years of WWII,

the general attitudes of its members and of the Movement during these dark years.

We can note below that it brings an interesting opportunity of discussing the many avenues and decisions taken in this complex time of opinions, etc.!

In the years running up to World War II the SNU was losing ground. This was reported at its Annual General Meeting, when some 160 delegates assembled at the Royal Hotel, Russell Square, London, on Saturday July 3rd, 1937.[1]

"In the National Council's report and in the address by the president, J. B. Mclndoe, it was stressed that the leading body in organised Spiritualism is not making progress.

Five Years Ago

Five years ago S.N.U. membership was 15,058 with an average membership per church of 31.4. At the end of 1936 membership had dropped to 14,939 with an average membership per church of 29.37.

The report and the discussion which followed, showed that the S.N.U. is perturbed by the growth of "one-man" churches. Some delegates declared that there were more new churches with 20 members or so than any other kind.

In the council's report there is this striking sentence, "At least 150 churches have shown no increase in membership during the last five years, though at no time in the history of Spiritualism has greater interest been shown by the man in the street than in the last few years. Yet comparatively few have become members of churches affiliated to the union."



John B. Mclndoe

[1] Psychic News, July 10th, 1937.

One suggestion by President McIndoe was to consider an SNU newspaper or journal to bring awareness to their churches; he was, however, frank, reminding the delegates of the "failure of their previous venture, the 'National Spiritualist'." This was featured in the first issue of Pioneer, August 2013.

Delegates were eager to see a journal of some kind starting right away, resulting in a resolution which was passed by 79 votes to 3 pledging support to the Council in any efforts to re-establish a national journal—this, however, did not come to fruition.

One the second day of the Conference:

S.N.U. Peace Debate Shows Split Over Rearming
"WE CANNOT SHIRK DEFENCE"

THE Spiritualists' National Union, at its annual conference in London on Sunday passed a resolution re-affirming its determination to work for peace and urging the Government "to pursue its efforts to maintain peace within the British Empire and to so strengthen its defences as to keep its people safe from attack."

Moving the resolution, which was in the name of the National Council, J. M. Stewart, who is honorary treasurer of the Union, said that the actual phrasing (which is given in the leading article on page six.) was the work of the general secretary of the Union, Frank T. Harris.[2]

Composite Motion

It was a composite motion, drawn up in an attempt to satisfy all points of view, but Stewart considered it unlikely that the conference would give it a unanimous vote.

While many people, with whom he had a great deal of sympathy, would under no circumstance resort to war, they must remember that practically two-thirds of the civilised world to-day was under dictatorship.

Nations Train For War

The Press and the cinema were being used to create a mentality which was in harmony with that of the dictator, and nations were being trained systematically in philosophy of violence.

They regarded war as glorious and considered that peace was neither possible nor desirable. The time was coming when all peace keepers would have to make a stand against all peace breakers. Defence of peace was a duty which they could not very well shirk.

He did not advocate resorting to force until every other means had been adopted to secure peace. But to repel an attack on world peace, and to repel it by means of arms, might perhaps be the only way of conserving peace. It was in that spirit that he moved the resolution.

"Wrong To Kill"

A. G. Newton declared that it was in the spirit of "the protection of peace and liberty" that the war of 1914 was started.

He moved an amendment deleting the words which supported the Government's rearmament programme.

[2] A photograph of the National Council is shown at the end of this report.

It was wrong to kill even people who attacked you he said. If it was right to kill people who attacked, it was also right to hang people who had committed murder—and to this the Union had been opposed in the past.

Newton's amendment was lost by 45 votes to 32.[3]

"I have found that if you want a Jolly good row you can get it by putting forward a peace resolution," declared J. Slimin. A peace resolution on which there was disagreement was not worth anything and they should delete everything that was in the slightest degree controversial.

He proposed a further amendment, but that too was defeated.

Frank T. Blake, supporting the original motion, declared that he was responsible for the spirit of the resolution.

"No one desires to work for peace more than I do," he said. "I try to look at it from a world-wide angle and there is a responsibility on our empire which does not seem to be realised by some of those who have opposed this resolution,

"Be Strong"

"In a sense that is both spiritual and material, we are the responsible factors for peace in the world to-day. That is our position as an empire.

"I maintain that the best method by which we may maintain peace, and assure its maintenance, is to strengthen ourselves in whatever manner is necessary so that we can say to the dictators who would destroy peace that their actions must stop."

Brigandage To-day

In the conquest of Abyssinia, he went on, they had witnessed brigandage in the twentieth century and there was something of the same kind of thing going on in Spain. It would spread like a cancer unless the British Empire was strong enough to cut it out.

Mrs. Granville, a London delegate, asked the delegates whether they were prepared to say they had the right to determine the existence on this earth of any soul.



Those Who Are Maimed

Ernest Oaten emphasised that the worst part of war was not killing people but maiming them so that they lived an incomplete life for years afterwards, unable to take their place in the world. The people who were killed were the only ones who deserved to be congratulated.

There was a further amendment, pruning the resolution still further, but this, too, was defeated and eventually the original motion was carried by 55 votes to 24.

[3] The SNU Council sustained a great loss on September 22nd, 1938 with the death of Alexander George Newton, well-known within the Spiritualist movement, being elected to the SNU Council in 1915 and Vice-President. For many years he was involved with Southampton Church as Secretary, Vice-President, etc.

John McIndoe, known as Mac,[4] was once again President of the Union; this was his eighth year, a record for the SNU. He made it clear he would not stand again for re-election and told the Conference,

> *that it was only because his colleagues had pressed him that he had allowed himself to be nominated again this year.*

Given that the SNU voted in favour of the "Arms Resolution" an overwhelming number of Spiritualists were against it—dividing the Union and movement and bringing much criticism of the Union—as well as much debate within the pages of the Spiritualist journals.

However, at the SNU AGM the following year, held at the YMCA Hall, Dale End, Birmingham on July 2nd, John McIndoe's Vice-President, Frank Blake, became the new Union President. The Conference showed the annual and interim reports with an increase of Churches from 511 to 539, bringing a paying membership of 13,617 against 12,927 the previous year. Subscribing members had also increased.

McIndoe continued his work within the SNU, as did J. Arthur Findlay's brother John, the Union's Scottish representative. Below, taken from the "Two Worlds", March 31st, 1939, shows the victory of Spiritualists being legally able to have their marriages conducted within their churches in Scotland:

SPIRITUALIST MARRIAGES IN SCOTLAND

We Win Our Rights

AT the Annual Meeting of the Scottish District Council, Mr. J. B. M'Indoe presented a report upon Scottish marriages. At a previous Annual Meeting, a resolution had been passed that the matter be taken up with the Scottish Secretary, and through the good offices of Mr. Erskine Hill, M.P., Colonel Colville had received a deputation of Spiritualists to hear their claim. Subsequently an interview had been arranged with the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor-General for Scotland.

Mr. J, G. Findlay and Mr, M'Indoe had had a very sympathetic hearing from the Law Officers at Edinburgh in January last, and as a result, the restrictions placed upon Spiritualists were to be removed.

The position was that between 1910 and 1920 Spiritualists had exercised the right to celebrate their own marriages, and these had been registered without question. Then some time between 1920 and 1923 the Registrar-General, without intimating the fact to anyone, had decided that marriages conducted by Spiritualists were not to be registered. This came to his, Mr, M'Indoe's notice in 1923 when two Spiritualists in Glasgow desired to wed, and were informed that such marriage could not be registered. Correspondence with the Registrar-General followed, in the course of which they were informed that since Spiritualists did not practice Baptism "in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost," and as also they admitted Jews into membership, they could not be regarded as Christians; therefore their officers were not entitled to celebrate marriage.

The Spiritualists raised protests against this restriction of their liberties, and at the Annual Meeting of the S.N.U, at Newcastle, in 1923, a strong resolution of protest was passed. In the same year questions were asked in Parliament, and they were practically told that if they were dissatisfied, they could raise the matter in the law courts. This meant, in effect, that a marriage should be conducted, and that they should appeal to the courts to determine whether the contracting parties were really married, thus setting up an impossible position. The question

[4] McIndoe first row centre, on his right Frank Blake; the end chair is Ernest Keeling, the far end of the first row is, I believe, Frank Harris, on his right Ernest Oaten. Apart from Harris all mentioned were SNU Presidents. The photograph was taken at Barrow.

had been raised with subsequent Scottish Secretaries, and a lengthy statement, accompanied by numerous documents had been made to the Commission set up to consider Scottish Marriage Laws in 1936. All these efforts had been fruitless,

Fortunately they now had a Secretary for Scotland who ignored theological questions and treated the matter as purely one of law.

The case which the deputation put to the Law Officers that if omission to baptise in a certain manner was the real reason for debarring Spiritualists from their rights, then the law was not being impartially administered, since members of other denominations with similar practices were allowed to perform marriages. The deputation claimed that the words "minister" and "pastor" were being interpreted in a narrow and restrictive way, which if applied to other definitions in the Act would render them absurd.

When the Registration Act was passed, it had been emphatically stated that the law was not concerned with who performed a marriage, but merely with having the ceremony registered, and this had later been endorsed by the Royal Commission on Registration.

The deputation appealed to the Law Officers not to be parties to impossible restrictions and narrowing the standards of freedom, in a way which those who framed the law nearly a century ago would have repudiated

Finally, it was pointed out that no regulations modifying the procedure under which Spiritualist marriages were formerly celebrated had ever been approved by Parliament or provided by Statute.

Mr, M'Indoe was pleased to be able to report that the Law Officers had now apparently recognised the justice of the claim put forward by Spiritualists, and advised the Scottish Secretary accordingly. All that now remains is to arrange the details of procedure with the Registrar-General.

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At the 1939 Annual Conference of the SNU held on July 2nd and 3rd on the premises of the Cardiff First National Church, Park Grove, about 120 delegates and members attended.[5] Once again there was a substantial rise in Union membership. Below is published from the "Two Worlds", July 7th, 1939:

The Secretary, in his interim report, showed that the membership had advance from 13,620. to 14,028. In analysing the membership of churches, he produced the following interesting figures: The average number of members per church was: in Scotland, 47.3; London, 46.9; Southern, 41.6; Lancashire, 26.7; Midlands, 24.4; Wales, 18.8; Yorkshire, 18.2.



Around this time Ernest Oaten laid the foundation-stone of Portsmouth's new £3,600 Church.

[5] Featured in Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 6, December 2018: "Cardiff SNU Church, Park Grove".

As Britain was preparing to go to war many Spiritualists were *fully content* in the idea that all would be okay—in the knowledge that it would be avoided, as many of the leading 'spirit guides' gave their firm assurances that there would be "No War".

This issue of *firm assurances that there would be "No War"* and some claims that SNU Churches went into steep decline during this period are further addressed in Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 1, February 2016, quoted below:

Editor's comments on the fall in national membership:

Various reports show a dramatic drop during WWII in numbers of SNU Churches and membership; Quastel states a loss of 200 churches! Geoffrey K. Nelson's book, "Spiritualism and Society", first published in 1969, is an excellent reference book covering SNU history, with statistical tables, etc. Nelson reports that at the outbreak of war the Union had over 500 churches affiliated, with a total membership of 14,028; he further states:

"When the annual report was published in 1940 the number of affiliated churches had fallen to 361 and the number of members to 12, 460."

Nelson further reports:

"The movement continued to decline and reached a new low in 1941, when the interim report of the S.N.U. revealed that only 313 churches were then affiliated with a membership of 10, 250."

Some of the decline would be a result of the "No World War" predictions. Leading spirit guides such as Silver Birch, Red Cloud and others assured Spiritualists there would be no war. Assurances were given, more or less emphatic, that there would be "no European War," or that there would be "no Great War," or that there would be "no war for England." SNU President Frank Blake repeatedly said in public and in the press that "war would not come."

These incorrect prophecies from the spirit world dealt Spiritualism a severe blow within the movement and no doubt caused amusement and ridicule from its critics. In the next issue of "Pioneer" I will publish more on this, together with President Blake's and Red Cloud's response to the false prophecies, which had caused bitter disappointment within the movement, as many were no doubt convinced of the infallibility of the spirit guides.

A larger proportion of the decline, I would suggest, was due to the war conditions, blackouts, travel, the Blitz and conscription, etc, adding greatly to the closures of societies and churches and loss of membership.

Did the Union really go into decline and lose around 200 churches during the war?

The simple answer is 'NO' but I cannot explain where Quastel, Nelson and other reports I have seen got *all* their figures from, although Nelson gave a reference to an SNU Annual Report, but his book, unfortunately, does not generally give precise references.

In 1937 the Union had 510 churches in affiliation; this was seven up on the previous year. By the end of 1938 this had dropped to 475, with 14,750 members. By the end of 1939, the year WWII started, the Union had lost another church but had gained another 250 members, making a total of 15,000.

We can note that both Quastel and Nelson state that at the outbreak of war the number of churches affiliated to the Union was 500 and over 500 respectively. The net decrease of 35 churches between 1937 and 1938 was "*mainly due to a revision of the records*". This

will help to explain why the SNU Annual Report for 1938 gives the number of churches as 475.

As for Quastel's statement that "at one period it was as low as 300", and Geoffrey Nelson's: "When the annual report was published in 1940 the number of affiliated churches had fallen to 361 and the number of members to 12,460", and "…1941, when the interim report of the SNU revealed that only 313 churches…", I cannot fully explain this.

The 1940 SNU Annual Report states, page 10: "The number of Churches on the register at December 1940 was 401, with a membership of 13,863. This shows a decrease of 73 Churches and 1,137 members." In 1941, Nelson reveals, there are only 313 churches! Again, the SNU Annual Report states, page 10: "At December, 1941, there were 414 Churches on the register, with a membership of 12,457. There is an increase of 13 Churches, but there is a membership decrease of 1,406."

It should be noted that all the information I have used is taken from the published SNU Annual Reports of the day; these reports record the whole year, ending in December. So it should be noted that figures will vary throughout war-torn Britain during these years, for example in the July AGM's interim reports, etc.

Although the SNU Annual Reports show the lowest amount of churches during the war years as 401 in December 1940, it may have dropped into the 300s earlier in the year. Figures from the SNU Annual Reports during the war period are available on request. To conclude, it can be noted:

Year-end 1939: there were 474 Churches and a 15,000 membership

Year-end 1945: there were 460 Churches and a 14,924 membership

By the end of 1946 there was an increase to 486 Churches and a 16,446 membership

So no substantial long-term losses during the war years

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The question of the "No War" prophecies would be debated within the Spiritualist press for a long time and they still continued throughout the war to be published with few positive results. Also in debate was the question, "Are prophecies part of Spiritualism?"!



WAR REACTIONS

The propaganda meeting of the Bankfoot National Spiritualist Church, advertised to be held in the cinema on the 17th instant, and which will be addressed by Countess Wydenbruck, has been transferred to the Spiritualist Church, Bowling Old Lane, in consequence of local regulations.

* * * *

Mr. George T. Brown notifies us that the Spiritualist Church at Great Yarmouth has temporarily closed its evening meetings. The ladies' meeting on Tuesday afternoon will continue.

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The propaganda meeting arranged for the autumn by the Gloucester Spiritualist Church has had to be cancelled, as the hall has been commandeered by military authorities.

Very early after Britain and France declared war on Germany on September 3rd the Spiritualist press was showing the effect it had on their meetings; this notice was published in the "Two Worlds", September 15th, 1939.

On the same page the SNU President, Frank Blake, publishes the letter below:

AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE S.N.U.

To My Fellow Spiritualists



Frank Blake

To myself personally the outbreak of War has been as I know it must be to a vast number of us a great shock. Many of us, relying upon spirit messages or psychic vision, hoped and thought it would not occur.

This is not the time to discuss or try and explain why our prophecies have gone wrong that will form a useful matter for discussions later. At the moment our stern duty is to face and address ourselves to the reality that we are at war.

Many of our number will be called to national service of one kind or another, leaving but a thin remnant to carry on the ministry of our Movement. This will necessitate the closing up of out ranks and a consolidating of all our efforts. Churches will be very largely dependent upon local initiative and such help as may be found in their immediate district. To keep our Churches open should be the first consideration of those who are free to give their time and service. It will be a time of testing for us all.

To this end, I would suggest that where there are two or three churches in close proximity, an agreement should be arrived at between them for the present to close down one or two, as the case may be, and to concentrate upon the one elected to keep open. By pooling effort in this way, the Movement could be kept active in many a district where otherwise it may, through divided effort, be forced out of existence. With a will to agree and co-operate, minor difficulties could be overcome and a really live interest maintained. Financial considerations could be adjusted to meet the new situation. This arrangement, if approached with goodwill, could be adopted as between Union and non-Union churches.

It would help churches considerably if those booked for platform engagements, and through existing circumstances are not now able to keep them, would let the churches concerned know as quickly as possible, Churches not able to maintain their services should inform engaged workers as quickly as possible.

The Union office will be maintained, and will be willing, as far as it lies within its power, to advise and assist churches to carry on.

Lastly, I make an earnest appeal to *all* Spiritualists—those in membership with the Union and those who are not—to give themselves generously to whatever service they find possible in this hour of human need.

The battle we are called upon to fight is not against human comrades, but against an evil power. Whatever immediate personal sacrifice we are called upon to make will be made if—as it will—it helps to destroy for ever the evil force that seeks to dominate our world.

I pray most devoutly that God and His angels with strengthen, protect and comfort you all.

FRANK T. BLAKE

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Within the next two months the "Two Worlds", November 3rd, 1939 published the Spiritualists' National Union's Manifesto:

Spiritualists and the War

Manifesto by the Council of the Spiritualists' National Union

THE Officers and Council of the Spiritualists' National Union feel it necessary to make public their attitude in the circumstances which have disturbed Europe and the world, especially since the declaration of war by the British Commonwealth and its Allies.

The fundamental principles of Spiritualism emphasise the essential value and sacredness of individual life, the right of the individual to mental and spiritual liberty, (always provided that its exercise does not impose restrictions on the similar activities of his fellows,) and the bounden duty of the Spiritualist to exercise the principles of brotherhood in assisting and protecting his weaker brethren in the attainment of these principles.

Whilst we recognise the folly of war and bloodshed, which is a survival of primitive times, and which should in the course of time lead up to higher spiritual conceptions, we cannot be unmindful of the fact that the peoples of several nations have had their freedom and liberty restricted by brute force, that they are being enslaved both physically and mentally, and are thus being deprived of their rights as individual souls.

We regard this liberty as one of the most sacred and cherished possessions of mankind, arising from man's inherently divine nature.

This liberty is now threatened, and the right of the individual to determine and control his actions and destiny is so seriously endangered that it may be lost for generations.

Whilst, therefore, this Council still affirms the right of an individual to act according to the dictates of his conscience, we feel that the principle of man's common brotherhood involves the duty of assisting the weak and oppressed; of contesting by every means in our power for the maintenance of that freedom, both mental and spiritual, which has taken centuries to achieve, which is man's spiritual right, and which ultimately must be established.

In our opinion it is the duty of Spiritualists to serve the cause of liberty in any and every way which conscience dictates. To do less would be a denial of the value of that freedom which has been attained, and would hinder the realisation of those higher ideals for which we constantly strive.

Our ultimate object must be the attainment not only of an honourable peace, but the establishment of such a world order that honourable men shall never again be compelled to choose between the possible sacrifice of their physical lives and the surrender of ideals of supreme value to humanity.

On behalf of the Council,

FRANK T. BLAKE, President.
ERNEST A. KEELING, Secretary,

21st October, 1939.

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However, not all members were in agreement with the Union's Manifesto, as the "Two Worlds", December 1st, 1939 reported:

THE S.N.U. MANIFESTO

WE have received the following communications with reference to the Manifesto recently issued. We are publishing them because we consider it right that those who differ from the Manifesto should be allowed to present their point of view. It must be clearly understood, however, that our space is restricted and we cannot undertake to continue similar publication in the future.

From Parkstone Church

The Committee of the Parkstone N.S.C deplore the lack of helpful direction to be found in the Manifesto, "Spiritualists and the War." It feels that such a Manifesto should only be published after the opinions of the affiliated churches have been ascertained. so that such a publication shall express at least the voice of the Movement as well as that of its officers.

Nine from Blackburn

"In view of the fact that we, the undersigned, have arrived at the profound conviction that war under *any* circumstances is wrong, and that we have arrived at these opinions primarily from the teachings of Spiritualism as taught in the Lyceums to-day, we respectfully but earnestly protest against the Manifesto recently issued by yourselves respecting the Spiritualist's attitude toward the present conflict between the nations.

"We feel that, in consideration of the grave importance of the matter, it was the duty of the Council to first secure a referendum from the members of all the affiliated churches.

As this most directly affects the younger members of our Movement, it is only fair that their opinion at least should have been ascertained before publishing such a Manifesto, which not only undermines the standing and case of the Spiritualist Conscientious Objector, but also negates the teaching of the Philosophy of Spiritualism.

Further, if as stated in the Manifesto the individual should follow out the dictates of his own conscience, it is apparent that the issuing of such a document was unnecessary, and its effect would be to influence Spiritualists in a pro-war direction, which is contrary to all the principles of our Movement.

"We, therefore, respectfully request the early retraction of the Manifesto until such time as a consensus of opinion can be obtained."

Yours very sincerely
(Acting Secretary for the undersigned),
A. V. Moorey
and eight other signatures.

To be continued.…

RICHARD (DICK) ELLIDGE



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

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

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

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

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

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

This Man Is the Mainspring of Organised Spiritualism



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

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

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

THE SMALL UPPER ROOM

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

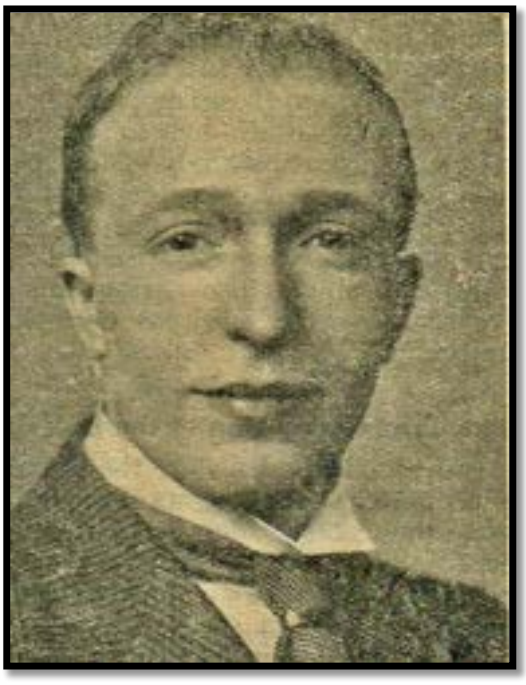
When he first began to take notice in a conscious way—his early interest was derived from his mother, wo was a keen Spiritualist—the Shaw congregation met in a small room over a stable. There may be some Biblical significance in this fact. His mother was one of the most active members of the congregation.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

A YOUTH MOVEMENT

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

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

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



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

A PROFITABLE DEAL

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

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

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

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

AN OPTIMIST

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

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

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

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

CIVIC RECOGNITION

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

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

PRISON VISITOR

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

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

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

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

SPIRITUAL HEALING

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

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

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SNU Registered Offices:

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

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

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

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

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

ERNEST OATEN

Rights of Spiritualism



Earnest Oaten's contribution to Spiritualism and the Spiritualists' National Union was considerable. Some of his labours have previously been published in Pioneer [14] and Psypioneer. Oaten made history on Friday, April 13th, 1934, by making the first broadcast talk on Spiritualism, which was transmitted from London by the BBC. Oaten was unanimously chosen as the representative of the Spiritualist movement.[15]

Spiritualism from its early beginnings has had to fight not only the persecution of the Christian Church and its many Christian groups but also antiquated Acts within the then laws in England.

It should be noted that Spiritualism has never in itself been illegal, as some reports suggest—but some of its practices had violated certain Acts in English law, such as the Vagrancy Act, etc., which affected the movement widely (for over seven decades) from the mid-1870s.[16]

July 1st 1930 saw the first deputation to the Right Honourable J.R. Clynes, M.P. (Home Secretary) at the Home Office, Whitehall, S.W.1 by the United Spiritualist Organisations for the purpose of parliamentary action for the amendment of the Witchcraft and Vagrancy Acts. Ernest Oaten, with others, represented the SNU and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle represented the International Spiritualist Federation. This was to be Doyle's last of his many services to the movement, as he passed on July 7th.[17]

There were *no official Ministers* in organised Spiritualism until circa 1938, when the SNU announced their first Ministers. Oaten, then president of the Union, however, proclaimed himself a Minister! This would have been through his church work and not the Union.

Ernest Oaten was charged on July 6th 1918 for failing to accept military service on the grounds that he was a Minister of a religious denomination.

The case was heard at Sheffield West Riding Police Court on October 15th 1918. A verbatim report of the full Police Court proceedings was published by the SNU in 1918 – "On the Side of Angels – the Law v. Spiritualism"; a PDF copy is freely available on request.

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[14] Vol. 1, No. 2: Ernest Walter Oaten (1875-1952) – His contribution to Spiritualism was long and notable, giving almost 60 years' service – The History of the Two Worlds – Twenty-One Years – Oaten tells us how through spirit guidance his position as editor was orchestrated by the spirit of Emma Hardinge Britten.
Vol. 5, No. 1: When Spiritualists Refused the B.B.C. – How Conan Doyle Declined to Broadcast – Ernest W. Oaten.
Vol. 6, No. 1: – Ernest Oaten Spirit Photography – M. J. Vearncombe – Corona, Corona! – John Sloan.

[15] Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 7: full report on the recording.

[16] See Pioneer for the six-part series: The Effect of the Vagrancy Act – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union – starting in Vol. 2, No. 1.

[17] Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 7: Deputation to the Right Honourable J. R. Clynes MP by the United Spiritualist Organisations, July 1st 1930.

Below gives another example of an Act which hindered the Spiritualist movement, the "Burials Act", which was addressed by Ernest Oaten when he was the editor (1919-1945) of the "Two Worlds"; it was again published on January 5th 1952, a couple of days after Oaten's death on January 3rd 1952, at the request of SNU President Percy Wilson.



Rights of Spiritualism under the Burial Acts

by Ernest Oaten

This article by the late Ernest W. Oaten was written for "Two Worlds" nine years ago when he was Editor.

It is reproduced here at the request of Mr. Percy Wilson, M.A., (Oxon.) President of the Spiritualists' National Union, which regularly receives enquiries for information on this subject.

This is a further example of how Earnest Oaten served a movement which is now asked to express in a practical way—its appreciation of a lifetime devoted to Spiritualism by subscribing to his Memorial Fund.

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A correspondent raises the question of Spiritualist Funerals. A friend of his would like to be buried as a Spiritualist when the time. Comes. How should he proceed?

In the case of a public cemetery there is no difficulty, and I have never heard of an objection at a public or private crematorium.

Relatives of the deceased generally instruct the undertaker who is in charge of the funeral, and he, being accustomed to the work endeavours to carry out the desires of his client.

When making arrangements for the interment he notifies the cemetery authorities that his client will provide his own minister. Relatives of the deceased must then determine who shall conduct the funeral. Any person may conduct the service, either in the chapel or at the graveside, but care should be taken to choose a person who can officiate with dignity and efficiency.

The minister conducting a Spiritualist service has no claim to the use of the Anglican or Roman Catholic Churches (though this is sometimes waived in special circumstances), but in general he uses the nonconformist chapel at the cemetery.

The Spiritualists' National Union has prepared a list of ministers. (See S.N.U. Diary), any of whom will conduct such a service by request.

Opposition is sometimes met when it is proposed to conduct a spiritualist funeral in a parish churchyard.

Now, by the common law of England, every parishioner is entitled to be buried in the churchyard of his parish and for this purpose every person is a parishioner of the

parish in which he dies. Prior to the Burials Act, 1880, the burial service of the Church of England was the only one which might be used in a churchyard or other consecrated ground. By the provisions of the above Act, nonconformists were given certain rights. The Act specifies that notice of an intention to bury, either in churchyards or the consecrated parts of parochial cemeteries should be given with as little delay as possible and must not be later than forty-eight hours before the time proposed for the burial. The notice may be given by any relative, friend or the legal representative responsible for the burial. He may be the minister who will conduct the service, or the undertaker, if duly authorised. The notice must be given in writing, must be endorsed on the outside "Notice of Burial" and be to the following effect:

> I ……. Of ……., being the relative (or friend or legal representative) having charge of or being responsible for the Burial of A.B, ……. of ……. Who died at ……. in the parish of ……. on the ……. day of ……. do hereby give you notice that it is intended by me that the body of the said A.B, ……. shall be buried within the (here describe the churchyard or graveyard) on the ……. day of ……. at the hour of ……. without the performance in the manner prescribed by law of the service for the burial of the dead according to the rites of the Church of England; and I give this notice pursuant of the Burial Laws Amendment Act, 1880.
>
> To the Rector (or Vicar as the case may be) of …….

(N.B. Whilst it is desirable to keep to this form, the person receiving it is not at liberty to object if the exact words are not used. The Act only requires that the notice shall be in the form or to the effect of the above.)

In the case of a churchyard, the notice to be left at the house of the clergyman, or, in his absence, of the clergyman in charge of the parish, or of any person appointed to receive such notices.

In the case of a parochial cemetery, if there is a chaplain for the consecrated ground the notice should be addressed to him, but should be left at the office of the clerk of the Burial Authority.

In the case of a pauper, notice may be given to the incumbent or the chaplain, and to the work-house master or the clerk to the Guardians, by the husband, wife or next of kin of the deceased. The Guardians will be bound to allow the burial to be in accordance with the Act.

It is not necessary that the clergyman to whom notice is given should consent to a burial under the Act. He can only object to the time proposed under certain circumstances. Unless it be mutually arranged, burials must be between 10 and 6 o'clock from April 1st to October 1st and between 10 and 3 o'clock from October 1st to April 1st.

A burial may take place either without "any religious service" or with such "christian and orderly religious service" at the grave as the person responsible for the burial may think fitting, and any person or persons — whether ministers or laymen — who may be invited or authorised may conduct such service, or take part in any religious act thereat. All burials must be decent and orderly, and anyone guilty of riotous, violent or indecent behaviour, or of obstructing any service will be guilty of misdemeanour. So also will "any person who shall deliver any address not being part of, or incidental, to any religious service" permitted by the Act, or who wilfully endeavours "to bring into contempt or obliquy the Christian religion, or the belief or

worship of any church or denomination of Christians, or the minister or members of any such church or denomination or any other person."

The person having charge of a burial under the Act must either on the same day or the day thereafter send to the incumbent or his representative—in the case of a cemetery to the clerk—a certificate of burial in the prescribed form.

> I ……. of ……. the person having charge of or being responsible for the burial of the deceased, do hereby certify that on the ……. day of ……. 19 ……. was buried in the churchyard (or graveyard) or the parish (or district) of …….
>
> To the Rector or other responsible person.

(This requirement is generally covered by the person officiating signing a special register at the office of the clerk—or the vestry of the church as the case may be.)

The certificate of burial must not be confounded with the registrar's certificate of death.

The Act of 1880 does not entitle anyone to be buried in any place in which he would have had no right to be buried if the Act had not been passed.

When permission to bury a non-parishioner is given (as, for instance, in the case of a person dying outside the parish who owns a grave within the churchyard or parochial cemetery) the service may be conducted under the Act. The incumbent has no legal right to make his consent to such a burial dependent of the service being conducted by himself or any other minister or clergyman. The same fees will be payable as though the burial was conducted by a clergyman.

The Act of 1880 applies only to England, Wales and the Channel Isles:

Burial Grounds Act 1900. This Act, which came into force on January 1st, 1901, modifies the Act of 1880 by making the forty-eight hours' notice unnecessary in the case of parochial cemeteries. This Act does not apply to churchyards. In such cemeteries opened after the passing of the Act, Burial authorities are not compelled to erect separate buildings for Anglicans and other denominations. They may erect any chapel they consider necessary and this shall not be consecrated or reserved for the exclusive use of any denomination. The parson conducting such a service is entitled to the fee.

The above information has been compiled for the guidance of church officials and spiritualist ministers, and should be kept for reference.

Extract from "Two Worlds" dated April 9th, 1943.



PRESIDENT OR CHAIRMAN?



The foundation of the Spiritualists' National Union began with the National Conference of British Spiritualists held in the Assembly Room of the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester on July 6th, 1890. They nominated the veteran Spiritualist, John Lamont, of Liverpool as their first Conference President. [1] Lamont was again elected for their second Conference. However, Lamont was unable to fulfil his commitment owing to illness, resulting in the Executive and Bradford Committees appointing Samuel Chiswell as their Conference President.



The second Conference was held on July 4th and 5th 1891; after a meeting at the Temperance Hall on the Saturday evening the Conference commenced on Sunday the 5th at the Prince's Theatre, Bradford, Yorkshire, with around 2,000 people present.[2] It was here that the Spiritualists' National Federation (SNF) was formed and constituted under the Conference President, Samuel Chiswell. He would later serve as SNF President the following year and in 1895 also; for that year he was the second President of the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union. Chiswell was a former chairman on the Two Worlds' Board of Directors.

It has been previously noted in the Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 5, "British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union – Lyceum Archives moved to Stansted Hall", how the Lyceum Union were so very closely entwined in the early days of the establishment of National Spiritualism.

Some of the Presidents of the Spiritualists' National Federation" (SNF) were also Lyceum Presidents:

> Samuel S. Chiswell (1891, 1892, 1895), John Venables (1901), James J. Morse (1899, 1900), William Johnson (1902).

Later, the SNF was reconstituted into the Spiritualists' National Union (SNU); for details please see Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 1, "National Federation to National Union".

This continued with SNU Presidents:

> Jessy Greenwood (1923–25), Albert Wilkinson (1910), William Johnson (1902), Ernest Keeling (1928–30).

[1] Photograph of John Lamont: see Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: "John Lamont – Our first President – The Passing of John Lamont."

[2] It should be noted that Emma Hardinge Britten was never the President of the National Federation, as is often assumed. After the 1891 Conference Emma seems not to have attended any other meeting or Conferences of the Spiritualists' National Federation and in February 1892 she resigned as editor of the Two Worlds.

However, there is some confusion in the old SNF Conference reports, etc. as to the position of: ***President*** – ***Chairman*** – and these were used interchangeably in the many different reports to mean the ***same position***.

At the tenth Annual Conference of the Spiritualists' National Federation, held at Blackpool on Saturday and Sunday, July 1st and 2nd, 1899, a Committee Meeting of the Temperance Section was held on the Sunday morning; owing to a small attendance it was postponed to the following morning. We can note in The Two Worlds, July 7th, 1899:

> The Conference was called to order by the President at 10-5, and after a hymn and invocation by Mr. Thos. Grimshaw, the President delivered his official address.

The President at this Conference (and the following year) was James Johnson Morse and within his Presidential address Morse makes an interesting comment on the official position of their "President". During this period of time Morse and his colleagues were pushing for legal changes within the Federation via a Deed Poll. Please see, as previously noted, Pioneer, Vol. 3, No.1: "National Federation to National Union".

Morse stated during his address:



One year ago, at our Conference in the historic town of Keighley, the highest honour our movement can confer on a worker was conferred upon your presiding officer. That he fully appreciated it you will rest assured.

But the Federation founded upon what it is common to describe as 'democratic' lines has no President, and, one of the difficulties your speaker has had to contend against has been the frequent incorrect description of him as the 'President of the Federation,' though at all times he has endeavoured to avoid the appearance, even, of, using a designation to which he is not entitled.

One result of the lack of a Federation President is that the organisation is a body without a head, which, though it may enable us to avoid some, largely imaginary, dangers, may yet cause certain real disadvantages. If our new Constitution becomes operative, an opposite condition of affairs will exist, as therein a President of the Federation is provided for, and, may it be said, wisely so? However, owing to the fact as stated, and that your Executive have held their sessions strictly for business only, and at one place always, there have been no official visits paid to any centres of our work during the past year, nor has your presiding officer felt it right to claim official recognition during his term on the Executive, when visiting societies in the course of his public duties. Should the Walsall resolution be passed, it will help to popularise and strengthen the Federation in many places.

Below is a more detailed list of all the Chairmen – Presidents:

National Conference of British Spiritualists – July 1890

Spiritualists' National Federation (SNF) July 1891 – July 1902

1890 John Lamont (-1900), Liverpool
1891 Samuel Southern Chiswell (1852-1910), born Barleston, Leicestershire
1892 Samuel Southern Chiswell (1852-1910), born Barleston, Leicestershire
1893 James (Jas) Robertson (1844-1913), Glasgow
1894 Peter Lee (1841-1908), born Bolton
1895 Samuel Southern Chiswell (1852-1910), born Barleston, Leicestershire
1896 A.J. Smyth (-1913), Birkenhead, died aged 60
1897 Joseph Armitage (1843-1924), born Dewsbury Moor, Yorkshire
1898 Edward Walter Wallis (1855-1914), born Teddington
1899 James Johnson Morse (1848-1919), born Strand, central London
1900 James Johnson Morse (1848-1919), born Strand, central London
1901 John Venables (c1853-1931), Walsall (incorporation into the SNU) [3]
1902 William Johnson (1838-1914), born York – last elected SNF – First SNU President

Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) July 1902 – present

1903 John James Parr (1860s-1946), born St. Helens, Lancashire – First elected President
1904 John Adams (1841-1922), born Devon
1907 George P. Young (-c1928)
1909 Frank Thomas Hepworth (1859-), Clayton West, Huddersfield, Leeds
1910 Albert W. Wilkinson
1911 George P. Young (-c1928) (term not completed moved), British Columbia, Canada
1912 George Tayler Gwinn (sometimes spelt Taylor)
1915 Ernest Walter Oaten (1875-1952), born Bristol
1920 George F. Berry (1873-1947), Birmingham
1922 Ernest Walter Oaten (1875-1952), born Bristol
1923 Jessy Greenwood (1860-1958), Cawkwell, Lincolnshire – First woman President
1925 Robert Anderson Owen (1881-), Bootle, Lancashire
1928 Ernest Allan Keeling (1877-1958), Anfield, Liverpool
1930 John Brown (Mac) McIndoe (1875-1958), born Paisley, Scotland
1938 Frank Thomas Blake (1875-1941), born Bristol – First President to die in office
1941 John Macintosh Stewart (1883-), Glasgow
1943 A.H.L. (Harold) Vigurs (-1970)
1948 W. Lorraine Haig (1891-1953), Glasgow
1950 Percy Wilson (1893-1977), Halifax area, West Yorkshire
1953 Harry Dawson (1886-), born Bolton
1958 Charles Ivan Quastel – First Jewish President
1965 Dr John Winning (c1886-1975), Scotland

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[3] Mr. James J. Morse, on behalf of the Executive, proposed: 'That this Conference* adopt the advice of Mr. Bateman that the Federation be incorporated under the Joint Stock Companies' Act, with liability limited under guarantee, under the style of 'The Spiritualists' National Union Limited.' Mr William Johnson seconded. In the afternoon session after it was debated and amendments made: James Morse moved the adoption of the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Mr. J. Burchell seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously. When the registration was affected the body would be known as 'The Spiritualists' National Union Limited.'

(Information taken from the Conference report published in the *Two Worlds*, Friday, July 12th, 1901.)

*Held on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th July, 1901 at the Music Hall, Surrey Street, Sheffield.

1968 Charles Ivan Quastel – First Jewish President
1970 Gordon Mons Higginson (1918-1993), Longton – Second President to die in office
1993 Eric Leslie Hatton (1926-2015), born Brierley Hill, West Midlands
1996 Judith Jane Seaman (1946 -), Methley, near Leeds –Second woman President
2000 Duncan P. Gascoyne
2010 David Robert Bruton (1960-), born Sutton Coldfield



President David Bruton at the 2017 AGM wearing the "President's Badge"

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Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 4:

The President's Badge – Robert Owen 1925-1928 – David Bruton 2010

At the twenty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Union, held at Caxton Hall, Westminster and the Artworkers' Guild, Queens Square, Southampton Row, London, on July 2nd and 3rd 1927 respectively, SNU President Robert A. Owen was presented with a new President's badge.

For many years, a farthing coin[4] was the symbol of office carried by the President of the Spiritualists' National Union.[5]

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

[5] See Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 2014: "Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists' National Union" and Vol. 3, No. 5, October 2016: "The 'President's Farthing'". See also Vol. 5, No. 2, April 2018: "The President's Badge and Farthings Again!".
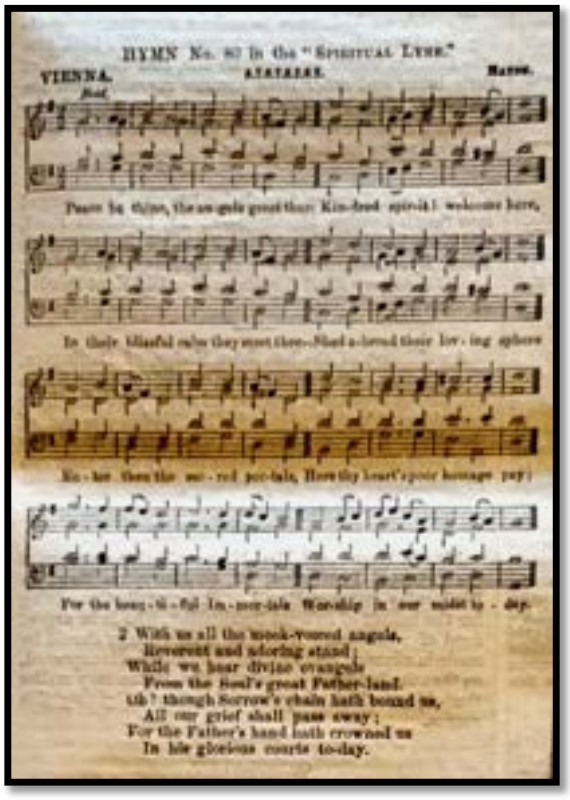
HYMNS AND TUNES FOR SPIRITUAL CIRCLES AND MEETINGS

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In Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 3, June 2017, was featured "Spiritualists' National Federation – Our First National Hymn Book". Hymns, of course, have been an important part of our early history in London. James Burns established Sunday Services; it can be noted in Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 4, "How many Principles made up Emma's "Creed of the Spirits"?":

> As a point of history it is interesting to note that during the autumn of 1869 James Burns was strongly impressed for the necessity of a free platform for the advocacy of Spiritualism in London on Sunday evenings. In early January 1870, the American speaker Mr. Peebles was visiting London and according to Burns he was also impressed with the same necessity in the organisation of Sunday meetings in London. Burns and Peebles strolled out together and found the Cavendish Rooms which was considered to be a suitable place for making a commencement. The first meeting was held on January 23rd 1870 with James Martin Peebles, who stayed in London for four months and who included congregational singing in his services. Various other speakers/mediums took to the Sunday evening rostrum; it was at these meetings there commenced the career of James J. Morse as a trance-speaker.
>
> Emma began her addresses at the larger Cleveland Hall, Cleveland Street, London on January 1st 1871 and concluded her run of Sunday Services on April 30th. Apart from March 19th when Emma was ill she conducted twenty one consecutive Sunday Services at the two venues. Her concluding lecture on Sunday April 30th 1871 was titled "The Creed of the Spirits, and the Influence of the Religion of Spiritualism" It was in this lecture that Emma gave four of her principles …

Pioneer continued the theme in Vol. 4, Nos. 5 & 6: "Early Spiritualist Sunday Services – Sunday services in Spiritualism – 1877 & Early Spiritualist Sunday Services – continued…" "An Ideal Religious Service for Spiritualists and Inquirers – E. W. Wallis, 1895".


HYMN No. 80 in the "SPIRITUAL LYRE."

VIENNA. AUSTRIA. HARM.

2 With us all the rook-roused angels,
Reverent and adoring stand;
While we hear divine evangels
From the Soul's great Father-land.
Oh! though Sorrow's chain hath bound us,
All our grief shall pass away;
For the Father's hand hath crowned us
In his glorious courts to-day.

James Burns in his weekly journal, "The Medium and Daybreak", published some of the hymns and music. Below is taken from issue April 22nd, 1881:

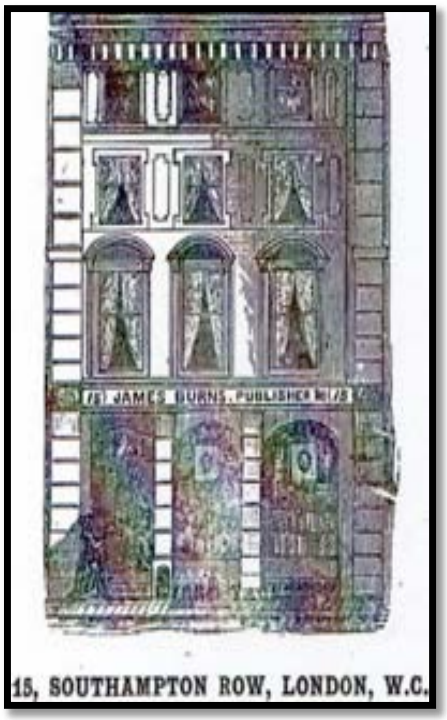
The hymn, No. 80 "Spiritual Lyre," introduced this week is one of the most beautiful compositions of T. L. Harris. It has been used in the Order of Spiritual Teachers at the entrance of a new teacher into the School. For such a purpose it is well suited, also as an invitation to any visitor to unite the exercises of a circle or spiritual meeting. Some of the glorious facts of spirit-communion are recognised in these verses.

"Vienna," or "Austria," as it is frequently named, is a tune well adapted to the theme. It is a musical composition of a superior order, and to give it true expression requires ability. It should be sung with boldness and spirit and a recognition of its well marked peculiarities.

This tune is almost universally known, but seldom is it correctly rendered by those whose musical instruction has been defective. The time is two beats to the bar—an easy measure—but the chief difficulty is experienced with the dotted notes, which are frequently misplaced, or over-looked altogether. One of these is at the commencement, causing the first word, "Peace," to be sung to along note, and the word, "be," very short. In the second part of the tune these dotted notes occur repeatedly, and a due observance of them gives expression to the musical idea.

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Editor's Note:



James Burns' contribution to the early Spiritualist movement is much unrecognised as one of our finest pioneers in the promotion of Modern Spiritualism. I will not attempt here to cover his vast contribution in this short note; this needs to be done in a full-feature article to do justice to it.

I will just note briefly. It can be noted above:

> "… is one of the most beautiful compositions of T. L. Harris. It has been used in the Order of Spiritual Teachers at the entrance of a new teacher into the School."

T.L. Harris refers to the Rev. Thomas Lake Harris, who can be noted in Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: "Spiritualism in Auburn, New York – Progress of Spiritualism from 1849 to 1855". James (Jas) Burns OST ("Order of Spiritual Teachers"), was probably the first Spiritualist educational centre at Burns' "Spiritual Institution", 15 Southampton Row, London W.C.

For more information please see Psypioneer: "Spiritual origin of The Spiritual Institution & The Medium and Daybreak".[6]

The first 'National Convention' was held at the Mechanics' Institution, Darlington, on Wednesday and Thursday, July 26 and 27, 1865: Burns was a promoter of this convention. Numerous well-known Spiritualists were in attendance, including David Richmond.[7] It was the first general assemblage of British Spiritualists and the origin of a free platform in connection with the Movement. "The Association of Progressive Spiritualists of Great Britain" was formed.[8]

It can be noted in some Spiritualists' National Union older educational literature that this *first* 'National Spiritualist' meeting was looked upon as an *unsuccessful attempt*, as only a few people attended.

In fact, this was not the case. Below is quoted from the Report of Proceedings:

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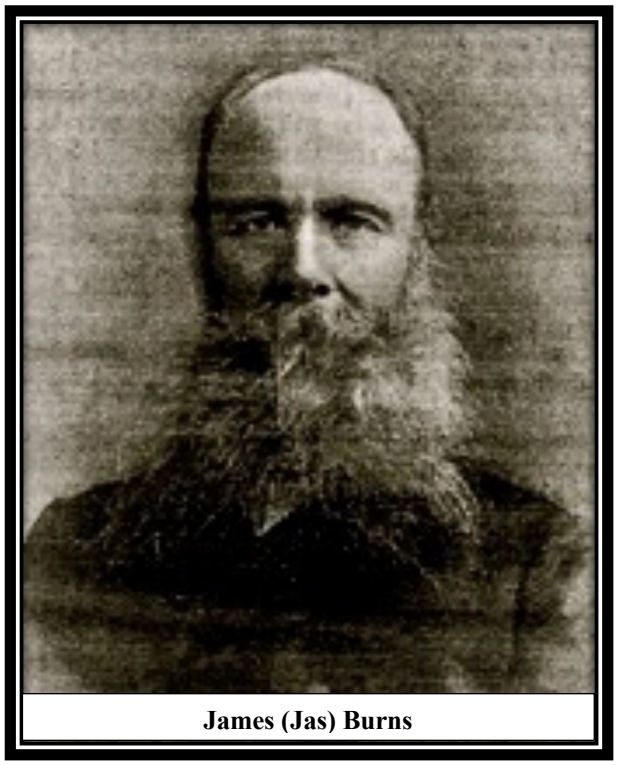
[6] Vol. 6, No. 1, January 2010.

[7] See Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 4: "Richmond & Weatherhead – An account of the introduction of Spiritualism at Keighley".

[8] The series of articles starts in Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 8: "The Building of The Spiritualists' National Union".

"Seeing that those present were called together by special invitation, the public not being admitted, the attendance was highly gratifying and satisfactory to its promoters. The following names of those who were present and took part at the various sessions have been recorded: …"

James Burns, along with Mr M. Heslop, a phonographic reporter, were appointed as Secretaries. Burns would give his first paper to this event, entitled: "Man's Natural Position in Respect to Theology, Religion, And Immortality," but it is too long to print here. During the various sessions over the two days there were many interesting discussions on the various forms of mediumship at this early period of our history. An interesting session was: "Discussion—Mesmerism *V*. Spiritualism"; during the discussions Burns noted:



James (Jas) Burns

Mr Burns contended that mesmeric phenomena and spiritual phenomena were identical, only that mesmerism was performed by spirits in the flesh, while the spiritual manifestations were performed by disembodied spirits. In both cases they were psychological, and in accordance with the same psychological laws, therefore, though similar manifestations were produced by what are called mesmerism and spiritualism, yet it was no proof that mesmerism was a fact and spiritualism a myth, but rather that spiritualism was the great fact of which mesmerism was a branch.

Man was now a spiritual being or he never could be one, and from his spiritual nature all forces and phenomena proceeded. Mere facts and instances could never settle the question: the investigation required to be based on a knowledge of principles. It was a well-known fact that disembodied spirits could control subjects and produce all the phenomena of the mesmerist.

Though we were spirits now, yet our condition of consciousness was a physical one—hence we were not cognisant of our spiritual existence; but under mesmeric or spiritual manipulations, the state of spiritual consciousness or clairvoyance could be induced, so that Mr Morgan's objection fell to the ground.[9] Those who were subjects for the manipulation of spirits were called mediums. Mr Burns then described the operations of writing and drawing mediums as they had been presented to his experience; how pictures of six or seven colours had been executed with crayons or paints by mediums who knew nothing of art; how valuable information in philosophy and morals had been given; also advice in regard to health and medical prescriptions.

He narrated the case of a lady who was rendered sleepless for several days and nights with a violent attack of pleuralgia. She was nearly worn out with pain when she thought of her spirit friends. In less than an hour her sister, who is a writing medium, and had not been acquainted with the action of her mind towards the spirits, went up stairs with the following prescription, written automatically, by the spirits controlling the action of her

[9] "Mr Morgan interposed an objection to the conclusions of Spiritualists respecting the source of their manifestations. He thought that Mesmerism and Spiritualism were two distinct things, and that the phenomena ought to be classified, not confounded."

arm:—"Lie on your back, and inflate your lungs forty times, even though it cause you much pain, then move into a darkened room and sit fifteen minutes." The lady did so, and while in the darkened room felt the influence, as it were, of mesmeric passes over the affected part, which removed nearly all trace of pain, and next day she was quite restored.

Mr Burns gave other instances of medical care and guardianship which clearly demonstrated the certainty, beneficence, and utility of spirit intercourse. He also gave a case of the spirits throwing a young woman, a medium, into the trance state, similar to what a mesmeric operator would, and against which she for a certain time resisted. In this state she not only went through the ordinary phenomena of clairvoyance, describing persons and places she had never seen, but talked with spirits, beheld spiritual states and societies, and got promise of many instances of spirit intercourse which have since come to pass. On another occasion she traced a robbery by the same means. These mediums are often conscious of the influence of the spirits. It falls on the head at the top, over the phrenological organ of Spirituality, and proceeds down the muscles of the arm, giving a volition not of their own, and causing them to write, draw, and do other unpremeditated acts.[10]

Mere mesmeric experience could never settle the question. Mediumship, and the intercourse of living beings with spirits, was a privilege and function of the human soul, and to understand it required a deep knowledge of anthropology and investigation of the spiritual nature of man. It would yet be seen that spiritualism would explain mesmerism, instead of mesmerism explaining spiritualism. Mr Morgan had quoted Dr Ashburner, but the doctor was now a spiritualist as well as Dr Elliotson; and both now declare that their acquaintance with spiritualism has thrown a flood of light on their former investigations, and entirely reversed their convictions in many respects. It ought to be remembered, also, that the late accomplished and lamented Professor Gregory of Edinburgh was an intelligent spiritualist.[11]

Mr Burns also referred to the writings of Professor Brittan of New York, one of the most experienced psychologists, and to Dr Dods, an experimental and healing mesmerist, who, after many years of resistance to the truth, at last acknowledged that he was in great part a medium for the operations of beneficent spirits.



[10] Burns at this period was travelling with one of the Fowler brothers, L.N. (Lorenzo Niles) Fowler, the famous phrenologist, who attended the Convention; his phrenology busts are still available today. Burns was also a phrenologist (the measurement of bumps on the skull to predict mental traits).

[11] Dr Ashburner and Dr John Elliotson can be noted in Psypioneer, Vol. 2, No. 10, October 2006: "Mrs. Hayden's visit to England in 1852-3".

SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION AGM

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

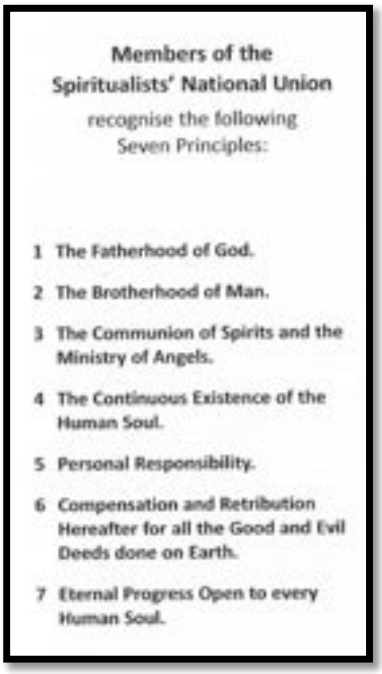
"No speaker in our movement can be inspiring if he has not assimilated a knowledge of Spiritualism"

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

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

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

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


Members of the
Spiritualists' National Union
recognise the following
Seven Principles:

1 The Fatherhood of God.
2 The Brotherhood of Man.
3 The Communion of Spirits and the Ministry of Angels.
4 The Continuous Existence of the Human Soul.
5 Personal Responsibility.
6 Compensation and Retribution Hereafter for all the Good and Evil Deeds done on Earth.
7 Eternal Progress Open to every Human Soul.

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

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

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

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

The AGM article starts with the headline,

> "Greater World Christian Spiritualist League has disaffiliated 800 of its churches …"

Please see the end of the article for further information.

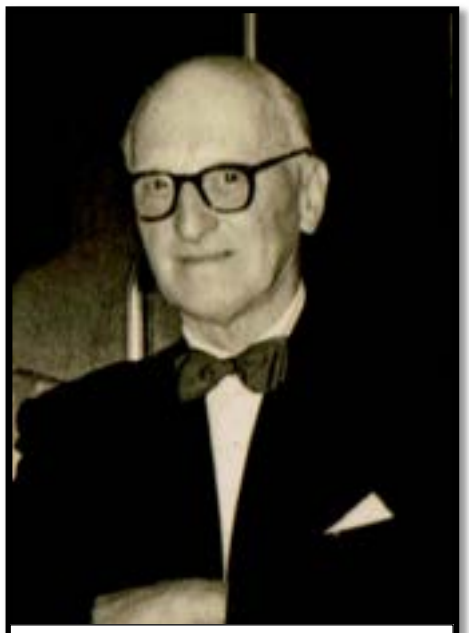
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Below is reported from the Two Worlds, July 9th, 1955:

Christian Spiritualism drops 800 of its churches

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

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



Harry Dawson

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2,000 LOST A YEAR

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

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

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

EDUCATION THE KEY

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

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

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

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

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

HEALTHY FINANCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Findlay is the author of Spiritualism's best seller, "On the Edge of the Etheric."

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

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

IGNORANCE OF FUND

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

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

Another inquiry into healing

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

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

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

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



Harold Vigurs

NO MORE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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[6] Founded by Minnie Harriet Wallis; see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3: "Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists' National Union".

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

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

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

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

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

HAVING IT BOTH WAYS?

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

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

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

Quastel, in a passionate rejection of the motion, asked for "freedom of conscientious interpretation of the Seven Principles." [11]

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

ABOLISH DEATH PENALTY

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

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

Two doctors send patients to medium

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

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

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

[10] John Stewart, SNU President 1941-1943, Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: "John Macintosh Stewart", etc.

[11] Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 2: "Charles I. Quastel".

[12] Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3: "Some Healing History – Healing within the Spiritualists' National Union".

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

JEALOUSY ATTACKED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FRIEND TO ALL

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

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

May that service continue in her new life.

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

Big business now

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

Mayor pays tribute

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I couldn't let that remain."

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

WHY I RESIGNED—by Greater World president

"Too many old people in our movement"

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

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

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

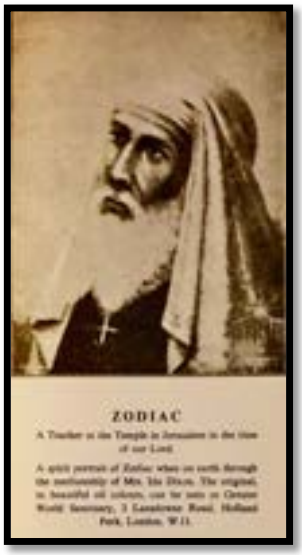
"It's worried us all, of course. Imagine the strain . . . and there's still got to be a lot of weeding out. But that's not my job now, thank goodness !"

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

[16] First lady SNU President, Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1: "Mrs. Jessy Greenwood, J.P. – *The National Spiritualist".*

SERIOUS POSITION



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

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

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

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

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

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

CHRIST'S FLORIN

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Magdalene Kelly

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



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

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

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

As she foretold

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

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

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

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

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

Her psychic debut

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

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

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

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

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

Unexplored talent

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

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

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

Health restored

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

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

New life wanted

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

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

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

THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION & WORLD WAR II Continued …

I have been asked several times for the views and direction the Spiritualists' National Union took during the war years of WWII,

the general attitudes of its members and of the Movement during these dark years.

We can note below that it brings an interesting opportunity of discussing the many avenues and decisions taken in this complex time of opinions, etc.!

The first part of this was published in Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 2, concluding with the SNU's Manifesto, "Spiritualists and the War", October 21st, 1939, under the presidency of Frank Blake.

1940:

The Two Worlds, August 2nd:

S. N. U. News
General Secretary: Ernest A. Keeling

Churches in Restricted Areas
IMPORTANT NOTICE

THE Government have found it necessary to restrict the entry of persons into a considerable section of Great Britain, extending from Berwick-on-Tweed to Weymouth. As this made it almost impossible for churches in this area to maintain their platform supply, the matter was taken up by the Union with the Ministry of Home Security, who have agreed to our suggestion that Platform Workers shall be provided with an identity certificate bearing their photograph and the seal of the Union.

Speakers and Demonstrators, Please Note.

The Spiritualists' National Union is prepared to grant a "Spiritualists' Minister's Identity Certificate" to Platform Workers who have to fulfil engagements with churches in areas where entry is restricted.

Applications, accompanied by a "Passport" photograph and a postal order for 1s., should be sent to the Local District Council Secretary of the area in which applicant resides.

This was followed with the names and addresses of Secretaries of District Councils; during this period it was further noted:

The Ambulance in Sight

We are pleased to report that donations to the Ambulance Fund are rather more satisfactory, and at the present rate it seems certain that in the next few weeks we will be able to complete the Fund.

It was further noted in **S.N.U. News** two weeks later in the Two Worlds, August 16th:

Identity Certificates

From information which has reached us it would appear that the purpose of the Identity Certificates, as well as the conditions governing their issue, are not fully understood.

The sole purpose of the certificate is to enable workers to travel, without hindrance, to conduct church services, particularly in restricted areas. They are intended to meet the present emergency, and do not confer upon the holder either membership of the Union or any implied acknowledgment of the holder's qualification as a platform worker.

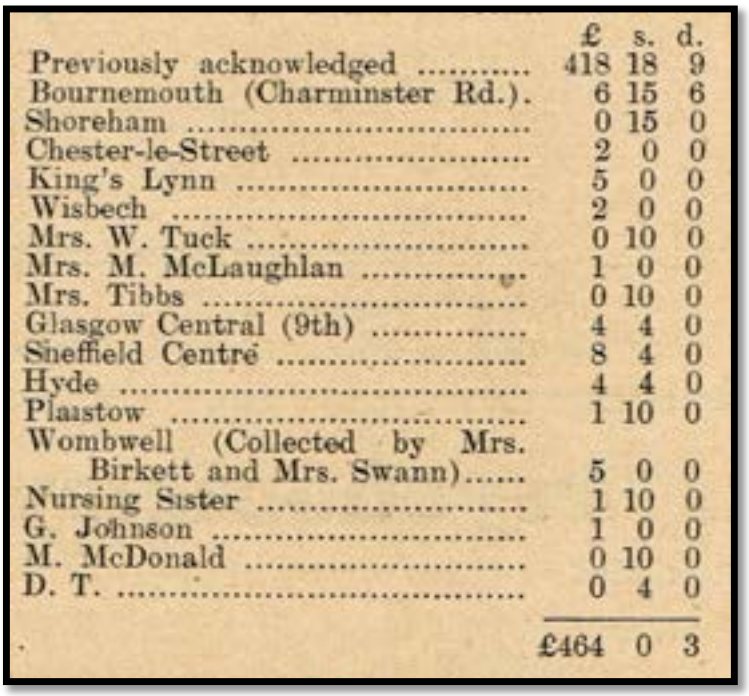
We would therefore restate the position as follows :—

"The Spiritualist National Union is prepared to grant a Union's Identity Certificate to known platform workers serving churches distant from their home town and its immediate vicinity to facilitate their travelling in areas where entry is restricted under the Home Defence regulations.''

Applications must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from a member of the National Council or from the secretary of their local District Council, together with a ''passport'' photograph vouched for by the writer of the letter of recommendation and a postal order for one shilling to defray cost.

The Ambulance Fund was updated and published in the same issue of the Two Worlds

During the great war (1914-18), on the suggestion of W.H. Evans,[1] the Two Worlds under the editorship of James J. Morse opened a subscription list to provide Red Cross Ambulances for service overseas; Spiritualists rallied to the call. Spiritualist papers, Light, and Psychic Gazette supported the Two Worlds effort, resulting in five ambulances being purchased and presented to the Red Cross. Later a sixth was purchased in a joint effort of the Spiritualists of New Zealand and Great Britain.[2]



	£	s.	d.
Previously acknowledged	418	18	9
Bournemouth (Charminster Rd.).	6	15	6
Shoreham	0	15	0
Chester-le-Street	2	0	0
King's Lynn	5	0	0
Wisbech	2	0	0
Mrs. W. Tuck	0	10	0
Mrs. M. McLaughlan	1	0	0
Mrs. Tibbs	0	10	0
Glasgow Central (9th)	4	4	0
Sheffield Centre	8	4	0
Hyde	4	4	0
Plaistow	1	10	0
Wombwell (Collected by Mrs. Birkett and Mrs. Swann).....	5	0	0
Nursing Sister	1	10	0
G. Johnson	1	0	0
M. McDonald	0	10	0
D. T.	0	4	0
	£464	0	3

[1] Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: "W.H. Evans – One of Spiritualism's finest philosophers: Fifty Years with the "Two Worlds" – My Jubilee, by W.H. Evans".

[2] Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3: "The Story of the Motor Ambulances – A Landmark in the History of Our Cause".



By August 1941 two Ambulance Cars were purchased; they were expected to be used overseas but I am not sure whether this was the case, as firstly they were used in this country for the transport of the sick and wounded.

"WAR ORGANISATION OF THE BRITISH RED CROSS AND ORDER OF ST. JOHN

"PRESENTED BY THE SPIRITUALISTS OF GREAT BRITAIN

(PER SPIRITUALISTS NATIONAL UNION LTD) NO2"

During the history of the Spiritualists' National Federation / Union their AGMs were for over a century conducted on the first weekend of July; very rarely were these changed, but one such AGM was abandoned in July 1940, with notice given under the Two Worlds "S.N.U. News" page by the Union's General Secretary, Ernest A. Keeling, Two World's issue, July 5th:

S.N.U. Conference Abandoned!

AT the expressed desire of H.M. Ministry for Home Security, the Annual General Meeting convened for Saturday, July 6th, has been cancelled. All members of the Union will be advised later of any revised arrangements which conditions may permit.

Yours sincerely,

ERNEST A. KEELING, General Secretary.[3]

Spiritualist Ministers and Military Service



One or two platform workers who are serving our churches have applied for exemption from Military Service on the grounds that they are Ministers of Religion. As in the last war, everything reasonably possible will be done to secure official recognition of Spiritualism as a religion. At the same time, it should be made clear that the National Union can only sponsor platform workers who are on the current list of certified exponents and/or demonstrators.

In one instance, the Ministry of Labour and National Service have referred to us the name of a worker who is neither a member of the Union nor a certified exponent.

Make them Welcome

From information which has reached us, we learn that many of our churches have been visited by members of H.M. Forces, and in several instances it has been revealed they were from some other Spiritualist church. We hope that church officials will make a special point of looking out for such visitors, making them welcome and, whenever possible, affording them whatever facilities the church may have to offer.

[3] Former SNU President, 1928-1930; see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1: Mr. Ernest Allan Keeling, A.N.S.C. – *The National Spiritualist*.

Church Delegates

Although we have previously called attention to the matter, there is still a considerable number of churches which have not yet registered with the Union the name and address of their delegate (Class A member). As meetings of District Councils are, in fact, district meetings of Union members, it follows that those churches which have failed to register their delegate, and consequently have not had a credential card issued to them, are disqualified from voting either at a District or National meeting.

All District Councils have been advised of the names of the persons in their district who are entitled to vote, and informed that the voting must be restricted to those so entitled.

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An emergency AGM, for legal reasons, would take place at the later date of August 31st, with the meeting experiencing a series of air-raid warnings; however, it flowed smoothly. The quote below is reported in the Two Worlds, September 6th, 1940:

THE Annual General Meeting of the Spiritualist National Union was held on Saturday last, August 31st, at the Brixton Church, St. Michaels Road, London, S.W. The usual date of the event is the first week-end in July, but owing to war emergencies it was thought inadvisable to draw delegates from every part of the kingdom in times of stress and railway restrictions. However, it was found that the requirements of the Board of Trade necessitated the calling of an Annual General Meeting, and hence the gathering became an emergency meeting, and churches were notified that nothing but formal business, in addition to the reports and balance sheets, would be dealt with. Under the circumstances, an attendance of some forty members was sufficient for the purpose of the meeting.



Frank Blake

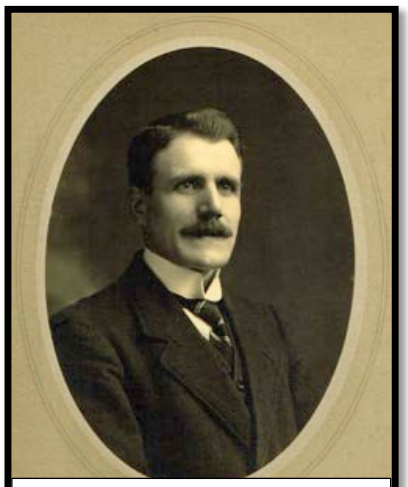
Mr. Frank Blake, President, explained the circumstances, and urged that in view of the possibility of interruptions from air activity, the business should be transacted as expeditiously as possible.

The reports and balance sheets were accepted and adopted. It was pointed out that the abnormal conditions of the present day had restricted activities at many churches, while the black-out regulations had meant decreased attendances in the winter months. Many of our workers had been drawn into the armed forces, while industrial activities are occupying the whole time of others. This was, of course, reflected in the finances. While the activities of the Union were steadily increasing, such emergencies had caused a reduction in income, and it was estimated that there may be a deficit at the end of this year of possibly £130. It was hoped that representatives of churches and District Councils would do their best to reduce the loss to a minimum. The growing activities of the Union were hindered by insufficient office accommodation; it was hoped that this, too, would be borne in mind.

Mr. Blake pointed out that although he knew many churches were suffering from reduced income, it was a fact that there had been a big increase in the amount of wages paid every week, and a large reduction in unemployment. It was his opinion that some of the added income of the workers might well find its way into the church.

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1941:



John Stewart

Sadly, the SNU President, Frank Blake, died in March and took over his work. Stewart was an ardent worker for National Spiritualism and was a founder member of Croydon National Spiritualist Church, being its President in 1930 for over a decade.[4]

John Stewart's official unopposed move to office as SNU President was announced at the Annual Conference held on July 5th and 6th at the Charnwood Street National Church, Derby. Maurice Barbanell was himself a former candidate for SNU President. In 1928 Barbanell became a member of the SNU Council, taking over from the veteran Spiritualist, Richard Boddington (brother of Harry), as London Area Representative, a position he would hold for many years.[5]

Barbanell considered a most effective path the Union should take; he published an 'Open Letter' in Psychic News, April 5th,[6] shortly after Blake's death, addressed to the next SNU President, John Stewart:

Plan For Post – War Spiritualism Now !

AN OPEN LETTER TO JOHN STEWART, PRESIDENT OF S.N.U.

DEAR JOHN,—What about a post-war plan for Spiritualism? Let me explain what I mean.

Because of the passing of Frank T. Blake, you have been called upon to fill the highest office in organised Spiritualism—the presidency of the Spiritualists' National Union.

All who know you, and have worked with you for years, are familiar with your sterling qualities, your wholehearted enthusiasm, your complete grasp of all the implications of Spiritualism.

You have been called to your high office at a time when, because of the blitz, Spiritualism in this country has been in the doldrums, from which it is only just beginning to recover.

It is a paradox, indeed an ironic jest, that at a time when this country needs our knowledge most the conditions produced by total war prevent us from broadcasting the truth of Spiritualism as we would like to do.

TO AID RECONSTRUCTION

How then, can we play our part in the great days that lie before us? I suggest it can be done by envisaging the problems of the future, by realising our post-war needs and by planning so that, when the present restrictive conditions end, we shall be ready to provide that evidence, comfort and knowledge which will aid the citizens of this country in the difficult period of reconstruction which is inevitable.

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[4] Vol. 3, No. 3: "First Croydon National Spiritualist Church – The benefits of Union affiliation! – Pioneer retires from active service – Farewell to John Stewart".

[5] Vol. 2, No. 6, November 2015: "Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U. and his Propaganda Work".

[6] Psychic News had begun on May 28th, 1932 with Barbanell as founding editor. He continued in this role until 1946, when (following a disagreement with Arthur Findlay) he left. Sixteen years later, on June 20th, 1962, Barbanell returned to his previous role and continued as editor of Psychic News and The Two Worlds jointly until his death in 1981.

The Angel of Death has been active in our land. Besides the misery caused by destruction of homes and loss of property, thousands have experienced mental and spiritual anguish. They have had to face bereavement. They have had to experience the desolate ache that comes when death separates them from the ones they love.

Thousands of soldiers, sailors and airmen, who have lost their comrades in battle, will want to know about Spiritualism. They will want to inquire for themselves, to find out whether the statements Spiritualists make will stand the test of personal investigation.

PREPARING THE GROUND

To some extent the ground has been prepared. As you know, we have distributed thousands of copies of *Psychic News* and Spiritualist books to men in the Fighting Services.

These have been handed round from colleague to colleague. There have been eager discussions. Many already have begun to inquire by visiting Spiritualist churches in their neighbourhood. Others await the end of the war, so that they can start their investigations.

I write as one who is familiar with the Spiritualists' National Union, who, for many years, took part in the deliberations of its council as area representative for London. My sympathies have always been whole-heartedly with the ideals of the S.N.U., though as Editor of *Psychic News* I have never hesitated to criticise its shortcomings if I thought I could spur it to greater action.

Now I ask you and your colleagues, who I know are anxious to spread our knowledge, and all its implications, to grasp one of the greatest opportunities that destiny has placed in your hands. I ask you to consider a seven years plan. "Why seven years?" you may ask.

In 1948, Spiritualists will celebrate the centenary of our movement. It will be 100 years since the Fox Sisters heard the rappings in their home. I ask you to plan so that we may indeed have cause for celebration.

I am convinced that the Union could take the initiative in preparing a bold, vigorous and comprehensive scheme which would fire the imagination and stimulate the zeal of Spiritualists.

It may be that not all the hoped-for ideals will be achieved, but at least we shall have tried. Better a glorious failure than sheer inertia; better a partial success than lack of vision.

NATION-WIDE PROPAGANDA

What should be embraced in the seven years plan? The first step is a national propaganda scheme to put Spiritualism literally on the map. Using an atlas there should be flagged the towns where Spiritualism is strongest. Where from your records you can see there are churches with a story of continued progress, these do not call for attention, except in one category.

Then on the map there should be indicated the areas where Spiritualism is still not represented, where there are no churches and no public activities of any kind.

In addition there should be charted the weak churches, the societies where no progress has been made for years, or even where losses have been recorded.

These territories should provide the soil of our labour. A propaganda campaign should be compiled. It should envisage the opening of mission churches to be nursed by the stronger societies, where they are in adjacent districts.

Where, at present, our message is not being given, the S.N.U. should make it its business to start new churches in conjunction with its district councils.



Maurice Barbanell (note Helen Hughes sitting behind him) at Edinburgh 1942

Propaganda meetings, with first-class speakers and mediums, should precede the effort. Then there should be trained speakers and mediums, working under the auspices of the S.N.U., who would be ready to give their services for the time that it is necessary to put the new church on its feet.

You will see that this will require careful planning, for it will require courses for speakers and a scheme for the development of mediumship. Mediumship, of course, is the backbone of Spiritualism. Without it we have little to offer.

Part of the seven years plan would be to arrange for the development of mediums, no matter how modest the beginning might be. We want, however much in miniature, a "School of the Prophets," some kind of "training college"—I am not thinking of a large building—where, under the skilful guidance of proficient and experienced mediums the powers of budding psychics can be unfolded.[7]

The plan should take into account our bombed churches, so that from the time peace is declared meetings can be quickly re-started.

Then there is the question of publications. The present method of producing our literature is haphazard. There is no central or co-ordinating body. Too much is left to chance. Our knowledge is strewn through old and new books.

OUR THINKERS' LIBRARY

I see that in "Light" a plea has been made for the formation of a Psychic Press Association modelled on the lines of the Rationalist Press Association, whose one shilling volumes, part of their Thinkers' Library, are known throughout the country.

One great defect in our presentation is that our literature is too expensive. It should be possible for us to produce one shilling booklets which lucidly set forth our evidence, phenomena, teachings and all their implications—scientific, religious, philosophical and moral.

We want books for beginners, books for students and books for the more advanced Spiritualist. Much of our literature is old-fashioned. It was written in Victorian days and is redolent of the atmosphere of the antimacassar, the horse-hair sofa and wax fruit in glass cases.

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[7] Early December 1870, "The College of Mediums" was founded at the James Burns Spiritual Institution (Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 3), with Mr Cogman as its first President. During January 1871 a term/course of six Wednesday evenings at the Spiritual Institution would cost 5s. Although this College was fairly short-lived, it is an interesting part of history; it was post-1876, following the publication of *Art Magic* (edited by Emma Hardinge Britten), that the concept of any college/school was popularised.

Robert Cogman (1810-1876) was the first in London to establish a successful training school for mediumship. His *East End Spiritual Institution* was responsible for helping many mediums develop, like James J. Morse, Frank Herne, Miss Eagar (later Mrs Wallis) and E.W. Wallis. Edward Walter Wallis (Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 5) would later credit Cogman and his "School of the Prophets" as he called it. Some of Cogman's students became key figures in the foundations of the National Federation / S.N.U.

See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 2018: – First Public Developing Circles – Robert Cogman & Mrs. Mary Main.

We have to appeal to the modern mind which is throwing off the yoke of creedalism and the dead hand of Orthodoxy and which does not worship the past just because of its antiquity.

PLACE FOR YOUTH

Our seven years plan must embrace the youth of Spiritualism so that they can take their rightful place in Spiritualism.

Yes, I know about the Lyceum movement. Its system of child education was in advance of its day when it was outlined by Andrew Jackson Davis more than 70 years ago, but now much of it is old-fashioned. It is crying out for revision and adaptation. The world has advanced in the last 70 years. We must take the best out of the Lyceum teaching and introduce new ideas, more fitted to the moods and needs of our own generation.

Then there is the Vagrancy Act, that stumbling block to Spiritualism which relegates us to the rank of rogues and vagabonds.[8] We must plan, as part of our campaign, for its repeal, so that the stigma of illegality may be removed. We must strive to win our religious freedom and compel Authority to recognise mediumship as part of man's natural faculties.

Then, too, we must revise our hymn book.[9] Many of the hymns must go. I shudder when I sing:

"Should swift death this night o'ertake
us,
And our couch become our tomb."

I have laughed during this war when I have heard audiences declare,

"They are winging, they are winging,
Through the thin blue air they come,"

and have heard whispering voices say "Parachutists!" We must ruthlessly throw out the hymns that cause ridicule. We should include some of the magnificent ones written by Mrs. M. A. St. Clair Stobart.[10]

WHAT ABOUT A TUNE BOOK ?

We also want a tune book so that at least we shall all sing the same tunes for the same hymns—something that does not at present happen at Spiritualist meetings throughout the country.

We want a volume that will give us naming, marriage and funeral services—our American colleagues have already done this. At present we only have the funeral service, the one at the beginning of the hymn book. When it was written by J. J. Morse, it was admirable, for his time. Much of it is still eloquent; some of it is out of date. It cries out for revision.[11]

Then the head office must be removed from Manchester to London. It is no longer true—if ever it was—that what Manchester thinks today . . . I cannot see any reason why the headquarters should be in Lancashire. The metropolis is the natural centre for Spiritualism, as for nearly everything else. A national body should be directed from the capital of the country.

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[8] Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 1, "The Effect of the Vagrancy Act – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union".

[9] Vol. 4, No. 3, June 2017: "Spiritualists' National Federation – Our First National Hymn Book".

[10] Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 8: "Mrs. Mabel Annie St. Clair Stobart – Paul J. Gaunt".

[11] Vol. 5, No. 4, August 2018: "When the spirit bids adieu to mortality – J. J. Morse".

Now all this is a very rough blue print. It may mean the appointment of a national organiser. It may mean hours, weeks and possibly months of arduous frank discussion by Spiritualists who have vision and who want to see our movement take its rightful place in our national life.

MONEY WILL COME

It will require money, you may say, but that does not worry me. I am convinced that for such a campaign the money will be forthcoming, as it always has been for good causes.

I suggest, in all seriousness, that for some years organised Spiritualism has lost its missionary spirit. I ask it to recapture the evangelical fervour of our pioneers. I ask it to give a lead to the thousands of loyal Spiritualists throughout the country who are wondering how they can serve in the fateful days that lie before us.

Such a daring campaign will appeal to their imagination, to their hearts and to their minds. All petty differences will be sunk, I am convinced, in the unanimous desire to sweep the country with our great message.

Give the rules and regulations a rest. Forget about the by-laws governing district councils for a time. Set up a small committee, a planning committee, a "brains trust," if you will, so that they can draft their schemes for giving Spiritualism the greatest impetus it has ever had.

THE EDITOR

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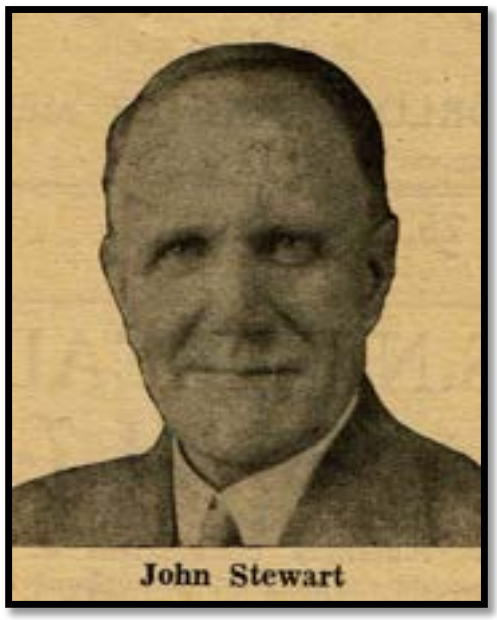
Psychic News editor Maurice Barbanell received a hearty response from the SNU under its new Presidency and published it in the April 26th, 1941 issue of Psychic News:

S.N.U. HEAD AGREES WITH 7-YEARS PLAN

Our Seven-Years Plan for Spiritualism, timed to mature with the centenary celebrations of modern Spiritualism, in 1948, has aroused enthusiasm throughout the country. It was published as an Open Letter to John Stewart, President of the Spiritualists' National Union. Here is his answer:

By John M. Stewart

IN replying to your Open Letter, I would like to say at the outset how much I appreciate the friendly terms in which it is couched. I know that you have the best interests of the Union at heart. You have shown that many times and in various directions.


John Stewart

The fact that you have an inside knowledge of the Union and its work, coupled with the wide experience gained through contact with the people in your editorial capacity, makes anything that you have to say worthy of the most careful consideration.

Let me say at once that I am in general agreement with your plan for post-war Spiritualism. A number of the suggestions made have already been discussed by the national executive, but it is opportune that you should raise

them again and set them out in such clear and comprehensive fashion. The whole statement constitutes a problem which must lie heavily upon all who seek to take a large view, and a long one, of what the Spiritualist movement may and should do for the public enlightenment.

It is quite true that the national executive devotes a great deal of time to rules and regulations in the conduct of its business; more especially is this necessary as through its trust property and pool schemes it is responsible for an ever-growing number of buildings which are dedicated as Spiritualist churches. It would, however, be a mistake to conclude that this is its only or even its main concern, for the members of the executive give a considerable amount of time, both in and out of committee, considering the best way in which the Spiritualist movement can be advanced.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE

It was for this reason that plans for the centenary celebration in 1948 were relegated to a special committee, though doubtless this was not generally known outside the executive. This committee will be meeting in London shortly and will no doubt review the whole position in the light of your Open Letter.

The need for propaganda is conceded on all hands, but our concern as an executive is to devise an effective form of propaganda which is suited to modern needs. Large and successful meetings have frequently been held in the past, but results show that such efforts have not materially added to those who are associated with us as a movement. No doubt such meetings have influenced current thought, but they have not built up an ever-increasing and solid membership.

The fact is that gifted speakers and mediums, who are available for such meetings, are all too few, and inquirers after such a meeting who follow up their interest by visiting the local church are sometimes disappointed by contrast. This is not always the fault of the church. Church officers, as a rule, are anxious to secure as good a platform supply as possible, but the shortage of really adequate speakers and properly developed mediums makes this problem very difficult.

Our best platform workers are usually booked to capacity. In fact they are overworked, and at times become psychically depleted and stale. Hence, as you rightly point out, the imperative need for a training centre where speakers and sensitives, under sympathetic and knowledgeable guidance, can be prepared to take up this pressing work. As a Union, we are anxious to correlate the problems of propaganda and platform supply so that where we hold big meetings to stimulate already established churches we shall be assured that the subsequent appeal at those churches shall be adequate.

To a lesser extent the same consideration applies to those areas where Spiritualism is not yet represented. We have a large scale map at the headquarters of the Union already prepared in the way you suggest. If support is forthcoming meetings in these virgin areas could be planned and organised, and followed up later by personal visits so that a church could be founded.

To begin with such a church would be a mission church, under the care of the local district council, as has already been done in some areas. It is an experiment which has justified itself and could be extended with obvious advantage. This is where a national organiser would be of immense benefit.

The question of cheap booklets has already been explored by the Union. Given the necessary finance, such a scheme could soon be self-supporting. We could immediately produce cheap editions of certain books, or parts of them, which should be readily available to the modern public.

When we considered this problem we soon found that our real difficulty was that certain aspects of Spiritualism could only be presented if we got down to the task of writing the books ourselves.

OUT-OF-DATE STYLE

The question of style, as you rightly point out, is a factor. Modern taste does not take kindly to the serious writing of 50 years ago. These booklets need to be modern; not only up-to-date with current scientific thought but also told in a way that appeals to the present day. In addition the public emphasis has changed. Today Survival is accepted, but the masses are quite content to leave it at that and to concern themselves with affairs of the moment. In one way that is salutary.

We really need to bring home to those same masses that without Spiritualism they are missing something that enriches life here. We have the knowledge which can completely transform life, satisfying current intellectual questionings and reconciling man's deepest intuitions. That is why Spiritualism to us is religion and that is why we need to write our books anew, showing our larger knowledge and understanding in a way calculated to meet modern needs.

CO-OPERATION WELCOMED

There is our problem. As an executive we are alive to its supreme importance and should welcome competent co-operation from any source. This war has called for a united national effort and, when it is over, the great period of reconstruction that will follow will demand that same wartime spirit of sacrifice, but directed to the progressive purposes of peace. In this campaign Spiritualism must lead. Now is the time to reorganise ourselves so that we shall be prepared for those conditions.

I would ask all Spiritualists, firstly, to ponder deeply what Spiritualism has meant to them and, if it has meant anything of real value, to dedicate their whole activities in furthering our cause.

Secondly, let us remember that finance is essential to any movement. I am of opinion that no body of people is doing so much work with so little money as the Spiritualists' National Union. In consequence, our efforts are hampered by cheese-paring economy. That is wrong. Spiritualism demands the best and we must see that progressive work is not restricted because of lack of funds. I agree with you, however, that the money will be forthcoming. I am convinced that no work for which there is a real need will ever perish for want of money while it has behind it people of faith and purpose. I believe there is a law of spiritual attraction which will draw to it all that is necessary for its support when the need is made clear.

We want effective propaganda and a modernised youth movement. We sorely need a centre to train suitable workers and an office so equipped and supplied that it can originate schemes to bring these things about.

I invite readers who are in sympathy with these ideals to join our Union and make common cause with us. Become subscribing members of the Union, if they are not already members, and then write and tell the office in what manner they can help.

In this way they will enable us to continue the work of building the Spiritualist movement till it becomes a mighty force, influencing all aspects of social, economic and religious life.

Barbanell responded:

I AM delighted to see that the S.N.U. is tackling the urgent problems of post-war Spiritualism envisaged by the Open Letter to John Stewart. I have been asked to co-operate and have been invited to join the planning committee which is shortly meeting in London.

I have since thought of two other ideals which should be included in this plan. The Spiritualist movement requires a country or sea-side home where its aged exponents could spend the winter of their lives in comfort and sympathetic surroundings. This home could include facilities for recuperation for mediums and speakers faced with illness.



Then we ought to have a psychic museum similar to the one established by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle many years ago in Westminster. All the seance-room mementoes he exhibited are still available, though they are all stored away.[12]

VALUABLE EXHIBITS

Scattered throughout the country, however, there are dozens of valuable psychic exhibits—apports, photographs, pictures, wax moulds obtained at seances—to enumerate only a few. These are at present lost to the movement.

The plea for a plan has brought a large correspondence from Spiritualists. Mainly they underline what I have already said.

James M. McLintock, a South-East London reader, points out that it is easy to get people interested in Spiritualism, but what they want is evidence. The movement needs more mediums. Pointing out that we depend on mediumship, he says that one medium who can produce results is worth ten books. He considers that insufficient is being done to produce mediums and urges a national campaign to encourage greater development of psychic powers.

SMALL CHURCHES' PROBLEM

Alfred R. Scarfe, of the Spiritualist church in Woodbridge, Suffolk, puts the problem of the small country churches. "One of our difficulties has been to obtain mediums," he writes, "for we have to have nearly all London mediums. This entails considerable travelling expenses on top of fees."

He has been considering the possibility of a federation of East Anglian churches, with a live organiser at its head. This could arrange for reputable mediums to be booked from a central organisation, large and small churches all contributing to the common pool.

He stresses the value of Spiritualist churches publicising their activities and encloses a copy of one of the large posters which is displayed on local hoardings.

J. D. Turner, a South-West London reader, points out that in the same week that we published the Seven-Years Plan "Light" printed a plea for Spiritualists to use co-operative advertising.

[12] See Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 5, May 2009: "Sir Arthur Doyle's Psychic Bookshop, Library & Museum".

"There is no doubt that action should be taken to put some of these plans in operation," he writes. "But I venture to suggest that it is not a matter for one organisation only. The best results could be obtained by a concerted effort on the part of all the main Spiritualist organisations throughout Great Britain. What can be done about it?"

I am convinced that, with bold planning, the use of vision and the marshalling of the talent this movement possesses, we could transmute the activities of Spiritualists throughout the land and make Spiritualism a leading, if not the leading, religious force in this country.

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Below is the National Conference report as published in the Two Worlds, July 11th, 1941:

NATIONAL CONFERENCE AT DERBY

THE Annual Conference of the S.N.U. was held on July 5th and 6th, at the Charnwood Street National Church, Derby. The attendance was small, owing to the inadvisability of workers leaving their own districts in the present circumstances, and by agreement it had been decided that only essential business should be done. The Council and Emergency Committee, however, have been working hard to continue and extend the Union's activities.

Mr. John Stewart presided and welcomed the delegates and friends, making special reference to the presence of Mr. Hannen Swaffer, our Hon. President, Mr. Fruin,[13] of the B.S.L.U., and Corporal Hancock, of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, a member of the Spiritualist Church at Edmonton, Alberta, who was accepted as a fraternal delegate. The visitor, who was received with applause, said he had been in England over twelve months and had found that Great Britain was home. They had their problems in Canada, but were steadily growing in strength and he hoped to learn something from his British colleagues. We want you to send the people to Canada who will help us to get legal recognition. The authorities want us to take out licences to practice mediumship at a cost of 200 dollars. We refuse to do so. We will not pay the Government for the right to worship in our own way. Religious freedom is every man's right. He thanked them for their brotherly welcome.

Mrs. Harrison (President) welcomed the Conference on behalf of the Spiritualists of Derby.

Owing to the transition of Mr. Frank Blake, in March last, the Presidential Address fell to the lot of Mr. J. M. Stewart, who said:

"In the hearts and minds of all freedom loving people to-day two resolutions stand dominant and unswerving: (I) to win the war and (2) to render impossible any repetition of the wanton aggression caused by Hitler and his associates.

As regards (I), this war has caused some strange reversals of peace time valuations and standards. We long for the stable and unchangeable, but find in time that the only everlasting thing is change.

It has always been our practice to pass a peace resolution at each A.G.M., but at London in 1937 a new note was introduced by appealing to the Government to strengthen the country's defences against possible attack. I am glad now that that resolution was passed despite opposition. It indicated a desire to make a stand against the peace breakers.

Two years later our country did make a stand against aggression, culminating in the ruthless attack upon Poland. In all, fourteen countries have one by one fallen victims in this

[13] Vol. 2, No. 3, May 2015: " "Remembering our old workers" – Albert Fruin 1888-1969".

way and it is plain that neither for us nor for any other country can there be security or hope of peace until Hitlerism is destroyed. This is a task which must come first and to which everything else must be subordinated.

When the war is over the period of reconstruction will demand the same war-time spirit of sacrifice directed progressively to the purposes of peace and the recasting of society. In this campaign the Spiritualist Movement must play its part. Now is the time to make our plans!

This A.G.M. affords us an opportunity to survey our position, to consider methods, ways and means as a preparation for a fresh advance. We must try as best we can to anticipate the issues of the future and to define our objectives in relation thereto.

A start has already been made, due to the foresight of our General Secretary, for in April, 1940, Mr. Keeling asked for the appointment of a Committee to prepare and submit plans for post-war development, including the raising of an Endowment Fund of £50,000 and culminating in special arrangements for the celebration of the Centenary of Modern Spiritualism in 1948. In this way, what has come to be known as the Seven Years' Plan was born.

Some of the things we are planning will be put into operation before our next A.G.M. Others may take longer, as, for example, the proposed publication of a series of books on various aspects of Spiritualism on the lines of the R.P.A. Thinker's Library, and plans for the achievement of a higher standard of Mediumship as well as its orderly training and development.



Shaw Desmond

Our friend, , in a recent article in the *Psychic News*, goes to the extreme when he says that the Movement is moribund. It is easy to criticise, but the man who only points out weakness and mistaken endeavour is of little value to progress.

Most of his strictures appear to be based upon experiences met while working with leading London bodies of Spiritualists. It would be unfair to apply them to the Movement at large and I do not accept them as applicable to the Union or its Churches.

There is one direct reference in his statement to the Union in which he asks if it is showing 'vital drive, constructive action, and illuminating propaganda' during what he calls 'a heaven sent opportunity of the war.' The opportunity is no doubt there, but surely it is not heaven sent.

Shaw Desmond is an Honorary Vice-President of the Union. It is a pity he is not better informed as to what the Union is doing and there is undoubtedly need for him to widen his contacts. I am sure if he had been aware of our work, even under war conditions, and particularly of the work of the Planning Committee, he would not have written in such despondent mood.

The Union exists to strengthen fraternal relations between Spiritualists and to facilitate co-operation in everything affecting their common interests. Deep in the hearts of us all there is this desire for co-operation. It brought the Union into being and has sustained it for half a century. No great movement has ever been consummated except by organised co-operation, but many Spiritualist bodies have been slow to recognise the need for a National Organisation, and this includes the very bodies Shaw Desmond complains about.

There is nothing for them to be afraid of, for the Union is essentially a free association of Spiritualist Churches, Societies and individuals. It is sufficiently comprehensive to include within its ranks all shades of opinion and should command the practical support of all sections. Until this is achieved, we will be denied the strength which comes from a united movement.

The world requires some new and unifying force to reach better times. I believe that behind all the destruction that is going on there are great purposes being worked out. The spirit people are not idle, and as long as we remember that we are co-partners with them, and in a measure co-partners with God, our Cause will radiate life and truth Spiritualism will be seen and known for what it is, a truth essential to the welfare and progress of the human race and will go forward to bless the world."

The Elections.

The election of Officers and Council were declared as follows:—

President: Mr. John M. Stewart (unopposed).

Vice-President: Mr. Harold L. Vigurs (unopposed).

Treasurer: Mr. Robt. F. Brewer (unopposed).

Area Representatives:—Midlands: No nomination. North-Western: Mrs. Lotta M. Andrews. Scottish: Election in progress. Southern: Mrs. Eva L. Vickers. National Councillor: Mr. Percy Wilson. Subscribers' Representative: Mr. E. W. Oaten.

Mr. Harold Vigurs voiced the annual tribute to "our arisen friends," which was received by a silent standing vote. Mr. Vigurs said: As we meet year by year gaps in our ranks remind us of the growing band of helpers in the larger life. We are conscious of their continued presence and interest in our work. We reverence them all—great and small—known and unknown. An exceptional case this year is that of our President, Frank Blake, who has joined greater army, and, if I speak of him in particular, it is as the representative of the whole band. Blake always struck me as an illumined mind with vision behind him. He was more a friend than a leader. He could minister not only to our earthly needs and sorrows but to our inner life. He helped us not by relieving us of our work, but by strengthening us to do it. Blake's work was not finished but he's completing it, and through him I thank the hosts of helpers and colleagues in the higher life.

The Annual Reports and Accounts were adopted. There had been a drop in membership but this was largely due to war conditions and was to be expected.

A discussion on the question of the proposed Youth Movement elicited speeches from Messrs. Fruin, Wilson, Mrs. Petz and others. It was generally agreed that something must be done to prepare for a larger future, and the President extended an invitation to the B.S.L.U. to join in the effort. The Secretary reported that, to meet the requirements of the Government, a panel of ministers—who need not necessarily be platform workers—had been formed and some sixty appointments had been made.

Amendments to the Trust Property regulations extending the scope of these measures were unanimously adopted.

Notices of Motion on the agenda were rejected by an overwhelming vote.

About 50 delegates were present and the meeting was a very happy one.

Thanks to retiring officers, Messrs. J. G. Findlay, R. Boddington and Mrs. Pickles were heartily adopted.

The proceedings ended with the greetings of the Hon. President, Mr. Hannen Swaffer, who said: We are meeting under difficulties I have often criticised, but I believe this is not the time for criticism. We are carrying on—that's as much as can be expected at present. We shall not draw large audiences when everyone is busy on national emergences work. Remember this country has not been saved only by famous generals and administrators, but by the courage of the rank and file. They will carry on till it ends. Then more difficult times will come. There must be a new world, but it must be worked for and we must be

worthy of it. We must strive for equality in colour, in religion, in social service and economics.

We Spiritualists are hampered in our work by inequality under the law—that must be mended.

Everybody knows the world's wrong been no two bodies agree as to the changes necessary. In the new world Spiritualism will be important. However humble your position, you must be true to the past and the future. Carry on ! There's a greater time coming.

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1942:

A trivial matter?

What may have been seen as a trivial matter at a time of devastation as WWII continued to rage, a speech at the 41st annual convention of the Spiritualists' National Union's London District Council, would cause turmoil within the Union. Some considered the ongoing bickering unnecessary but would continue for months; this was spurred on by the founding editor of Psychic News, Maurice Barbanell. The matter involved the editor's close friend, the Honorary President of the Union, Hannen Swaffer, and former SNU President Ernest Keeling, the SNU's Secretary. It began on the front page of Psychic News, June 6th, 1942:

Hannen Swaffer Throws A Bomb At Spiritualists

By Maurice Barbanell



Percy Wilson

INTO the Conway Hall, practically the only building left intact in a square which is the scene of devastation caused by air raids, Hannen Swaffer threw a bombshell last Saturday. The occasion was the May Meeting, the 41st annual convention of the Spiritualists' National Union's London District Council.

Swaffer, who is the Union's honorary president, flatly contradicted many of the statements made that evening by Ernest Keeling, the S.N.U.'s secretary. The climax was reached when Percy Wilson, president of the London District Council, forgetting that a chairman should be impartial, administered a public rebuke to Hannen Swaffer ! The controversy centred around the question of religion.

The meeting began on a quiet note with an address from John Stewart, president of the S.N.U., showing how Spiritualism had been effecting a reconciliation between science and religion. He regretted the many separate bodies in Spiritualism and pleaded for more co-operation.

LIVING IS THE TEST

Stewart made some references to religion. "The best exposition of a man's religion should be his life," he declared. Then he stressed the practical application of Spiritualism: "While we are demolishing superstition regarding life after death, we can join hands with those who are trying to improve the lot of man on earth."

Keeling, a distinctive figure with his snow-white hair, made an earnest speech. It was 52 years since he became associated with the Spiritualist movement. "I pledged my life to the spirit world," he said. "It was one of the most solemn moments of the whole of my life."

Then came one of the statements to which Swaffer later took exception. “I have come to believe that the Spiritualist movement has missed its way,” he said. “I cannot explain how it has come about.” Later he gave as one reason—“The average Spiritualist church is not a religious institution.”

He spoke as one who had held all the leading offices in one of the oldest churches in Britain and was fully acquainted with all the difficulties. But we had to realise that religious needs were the paramount needs.

Keeling then dealt with mediumship, which he said was the foundation on which the whole movement rested. “There would be no Spiritualist movement if there were no mediumship,” he said. “But I cannot see anything religious in the phenomena of Spiritualism.”

There were three main types to which the name Spiritualist was given. There were those who belonged to the infants’ class, who were merely convinced that life was continuous and communication was possible. There were thousands of the second class, people who were always going to our phenomena meetings in the hope of getting a message, and who were not interested in anything else.

“That is where I think we missed our way,” he said. If he had a Spiritualist church the public would be admitted to psychic demonstrations only once a month. The other Sunday services would be for “communion” and restricted to its members. What form that “communion” was to take he did not explain.

He regarded his talks with the next life as “the most sacred and hallowed experiences I have ever had,” adding, “I have a horror of parading the sacred and the hallowed.”

Keeling went on to plead for more humility on our platforms and among our church officials. He complained that there were hundreds of mediums giving public demonstrations who had not emerged beyond the apprentice stage. It would be infinitely better if they went back to their developing circles, for they were not properly trained.

The third type of Spiritualist was the one who realised the implications of the continuity of life.

HUMAN AND HOMELY



Bertha Harris followed with a demonstration of clairvoyance that was replete with human and homely touches.[14] It was mainly made up of those trivial incidents to which our critics frequently allude. The “dead” who returned showed they were still interested in all the little circumstances, the commonplaces that surrounded the loved ones they had left on earth.

There were one or two notes of drama as she referred to a group who passed because of an air raid. The group included five children who were “killed” when they left their shelter for a cup of tea. With them came a woman who jokingly referred to the fact that she and the recipient of her message “swopped furs.” The “dead” woman regretted that she could not borrow her shoes, because their feet were different sizes.

Then there was a “dead” individual who referred to a blazing car which overturned. He gave his name as Sandy and mentioned how he was wrapped in bandages as he lay dying.

[14] Vol. 3, No. 5, October 2016: “Bertha Harris Tells: How I See The Dead”.

NO RELIGION EXCEPT—

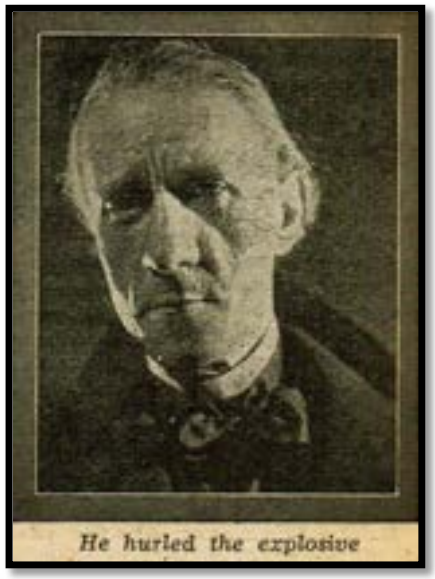
There was a woman who had passed on in the blitz, in a house near the Elephant and Castle, in South London. "I had no religion," she said, "except just doing my bit."

Whether by accident or design, the clairvoyance contradicted Keeling's statement that spirit communication was sacred and hallowed.

There was mention of a Siamese cat that would come back, and a budgerigar in which another cat was interested. A "dead" woman told her daughter that she wanted her to have her diamond ring.

A man told how, when some property was left, he was omitted in the bequest, but the two who inherited the property had played ducks and drakes with it. There was a spirit father who said he used to deal in old mangles and irons. He jokingly said that if he were on earth now he could make his fortune. There was a humorous surgeon who mentioned how he used to "carve beautifully" and who "died" because he "helped himself to gas."

Percy Wilson introduced Hannen Swaffer with glowing praise. He described the famous journalist as a columnist who stripped shams and pretences and revealed naked truths.


He hurled the explosive

Swaffer immediately began to do so. He thought it strange, he said, that Keeling should have travelled 200 miles to "say some extraordinary things." The secretary of the S.N.U. had spoken about sacred and hallowed communion. Yet the medium who followed him revealed that spirit return was merely part of a natural law. There was nothing sacred about the Siamese cat, the budgerigar, the diamond ring and property and all the clairvoyance which Keeling had obviously enjoyed.

"It has taken the spirit world 90 years," said Swaffer, "to demonstrate that communication is a human thing."

He referred to his home circle, which he had attended that afternoon, describing some of the visitors—the daughter of a marquis, a well-known knight and industrialist, and a leading Australian journalist. The circle that afternoon had been composed half of Gentiles and half of Jews.

THE GREAT LEVELLER

He mentioned all this to show that Spiritualism, and seances in particular, was the great leveller.

"I want to undo all that the secretary of the S.N.U. has done," said Swaffer. "I deny that one's religion is the 'most important thing in the world." And he referred to the woman who passed on in the blitz and who came back to say, "I haven't any religion—except just doing my bit." "That is all we have to do," he commented. "That is religion.

"The Spiritualist movement has not lost its way," said Swaffer. "It has done so much to destroy the fear of death that there is a new idea right across the world. It has brought hope into thousands of lives.

"Public worship is not the end of our movement. We shall be judged by our contribution to the society in which we live. This movement cannot fail because of the things it is teaching."

Swaffer said that he was in a position of some embarrassment. “Although I am the head of 500 Spiritualist churches, I do not believe, in public worship,” he said. “I never go to our churches, except to speak. We have a job to do, and religion is only of use as long as it helps us to do our job. What is important is not going to church, or singing hymns, or praying, but doing your job.

WORLD OF TOMORROW

“We have got to build a new order of society. Religion is not an end. It is merely a means. The end is a world in which there will be no creed, caste or colour bar, in which all races and all classes contribute to the common good.

“If there had been no religion in India there would now be a settlement instead of interminable disputes between Moslems and Hindus.

“Our task in the future is to spur on the purpose of building a new social order. The old world is gone. We have to rebuild. And, in the building of the new world, Spiritualism will either be of great use or of no use at all.”

Then came the sensation—Percy Wilson’s reproof of Hannen Swaffer ! After declaring that with much Swaffer had said he profoundly disagreed, and that with some of it he heartily agreed, Wilson went on: “I venture to say that Mr. Swaffer has not read and imbibed the teachings of the spirit world.”

Swaffer afterwards told me that, because he was seated directly behind Percy Wilson, he neither heard his fulsome flattery in introducing him nor the intended rebuke at the end! He was never concerned with praise or adverse criticism. He had thought, for example, that John Stewart’s lavish tribute to him in *Psychic News* last week should not have been printed. That issue of *Psychic News* was dated the same day as the May Meeting !

In it Stewart praised Swaffer for the “fearless way in which he so consistently upholds freedom of thought and does his best to counteract tyranny in high places. His support of unpopular causes has won for him the esteem of all true lovers of humanity.”

PAST TROUBLES

There have frequently been arguments about Swaffer’s speeches. Once, after addressing a meeting at the Queen’s Hall, at which he declared that the home circles were the strength of our movement, he was accused of attacking professional mediums. An outspoken address, given by him at the Grotrian Hall opposing Mrs. Stobart’s view that Spiritualism should be handed over, “lock, stock and barrel” to the Churches, did not please her and some of her supporters.

And, many years ago, he and two other speakers who, at an Albert Hall remembrance service, stressed the need for applying Spiritualist truths to life’s problems, were accused of being too political !

Above is the full published account by Psychic News; it would naturally create a backlash with Spiritualists in general, relationships of the SNU and the press, and, of course, within the Union itself, and would indeed call on the position and role of Honorary President of the SNU. Below, Barbanell in Psychic News, issue June 27th, 1942, continues to keep up the pressure resulting from the May meeting of the Union's District Council. This article also brings in other points of our history, its workers and their views:

CRISIS IN OFFICIAL SPIRITUALISM
FRANK WARNING TO OUR LARGEST ORGANISED BODY

THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION, OUR LARGEST ORGANISED BODY, IS NOW AT THE CROSS-ROADS. SOMETHING APPROACHING A HERESY HUNT IS BEING CONDUCTED. THERE ARE WHISPERS AND HINTS THAT HANNEN SWAFFER SHOULD BE ASKED TO RELINQUISH HIS HONORARY PRESIDENCY OF THE S.N.U.

All this is a result of the May Meeting of the Union's London District Council held a few weeks ago, when Swaffer challenged some of the views expressed by Ernest Keeling, the S.N.U. secretary.



Ernest Keeling

As inevitably happens in controversies, the main issue has become a little obscured. In the "Two Worlds," more or less the official organ of the S.N.U.—the exact relationship has never been defined [15]—Keeling recently said, among other things, of his visit to the May Meeting, "The question of whether Spiritualism is or is not a religion was raised in a rather acute term" He went on to say that Swaffer disagreed with him.

There was a disagreement—but not on whether Spiritualism is a religion. The main controversy dealt with public worship and the place of religion in a man's life.

BE ONLY FAIR REPORT

If you want to know what happened and were not present at the meeting, you could only learn from the report published in *Psychic News*. Only two papers reported the meeting, ourselves and the "Two Worlds." Ours was as fair as human beings could make it. Every news-worthy point was recorded.

The "Two Worlds" neither printed Swaffer's speech nor referred to him by name ! He was described first as "a visitor" and then as "the person." In the past Spiritualists have

[15] Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 2: "It has been stated that *The Two Worlds* is controlled by the Spiritualist National Union. That is not true. (The fact is, the Union was started as the result of agitation *in The Two Worlds*.) When the paper started in 1887, many Spiritualist Churches subscribed to its capital; they are *still* on the list of shareholders, so that many of the Churches rather than the Union have an interest in the paper. Further, every editor of *The Two Worlds* has been a member of the National Council, and *several* of them have been its President. Members of the Council of the Spiritualist National Union have *always* been invited to a position on its Board of Directors. There is no obligation in the matter, but *The Two Worlds* has always considered that an organised Movement is essential to the well-being of Spiritualism, and has considered it wise to work in the closest collaboration *with* such organisation. While individual effort can be useful in propaganda, we believe that organisation is necessary for consolidation." Ernest W. Oaten.

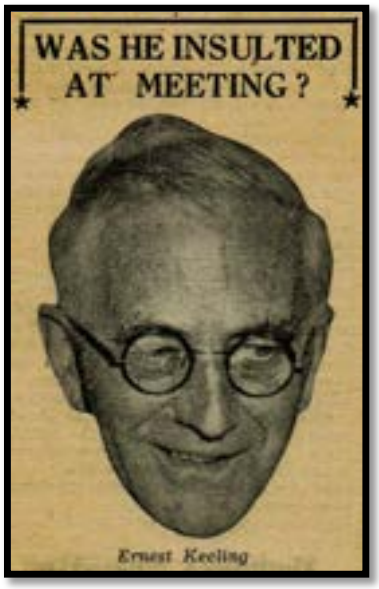
rightly protested against the way in which national newspapers have often unfairly dealt with our case. Here a difference of opinion in Spiritualism was fairly dealt with by a Spiritualist journal.

The truth is that Hannen Swaffer at the May Meeting was Hannen Swaffer. If Percy Wilson, the London District Council's president and chairman of the meeting, wanted to hear conventional views conventionally expressed, he should not have invited Swaffer to speak. Swaffer is always challenging and disturbing.

REASON FOR HIS CHOICE

That is why he is well known. That is why he is valuable to Spiritualism. That is why the Union, 12 years ago, when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle passed on, asked him to be the next honorary president.

John Stewart, its present president, who said at the May Meeting almost the same thing as Swaffer—his words were "The best exposition of a man's religion should be his life''—did not meet with any objection. But then John is more conventional. Swaffer later amplified that statement in his inimitable fashion.



When he said, "I want to undo all that the secretary of the S.N.U. has done," he did not deny, as Keeling now says he did, that Spiritualism was a religion. What Swaffer did deny was that religion "is the most important thing in the world."

He cited a "dead" woman, described that evening by Bertha Harris, who came back to say, "I had no religion— except just doing my bit." Then Swaffer made the point: "That is all we have to do. That is religion."

He criticised the idea that religion and public worship were one and the same thing. He did not believe in public worship, he said. He stressed, "Religion is only of use as long as it helps us to do our job. What is important is not going to church, or singing hymns, or praying, but doing your job."

Visualising the World of Tomorrow, Swaffer concluded, "We have got to build a new order of society. Religion is not an end. It is merely a means. The end is a world in which there will be no creed, caste or colour bar, in which all races and all classes contribute to the common good."

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Now that is the application of Spiritualism, as I understand it, and as most Spiritualists understand it. Anyway, it is what the spirit world teaches.

In last week's "Two Worlds,' in "London Topics," a similar point of view was stated another way. It declared that the spirit teachers worked "to alleviate the suffering of humanity by removing the misconception concerning 'death,' and by uplifting the mind so that the circumstances of life shall be improved."

It is now being alleged that Swaffer made an offensive and insulting attack on Keeling. I can only say that I was present and saw no offence. If there was any offensiveness that evening, surely it was in Percy Wilson's rebuke to Swaffer, rather surprising after his fulsome praise.

JOKE ABOUT NORTH POLE

In characteristic vein, Swaffer referred to Keeling's travelling from Liverpool to London by joking about the man who came from "somewhere near the North Pole." You must be very thin-skinned to regard this as offensive and insulting !

You might agree or disagree with the views expressed by Swaffer, but free speech is the essence of democracy, and healthy controversy can never harm truth.

A few years ago, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, when he was the Union's honorary president, advocated the adoption of an eighth principle, one accepting the leadership of Jesus. This was rejected by the movement. But no heresy hunt followed.[16]

CONAN DOYLE'S PLEA

Later, at a general election; he pleaded, because of a promise from the head of the Liberal Party to amend the Vagrancy Act, that Spiritualists should vote Liberal. This did not find favour with thousands of Spiritualists. But no heresy hunt followed.

Mrs. St. Clair Stobart and Shaw Desmond, both honorary vice-presidents of the Union, have propagated views diametrically opposed to those held by many Spiritualists in the S.N.U. But no heresy hunts have followed.

Now I know Swaffer's views better than any other Spiritualist in the land. I know that his outward, mocking cynicism hides a burning, passionate sincerity. I know that Spiritualism has been a tremendous influence in his life, which, ever since he became convinced of its truth, has been dedicated to the upliftment and betterment of the illtreated and the impoverished.

His political campaigning, his fight for social justice and his enthusiasm for reform are fortified by his Spiritualist knowledge.

I have spoken with him on hundreds of platforms. He and I set up the record for Spiritualist propaganda by addressing 250,000 people in three years. I have sat up half the night with him discussing Spiritualism and a thousand-and-one other subjects in cars, trains and hotels.[17]

SERVICE WITHOUT FEE

I know his embarrassing frankness. I know all about his idiosyncrasies. But I do know his great contribution to our movement—and he has never charged one farthing for his services or his expenses.

He has been the means of spreading our knowledge among thousands, who include the influential and the well known, with whom he is on intimate terms. He is our biggest draw with the public, for his name will fill the largest halls where others do not.

His advocacy has earned for our movement a respect which it never before possessed. And the marked change in the Press attitude towards us is largely due to his activities.

"MY RELIGION"

He has not changed his views on Spiritualism and its religious implications ever since I first met him almost a score of years ago. When in 1935 he contributed to a "My Religion"

[16] Vol. 2, No. 6, November 2015: "Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U. and his Propaganda Work".

[17] As above reference.

series in *Psychic News*—his article was reprinted in its entirety four years later —he began by saying:

"I am in religion a Spiritualist and a Socialist. To me both those words mean the same thing." Then he went on, "In accepting the Brotherhood of Man as a cardinal principle of everyday life in all its aspects, I believe that Spiritualism and Socialism, when joined in the practice of the lives of all of us, will abolish all creedal differences, end all class and caste hatreds, join us all in one great human family and build up a new world, in which the only distinctions will be the degrees of our service to the general good."

We are fighting, among other liberties, for the right of free speech. It would be folly of the direst kind for Spiritualists to resent freedom of expression on our platforms—especially as we have always boasted that we possessed no creed, no dogma and no pope.

ROOM FOR ALL

The S.N.U., if it is to succeed, must be inclusive and not exclusive. It must break down barriers, not add new ones. It must find room within its ranks for all who are fired by similar enthusiasm to propagate the new-old gospel enunciated from the Other Side.

We must not create a new rigid orthodoxy. We must not introduce anything approaching a Star Chamber or a Grand Inquisition.

Narrowness is a restriction. Cliques must be avoided. Cabals must not be imported. Regimentation and dragooning are foreign to Spiritualism.

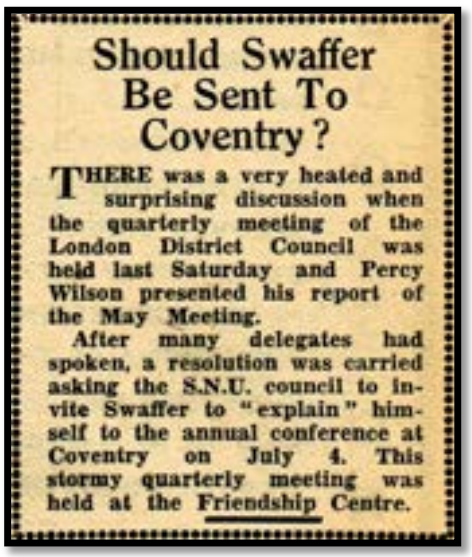
There is a hungry, bereaved world awaiting our message. That is our important task—not a new heresy hunt.

FALLING MEMBERSHIP

Besides, the S.N.U. has urgent problems claiming its attention. The number of Spiritualists has grown in the past few years. This growth is not reflected in the S.N.U.

Ten years ago it had 479 churches with over 15,000 members. Today it possesses 65 fewer churches and has lost 2,600 members—one-sixth of its membership gone in a decade. At that rate, there will be no S.N.U. in a half-century !

BLUNT WORDS



Should Swaffer Be Sent To Coventry?

THERE was a very heated and surprising discussion when the quarterly meeting of the London District Council was held last Saturday and Percy Wilson presented his report of the May Meeting.

After many delegates had spoken, a resolution was carried asking the S.N.U. council to invite Swaffer to "explain" himself to the annual conference at Coventry on July 4. This stormy quarterly meeting was held at the Friendship Centre.

"Religion attracts but the churches repel," said Cosmo Gordon Lang, indicting the Orthodoxy he led for years. Can it be that Spiritualism attracts and some S.N.U. churches repel ?

Now I am not criticising individual members of the S.N.U., many of whom have given splendid service to our cause through their churches. But I warn the Union that unless it adopts a more far-sighted policy, unless it is guided by toleration and broadmindedness, it will fail the post-war world and the spirit world.

It has reached a crisis in its history. I hope it sees the writing on the wall. I trust that when it is weighed in the balance it will not be found wanting.

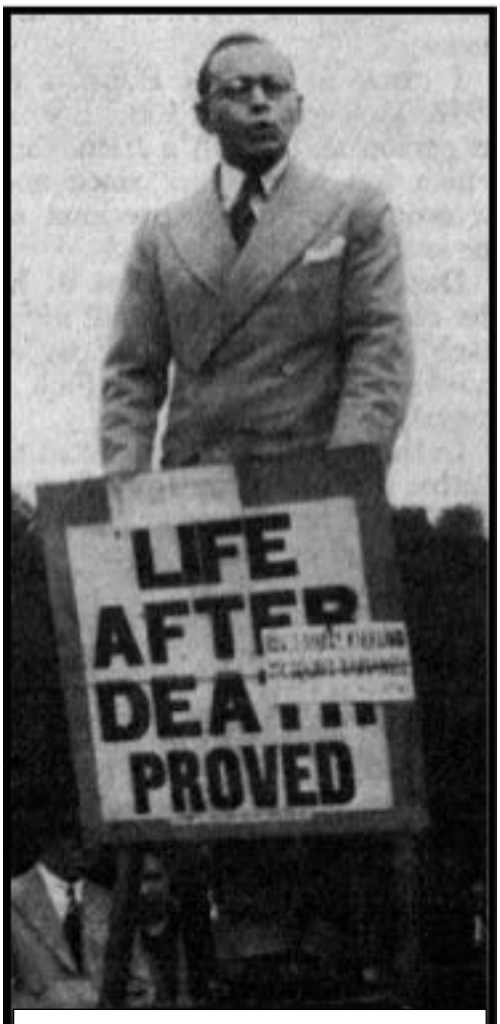
There were no signs of relenting as controversy continued in Psychic News; sliding away was not an option, especially as the 1942 AGM was soon to take place. Barbanell continued the pressure in Psychic News, July 4th, 1942:

We Are Now Accused Of Hatching A "Sinister Plot"

S.N.U. SECRETARY HAS NOT HEARD OF CRISIS !

Maurice Barbanell

THOUGH HE IS THE SECRETARY OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION, ERNEST KEELING DOES NOT KNOW THAT THERE IS A CRISIS IN HIS ORGANISATION ! IN FACT, HE DENIES ITS EXISTENCE, AND ACCUSES ME OF "APPARENTLY TRYING TO CREATE TROUBLE IN THE S.N.U."



Maurice Barbanell: Hyde Park 1936

I did not create the trouble. It was created by the S.N.U. *Psychic News* merely did its duty by reporting what has happened.

If Keeling does not know what is going on in his organisation, I am sorry for his ignorance. His own words are, "It might be thought that the Union's office would be aware if there was a crisis, but we have no knowledge of one."

Well, the office may not know, but John Stewart, president of the Union, to mention only one official, knows all about it.

THE INDICTMENT

Keeling does not like the article I wrote on this page last week. In "S.N.U. News," under the heading "Is It A Plot?" he deals with the aftermath of the London May Meeting in this fashion:

"The manner in which the whole incident has been dealt with and the somewhat extravagant innuendoes and misrepresentations which have been made all seem to point to a sinister plot. What its purpose may be we cannot surmise, but it is obvious that it is not intended to benefit the S.N.U.

"There appears to be a desire on the part of a single individual to use the power of the press to create a crisis and dictate to the members of the Union what they shall think and what they shall do."

That is the accusation. What are the facts? *Psychic News* is a newspaper. It prints the news. As part of its normal duties, it reported the May Meeting—and the aftermath.

The "Two Worlds," which publishes "SNU News," left out Swaffer's speech—that led to all the controversy—and even refused to mention that he was present!

PRESIDENT AGREES

As Keeling is so abysmally ignorant of what has since transpired, I will pierce the veil for him. Seeing that he accuses me of indulging in "extravagant innuendoes," of "misrepresentations" and of hatching a "sinister plot," I will tell him that his president, John Stewart, read the article on the day before it appeared last week and expressed his agreement with it. Will Keeling now accuse Stewart of joining in a "sinister plot" ?

It was intended, at the quarterly meeting of the Union's London District Council, held on June 20, to move a resolution that the office of honorary president should lapse. This was an adroit move to get rid of Swaffer, for he is the honorary president.

When he heard of this first step in the heresy hunt, John Stewart announced that if Swaffer were forced out of his honorary office, he would resign his presidency of the Union.

John would automatically continue in office for another year, for he is unopposed in the election that takes place at Coventry on July 4.

Keeling says that he has no knowledge of any crisis. Do presidents resign every day in the S.N.U.?

After learning of John's decision, the original resolution was dropped. In its place, one was moved and carried, as reported by us last week, asking Swaffer to "explain" himself to the annual conference at Coventry.

This meeting of the London District Council was a very stormy one. It was at first impossible for John Stewart to get a hearing ! He was shouted down by a bigoted opposition. All he attempted to do was to report Swaffer's views, following a conversation with him. And being a man of peace John wanted them to vote against the resolution. Dealing with the heresy hunt, he announced that his sympathy was with the hunted and not the hunters.

DOESN'T KEELING KNOW ?



Ernest Keeling

So disgusted was he with the proceedings that John seriously considered resigning from the London District Council as a protest. Yet Keeling says he has not heard of any crisis.

Let me repeat that if the heresy hunt is continued at Coventry, John, unless he changes his mind by then, has announced that he will no longer be the Union's president.

I pleaded at the London District Council's meeting that the right of free speech was vital in Spiritualism, that even if Swaffer was wrong—and I do not admit that—he had a perfect right to express his views on Spiritualist platforms.

MY RESIGNATION

Because of the heresy hunt I resigned from the planning committee of the Union. This is the committee that was formed to adopt the "Seven-Year Plan" I proposed in these columns. At John's request I agreed to defer my resignation until after the annual meeting at Coventry.

Because of all these happenings, which I thought and still think constitute a crisis in the S.N.U., I wrote the front page article last week. It was a frank warning. It was a plea for toleration.

I have been associated with the Union for a score of years. I have been a member of its national council. I know its virtues and its failings. But loyalty to Spiritualism must come first. I cannot place the S.N.U. before the spirit world.

The Union has wasted years on rules and regulations, on altering and revising its articles of association while a perplexed world awaited our message. If half the time spent on tinkering with its machinery had been devoted to fostering mediumship and to propaganda the Union would not be in the parlous state it is in today.

Keeling now agrees that "it should be possible to differ without quarrelling." That is why I opposed the heresy hunt. My reward is to be accused of "indulging in wild statements," and of hatching a plot."

Honest criticism never harmed anybody. If the Union or its secretary resents it, I am sorry for them. It is the life-blood of democracy. It is one of the principles for which we are fighting.

I will oppose any attempt to start a new orthodoxy in Spiritualism. I have nothing to withdraw or to retract. My warning to the S.N.U. still stands.

"The cause is greater than the Union, the church or the individual," says Keeling.

That is the lesson the S.N.U. must learn. If it does not, it will decay—as have all organisations which preferred vested interests to spiritual freedom.

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The Two Worlds, July 10th, 1942, report is partly quoted below. The fortieth Annual General Meeting of the Spiritualists' National Union was held at Parkside Spiritualist Church, Coventry on July 4th. Regarding the controversy, alleged crisis, etc., apart from Swaffer's letter shown below and a rather pointed comment noted below, it appeared to be business as usual: [18]

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE S.N.U.

"The annual Reports were accepted and were supplemented by interim reports for the last 6 months. These showed an increase over last year of 40 churches and 1,000 members, resulting in an increase of £90 in fees. Class B. (subscribing) members showed an increase of £24. The war had, of course, brought increased expenditure, including insurances and fire watching, amounting to roughly £50. The Building Fund pool had made two further advances to enable churches to secure premises, but war damage had affected the ability of some churches to keep up to their repayments. Every building society had the same difficulty to face, but these disabilities are probably temporary. A fund is now in existence to assist blitzed churches (and some have been assisted), but the response has been disappointing.

"A long discussion took place on the proposals of the Council for an organization to meet the needs of the young. These had been circulated and were presented for the Council by Mr. Vigurs. He stressed the need some organization to meet the youth of to-day. He could not agree that the welfare of the young was the sole concern of Lyceum Officers. The needs of youth were not being met. The scheme before them was placed there for discussion, and the Council asked for help in its evolution, to meet present any needs. A long letter was read from Mr. A. T. Connor. The Council stressed the point that it had tried

[18] Although I have not seen the Presidential address at present.

conscientiously for several years to secure the co-operation of the Lyceum Union, but had failed. It could no longer divest itself of responsibility for the welfare of its children and young people: but still held itself open to accept co-operation from every quarter.

"Some twenty delegates took part in the discussion, after which the following resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority, ''That this annual Meeting of the S.N.U. agrees to the proposals now before them and instructs the Council to proceeded with the scheme, and to solicit the co-operation of the British Spiritualists Lyceum Union." "

"Mr. Stewart, from the chair, moved the following resolution, "That this Annual Meeting of the S.N.U. affirms that it is one of the main objects of this Union to secure the legal recognition of the religion of Spiritualism, and whilst insisting on the right of each of its members to individual interpretation of the Seven Principles,[19] disassociates itself from certain reported statements of its Honorary President at the recent London May Meetings.

"On the contrary it expresses its appreciation of the work done by well conducted Spiritualist Churches in their public services for devotion and worship, and emphasises the value of the devotional atmosphere, not only for the highest type of spirit communion, as apart from the psychic communication, but also as an aid to individual spiritual unfoldment." The resolution was unanimously carried without a dissentient voice."

"The Credentials Officer, Mr. Lorraine Haig, reported the following attendance:— Council Members 11, B.S.L.U. 1, District Councils 8, Church Representatives 32, Visitors 15, Total 67.



"Mr. Stewart read a letter he had received from Mr. Hannen Swaffer which expressed regret that any remarks of his at the May meetings should have caused hurt to Mr. Keeling, and assuring him that the last thing he intended was to inflict hurt to one with whom he had had a long friendship. Mr. Swaffer thought that far too much had been made of a trivial incident. Mr. Keeling assured the meeting that he accepted such expression without reservation, and hoped the matter would now be forgotten.

"A lengthy discussion took place on the notice of motion by the Council to increase the capitation fee of the Churches from 1s. to 2s per member per year. The proposition was opposed by the Representatives of the Northern, South Midlands and Yorkshire districts, though Sheffield strongly supported it. Mr. McIndoe explained that costs were rising in every department of life, the Churches were continually adding to the work of the Council, which had had to carry on its work recently with an emergency committee, because they could not afford to meet as a full Council. Restricted income meant inefficiency, and this always meant waste. The proposal would double the income of the District Councils, as well as that of the Union. Over a dozen delegates contributed to the discussion. The resolution was subsequently put and carried by 23 votes to 4."

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[19] 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."

See Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 2: Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?

Given Swaffer's rather straightforward letter, one may be forgiven for concluding that, as Swaffer put, it "a trivial matter" would be the last of this "heresy" and life would return to business for the Union and reporting on Spiritualism for Barbanell in Psychic News !

But,

Barbanell in Psychic News, July 11th, 1942, writes:

Hannen Swaffer Throws Second Bomb

HE RESIGNS HIS HONORARY PRESIDENCY OF OUR LARGEST NATIONAL ORGANISATION

HANNEN SWAFFER HAS THROWN A SECOND BOMB—ONE THAT HAS BLASTED HIM OUT OF HIS HONORARY PRESIDENCY OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION !

It was a delayed action bomb, for I carried it about with me for a whole day last Saturday, when it should have exploded. Skilful tactics on the part of the council of the S.N.U at its annual conference at Coventry last week-end prevented me from hurling the explosive then.

And yet Ernest Keeling, the Union's secretary, and the "Two Worlds," more or less its official organ, denied last week that there was any crisis !

START OF HERESY HUNT

All this is the aftermath of the May Meeting of the Union's London District Council at which Swaffer threw his first Bomb. He disagreed with some statements made by Keeling on the value of public worship and the place of religion in a man's life.



Swaffer said he spoke with some embarrassment, for he was the head of Spiritualist churches. That started a heresy hunt. He was accused of insulting the London District Council.

Because he referred to Keeling's traveling from Liverpool to London by joking about the man who came from "somewhere near the North Pole," he was told that he had been offensive and insulting!

As part of its normal newspaper function *Psychic News* reported the May Meeting and all that has since transpired. This incurred both the censure and the displeasure of Ernest Keeling. I was accused of "apparently endeavouring to create trouble in the S.N.U.," indulging in "extravagant innuendoes," I was guilty of "misresentations," and I was hatching a "sinister plot."

SELF-CENSORSHIP

You would have thought from Keeling denial of the existence of a crisis that everything in the S.N.U. garden was lovely. But Keeling had his doubts about his own views. In between sending me his usual copy of the "S.N.U. News" and its appearance in the "Two Worlds" he censured himself! He changed his reference to my hatching

a "sinister plot" in my possessing an "ulterior motive." And I, the "villain" in the piece, was not told of the lessening of my crime.

Oaten, Editor of the "Two Worlds," and a member of the Union's council, also took a hand last week. He accused me of "engineering a crisis" and declared, "This may be good journalism, but it's jolly poor Spiritualism."

This is very fifth-form—'bad show, old boy," and all that sort of thing—but what does it mean? Bad journalism cannot be good Spiritualism.

The "Two Worlds" suppressed Swaffer's speech at the May Meeting. It even suppressed, in its report, the fact that he was present, describing him first as "a visitor" and then as "the person." That is bad journalism—and bad Spiritualism.

Oaten also denied there was a crisis. Well, he must have forgotten that he was present at the quarterly meeting of the London District Council at which Percy Wilson, its president, presented his report of the May Meeting. This was the stormy gathering at which John Stewart, the Union's president, could not at first get a hearing. He was howled down by a bigoted opposition.

Oaten, who left before the meeting's conclusion, said, in answer to a suggestion that he should speak, that they were in a nice mess, he hoped they would get out of it, but there was nothing happening that interested him !

John Stewart asked me to be present at this quarterly meeting so that I should speak against a resolution that the office of honorary president should lapse. That resolution was never moved. Instead one was carried asking the S.N.U. council to invite Swaffer to "explain" himself to the annual conference at Coventry.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Two days before this conference, John Stewart and Percy Wilson called on Swaffer to discuss this crisis which according to Oaten and Keeling did not exist. John, a man of peace, tried to pour oil on the troubled waters. Swaffer immediately agreed to John's suggestion that he should write a letter, which could be read at the conference, expressing his regrets for the alleged insult to Keeling.

Incidentally, there has been no mention of an apology for Wilson's public reproof from the chair of Swaffer—"I venture to say Mr. Swaffer has not read and imbibed the teachings of the spirit world." Despite the fact that I have shown Wilson my shorthand note, he says he was "misreported."

This is the letter that Swaffer wrote to Stewart:

"*I wish you would convey to Ernest Keeling my assurance that in the speech made at the May Meeting I had no intention of causing him any hurt of any kind.*

"*Directly after he left the platform, he merely said to me, 'I still think I am right,' and it was not until you told me that I had offended that I had the slightest idea that I had done more than chaff someone whom I regarded as a friend.*

"I cannot but feel that the entire incident has been magnified out of all proportion and that, in days when the whole world is in turmoil, it is singularly unfortunate that a speech made in all honesty of purpose should be regarded as anything more than a mixture of sincerity and humour.

"Perhaps all our nerves are frayed by the happenings in the world outside.

"Anyway, as I have hurt Ernest Keeling, I am assured it is only fitting that I should express my regrets to him."

On the day before the conference Swaffer gave me a letter to read *after* the May Meeting had been discussed by the delegates. The Union's council was very adroit. Although its secretary had officially announced that there was no crisis, it produced, after "careful consideration," this resolution which was its "unanimous decision":

"That this annual general meeting of the Spiritualists' National Union affirms that it is one of the main objects of the Union to secure the legal recognition of the religion of Spiritualism, and, while insisting on the rights of each of its members to individual interpretation of the Seven Principles, dissociates itself from certain reported statements of the honorary president at the recent London May Meeting, and, on the contrary, expresses its appreciation of the work done by well-conducted Spiritualist churches in their public services for devotion and worship, and emphasises the value of this devotional atmosphere, not only for the highest type of spirit communion as distinct from psychic communication, but also for individual spiritual unfoldment."

This resolution was read to the conference and, as it was unanimously carried without any discussion, I did not read Swaffer's letter.

SMOKE-SCREEN ?

This "devotional atmosphere" sounds very fine. The conference, which began and ended with prayers, was held in what I hope is a "well-conducted" Spiritualist church. Most of the time, many of the 67 delegates, 15 visitors and council members smoked cigarettes and pipes !

Tea was generously given to the delegates in another Spiritualist church which meets above a butcher's shop. I find it hard to believe that the conditions which surround slaughtered animals make for a "devotional atmosphere." Does this come within the category of a "well-conducted church"?

What sanctimonious nonsense! All the successful seances I have attended have been human, homely and natural. The guides have always asked for brightness and not long-faced solemnity. How pompous and self-righteous is "the highest type of spirit communion as distinct from psychic communication"! It smacks, too, of ersatz mysticism.

VITAL OMISSION

There isn't much to report about the conference. I found it boring. The delegates were not asked to discuss the vital need for spreading our message to the growing ranks of the bereaved. There was no mention of the message we could give to a war-stricken, disillusioned, perplexed world.

There were two bright spots. It was announced that the Union was to protest to the Board of Education against the move to foist Orthodoxy, in the guise of "religious education," on the children.

It was announced, too, that the Union was going to sponsor its own youth scheme, and the hope—it is a very faint hope !—was expressed that the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union, which cares for the young, would co-operate.

There was some discussion on the motion, ultimately carried, that the capitation fee should be raised from one shilling to two shillings. There was some more discussion on the hypothetical question as to whether the assets of its district councils belonged to the Union if the S.N.U. went into liquidation.

There was no discussion on why the Union's membership has been decreasing while the number of Spiritualists has been growing.

Union Loses Its (Nominal) Head

This is Swaffer's letter of resignation which he addressed to Maurice Barbanell:—

I WANT you to express to the S.N.U. conference my views on the unfortunate squabble that has arisen in consequence of my speech at the May Meeting. Yet in order that the whole matter shall be thrashed out in public, and that no member of the conference shall be influenced by what I have to say, I want you to withhold the contents of this letter until some decision has been reached.

I think it most extraordinary that at a time when the whole world is in despair, when ten countries in Europe are enduring slavery, and the future of the British Commonwealth, and indeed all that we call civilisation, is at stake, a few remarks that I made out of the earnestness of my soul should have given such offence that, although it happened over a month ago, a lot of people with nothing better to do are still arguing about it.

It is reported to me—and by you, whose word I absolutely trust, and whose memory is, in my view, by far the best among the leaders of the movement—that, at the quarterly meeting of the London District Council, there was shown by some speakers spite and malevolence foreign to the spirit of any gathering which professes religion, and startling even to my vast worldly experience.

President Howled Down

Someone asked if I was gate-crashing, this although I am the honorary president of the S.N.U. Someone else accused me of being a "spoilt child" because I was "a famous journalist." Someone else asked if I had signed the Seven Principles. I was jeered at. On the other hand, so too was John Stewart, the president of the Union, who indeed was howled down during his brave and generous attempt to bring some sense of proportion into the gathering.

Now, here is a troubled world yearning for a message of hope. Here are hundreds of thousands of mourning families seeking for news of their loved ones. Here is a new world in the making. Yet all that certain members of the London District Council seem to want to do is to show spite and envy.

I was asked, when Doyle died, to take on the honorary presidency. It was a post I did not seek or desire. I thought that, if I accepted it, I might be of some service to the movement. I have spent considerable sums of money on the Spiritualist cause. I have never charged anybody one farthing, even for expenses. I have championed Spiritualism publicly in several countries on the Continent, and in America, Canada, Morocco, Egypt and Palestine. I have travelled long distances, often far into the night, during my crusade for the Spiritualist cause.

Fleet Street's New Approach

I have succeeded, in the last few years, in doing what no one could do before—utterly changed the aspect of journalism towards a Spiritualism which, before I was convinced of its truth, was made a mock of in Fleet Street.

But all that, I see, counts for nothing.

Really, I have no time to waste on such trivialities. The S.N.U. is obviously concerned more with its churches than with Spiritualism. It is not concerned with propaganda, but with holding offices. It is not concerned wiith conveying its great message to a grieving world, but in altering its articles of association and defending its property.

Believe me, more important work awaits me elsewhere. I have no time for silly arguments, pettifogging disputes, or parish council bickerings.

If at any time any one of the S.N.U. churches wants me to conduct, with you, a propaganda meeting on its behalf, I shall be delighted to do so if I am able. If at any time the Spiritualist movement wants my aid, it awaits it. But as for being the honorary president of a Union, members of which insult me behind my back, that, I am afraid, is now beneath my dignity.

To be concluded in the next issue …



Pioneer over the years has shown the progress of Emma Hardinge Britten's principles from the initial four in 1871 at Cleveland Hall, London.[1]

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In 1901 the Spiritualists' National Federation was re-constituted into the Spiritualists' National Union. Emma's *Creed of the Spirits* became the basis of the religion of the Spiritualists' National Union formulated into the Seven Principles of today.[2]

Below was published in the Two Worlds, July 1st, 1950; this is taken from an issue of the 'Lyceum Manual' under the section, "Golden Chain Recitations", no. 136. These consist of questions and answers, or short sentences, on some spiritual, moral or instructive subject read alternately by the Conductor (italics) and the whole Lyceum.

Like Emma's principles it states,

"Given by the Spirits through Mrs. EMMA H. BRITTEN"

THE TEACHINGS OF SPIRITUALISM

By EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN

What does Spiritualism prove ?

It proves man's immortality, and the existence of a spiritual universe.

What effect has such proof upon humanity ?

It destroys all fear of death, annihilates the doctrine of eternal punishment, and substitutes the cheering assurance of eternal progress.

What else does it do ?

It sweeps away the idea of a personal Devil, and locates the sources of evil in man's own imperfections.

What does Spiritualism teach ?

It denies the immoral and mind-corrupting doctrine of any vicarious atonement for sin, and on the testimony of millions of immortal spirits, solemnly affirms that every guilty soul must arise and become its own saviour.

What does it teach regarding the Creator ?

It ignores the degrading conception of a partial and vindictive God, and substitutes the worship of an Infinite Eternal and all perfect Spirit, an Alpha and Omega, all Love, Wisdom, and Law.

[1] Booklet is available at: https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/the-creed-of-the-spirits

[2] Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 1: National Federation to National Union.

What does it teach respecting Heaven and Hell ?

It demolishes the absurd and materialistic conception of the theological heaven and hell making each a state of happiness or misery dependent on the good or evil within the soul itself.

What is it hostile to, and what does it promote ?

It is the death blow to superstition, sectarianism, and religious persecution, but the friend and promoter of all reforms that tend to elevate and benefit humanity.

What standard of Truth does it adopt and how is it enforced ?

Whilst Spiritualism proclaims that there is a standard of Truth in everything, it acknowledges man's incapacity to discover all Truth, and therefore it fetters no one's opinions, and teaches, but never enforces its beliefs on anyone.

What theories does it advocate regarding spiritual life ?

Concerning all spiritual life, state, and being, Spiritualism accepts no theories that are not sustained by proven facts and corroborative testimony.

What effect has Spiritualism upon Science and Religion ?

Its phenomena—being all based upon immutable principles of law—open up endless arenas of new research for science, and its consensus of revelations, being founded upon facts, tends to place true religion on the basis of science, and vitalise science with all that is true and practical in religion.

What good has it done for humanity ?

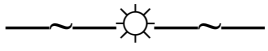
Spiritualism is a ceaseless incentive to practise good; it reunites the friends separated by death; strengthens the weak and desolate by the presence of Angel guidance and protection; cheers the afflicted with the certainty of another and better world, where justice will be done and every wrong will be righted.

Is there anything Spiritualism to fear ?

It is terrible only to the guilty, proving that spirit eyes can and do read every secret crime, and that all crimes must be abandoned and atoned for by personal suffering and personal compensation, before any guilty soul can attain happiness hereafter.

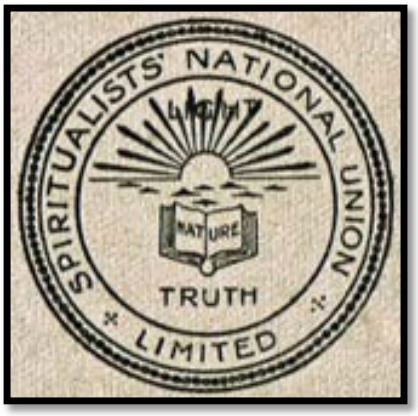
What is the creed of Spiritualism ?

Spiritualists have no creed, but mostly unite in affirming the following simple summary of principles:—
The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The immortality of the Soul, and its personal characteristics.
The Proven Facts of Communion between departed Human Spirits and Mortals. Personal Responsibility, with Compensation and Retribution hereafter for all the good and evil deeds done here.
And a path of Eternal Progress open to every human soul that wills to tread it by the path of eternal good. [3]



[3] For further information on the various early wording of Emma's principles please see: Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 1: "Education News – Lyceum Banner edited by George A. Mack".

THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION & WORLD WAR II Concluded …



I have been asked several times for the views and direction the Spiritualists' National Union took during the war years of WWII, the general attitudes of its members and of the Movement during these dark years.

We can note below that it brings an interesting opportunity of discussing the many avenues and decisions taken in this complex time of opinions, etc.!

The first part was published in Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 2, concluding with the SNU's Manifesto, "Spiritualists and the War", October 21st, 1939, under the presidency of Frank Blake. The second part was published in Vol. 8, No. 1, concluding with the conflict between the Union and the editor of Psychic News, Maurice Barbanell, over the SNU Honorary President Hannen Swaffer's letter of resignation.

1942:

Maurice Barbanell had long argued over the importance of propaganda meets, often at loggerheads with the Union which regarded its churches as the best way to secure a more long-term avenue for new people coming into Spiritualism becoming members of a national organisation. For much of this year the editor had kept the Union under pressure; the following article was no exception, published in Psychic News, November 14th:

KEEP IT DARK!
IS POLICY OF THE S.N.U.

Though it does not mention "Psychic News" by name, the Spiritualists' National Union is obviously referring to us in the following comment that it makes on propaganda in wartime.

FROM time to time we hear of people who are so full of the idea of publicity that they give the impression that the only means of bringing comfort and consolation to the bereaved is by means of huge propaganda meetings, and they appear to delight in adverse criticism of the S.N.U. because it does not display greater activity in that particular direction.

There is no doubt that large propaganda meetings serve a useful purpose in calling public attention to the claims of Spiritualism and, in some instances, they may induce a few individuals to look further into those claims, but beyond that their value is problematical.

Generally speaking these meetings will comprise from 1,000 to 2,000 people and in, say, half an hour's clairvoyance, not more than 20 will receive any personal evidence of life after death. This fades into relative insignificance when it is remembered that every week the Spiritualist churches throughout Great Britain are attended by some 25,000 to 50,000 people. In addition many churches provide facilities for private sittings and group seances, each of which offers an opportunity for personal evidence of survival.

It may be quite true that the work of the churches is neither sensational nor spectacular and for this we should be thankful. On the other hand we think it is equally true that the really solid lasting work on behalf of Spiritualism is not done by the holding of propaganda meetings, but by the faithful activities, year in and year out, of those responsible for the maintenance of the churches.

OUR ANSWER

WE are amazed that the S.N.U. disparages wartime propaganda. Surely it realises that its churches are very largely preaching to the converted.

We regard Spiritualism as pre-eminently a propaganda movement. Its purpose is to spread the knowledge of Proved Survival and all its implications. Every means of propaganda should be utilised especially in wartime. There may have been an excuse during the blitz for not holding large meetings, but that excuse no longer obtains.

Though it is true that probably not more than 20 people receive evidence for Survival at a meeting where 2,000 are present, the fact remains that 2,000 people witness the evidence being given and, as a result many will start their own inquiry. Indeed, that is how a large number of Spiritualist churches came into their existence.

If the Union fails to conduct largescale propaganda, it is not fulfilling its mission today. Does it intend to ignore the thousands who now yearn for information on Spiritualism ? The ranks of the bereaved have been swollen by wartime casualties. Thousands of the Servicemen want information about our truths. There have been eager discussions on our subject in hundreds of camps, Air Force stations and on board ships. More psychic books are being bought than ever before.

Thousands who have met with sudden “death” are eager to return to their loved ones to prove their survival. That is our task—to reunite the “dead” with the ones they have left behind.

If the S.N.U. will not help in that great task, then it must be done by other Spiritualist bodies who are concerned with proving Survival at a time when this country needs it most.

The S.N.U. is “thankful” because the work of its churches is “neither sensational nor spectacular.” What a Victorian attitude ! Too many of them languish in the rut of self-satisfied complacent obscurity. The least they can do, if they fear sensation, is to make their existence known. We often have to tell inquirers that we do not know if there is a Spiritualist church in their locality, because the Spiritualists take no steps to publicise their meetings.

1943:

No doubt the Union was pleased to move forward into a new year, as so much of 1942 was taken up with the controversy which was sparked off with Hannan Swaffer's speech at the 41st annual convention of the Spiritualists' National Union's London District Council. In the Two Worlds, June 25th, the Spiritualists' National Union made this announcement:

THE PROTECTION OF MEDIUMSHIP

A DECLARATION BY THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION.

SPIRITUALISM is based on fact, not on tradition. It has challenged the old beliefs. It must inspire and vitalise the new.

Recently there have been renewed efforts to restrict the exercise of the gifts of the spirit, in denial of those very ideals for which the United Nations are now contending at such great sacrifice and suffering.

We Demand Freedom.

Spiritualists demand freedom to worship, and freedom to seek for truth, by the exercise of their own spiritual, mental and psychic powers, and through mediumship. At the same time, they recognise that this freedom involves a duty to see that mediumship is used in the service of humanity and not merely for personal gain. Unfortunately improper practices are occasionally resorted to. Spiritualists condemn such practices and expose them whenever they can. They are concerned both to protect the public from heartless deception, and to provide facilities, under proper conditions, whereby all who will may prove survival, and come to realise the power of the spirit. But they are hampered in their efforts, both by the ignorance of the public and by the application of archaic laws which do not distinguish between the genuine and the spurious.

The Spiritualists' National Union, the largest organised body of Spiritualists in this country, has long endeavoured, by a system of education, examination and certification, to establish a standard of mediumship, and to ensure its functioning under the most suitable conditions. There has recently been a welcome increase in applications for certification,—welcome, because the Union is assured that a comprehensive national Register of trained and trustworthy mediums would do much to enlist public support for amendment of the laws now used to penalise mediumship.

Meanwhile we must re-double our efforts to foster true mediumship, to improve its presentation and to free it from undesirable associations. Generally, our mediums are inspired by a sense of trust to the Spirit World, and a desire to give comfort and enlightenment to mankind. Their service is mainly voluntary, but even where a fee is charged, it usually represents but a stall recompense for the sacrifice involved.

Abuse of Mediumship.

There are cases, however, though fortunately few, where individuals, whether for the sake of notoriety or even for personal profit, are making extravagant claims for their psychic powers and are not too scrupulous in their presentation. Sometimes exaggerated reports of phenomena are sent to the press, giving the public an impression of the present possibilities of mediumship which can only excite vain hopes.

In connection with physical phenomena deliberate fraud has undoubtedly occurred, though as Baron von Schrenck-Notzing once said, "Most so-called exposures have exposed nothing but the ignorance of the would-be exposer." The experienced Spiritualist has always been the most effective in dealing with charlatans.

In demonstrations of "mental" mediumship, it has been alleged, with some show of reason, that messages have occasionally been given in public by pre-arrangement with the recipients, and that information gleaned from normal sources has been presented as though of psychic origin. It has even been stated that in some private sittings requests have been made, in seeming trance, for expensive presents to be given to the medium.

Besides such flagrant abuses, which all condemn, there are a number of unwise practices tending to discredit mediumship. Thus, excessive gesture, or anything which, in the words of Emma Hardinge Britten, tends to "turn the public platform into a show, or religious services into an exhibition," is to be deprecated.

Overwork.

Many of the troubles of mediumship, and some of the abuses already mentioned, are largely due to over-working the psychic gift. This, in time, may lead to psychic deterioration, and possibly to physical as well. For this reason, developing mediums should not take part in public demonstrations, for the strain is considerable and overwork may cause a complete breakdown of the psychic faculty. Even amongst those mediums whose development is more advanced, the temptation to overwork is strong: they may be reluctant to disappoint members of an audience who are in seeming distress, or they may have some other equally admirable motive. However that may be, the temptation should be resisted.

The Council is aware that some Churches and other bodies sponsoring psychic demonstrations provide, and even advertise, conditions which cannot but lead to over-work; to a wrong conception of the functions of mediumship and to graver abuses. Definite promises to "give everyone a message" and the giving of twenty or more psychometry readings at one meeting are examples of practices which no sincere and reputable body of Spiritualists could endorse. From some of these activities the step to the prostitution of psychic gifts is but a small one.

Our Responsibilities.

The Council recognises that in this matter it has a responsibility to the large body of honest mediums, to Churches and to the public alike; and it will do all it can to deal with any abuses that are brought to its notice. Its object must be to protect mediumship from persecution, from abuse, and from exploitation.

The Council urges all Churches to co-operate in this important task. Our joint responsibilities will only be fully discharged if we make sure that demonstrations of mediumship, even if they do not convince, at least command respect.

On behalf of the Council of the
SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION,

ERNEST A. KEELING,
General Secretary.

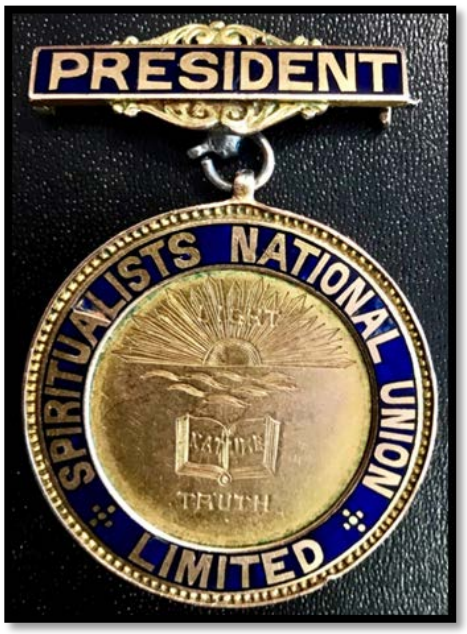
64a, Bridge Street,
Manchester, 3.

SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION CONFERENCE

The forty-first AGM of the SNU was held in London on the weekend of July 3rd and 4th 1943, at Brixton Spiritualist Church, St. Michael's Road, at 11 a.m.

The outgoing president was Mr. John Stewart, who

> *"then installed Mr. H. A. L. Vigurs in the Chair and pinned on his breast the badge of office,*[7] *offering him every good wish for a successful year. Mr. Vigurs thanked the Conference for the honour, and though he disliked public life, pledged himself to use his best endeavours to aid the Union in its forward march."*



Below are some quotes of the proceedings as recorded in the Two Worlds, July 9th, 1943:

RESOLUTIONS of protest against the unfair laws under which Spiritualists suffer and against the introduction of sectarian religious teaching in our elementary schools were the high lights of the 41st Annual Conference of the Spiritualists National Union held in London: on July 3rd and 4th.

The feature of the Consultative Conference on Sunday afternoon at Conway Hall, Holborn was a summary of the repressive state of the law as it affects spiritual mediumship, presented by Mr. C. E. Loseby, barrister-at-law and reported on another page. At its conclusion Dr. Sidney Peters, M.P. in a vigorous speech told of the efforts which he and other members of Parliament were making to put the grievances of spiritualists before their fellow members and the responsible ministers. He proposed the following resolution:

"That this meeting of Spiritualists gathered on the occasion of the 41st Annual General Meeting of the Spiritualists National Union places on record its deep concern and abhorrence of the continued persecution by the state against its bona-fide and experienced mediums and followers, and calls upon the Government to give directions which shall put an end to such proceedings: and further demands and claims their freedom to worship and conduct their services in churches and other places in accordance with their well-known principles: and demands also the right to the same religious tolerance as is shown to all other religious bodies with all that such tolerance implies."

The resolution was unanimously carried with acclamation.

Mr. Peters affirmed that he himself had for many years practised spiritual healing with beneficial results. He was conscious of assistance from the spiritual world, and he intended to carry on that practice as far as his time and ability allowed. Another important resolution passed at the Annual Meeting at Brixton on Saturday afternoon concerned religious training in the schools. It was as follows:

"Whilst recognising the importance of a spiritual outlook on life which is recognised in all the great religious systems of the world, this assembly of representative Spiritualists assembled in Annual Conference expresses its emphatic dissent against the proposed intention to introduce denominational and dogmatic religious instruction in the state-aided elementary schools. This Conference is of opinion that specifically denominational

[7] Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 4: The President's Badge – Robert Owen 1925-1928 – David Bruton 2010.

training of children is a matter for the home and the church, and views with great alarm the fostering of religious systems which may well promote discord not only in our social but our international relationships."

Mr. Oaten introducing the resolution pointed out that followers of all the world's great religious systems were embraced within the British Empire. The moral and ethical standards of all of them were virtually the same, and to foster the purely Christian point of view—with all its narrow dogmatism in a world which was gradually becoming one huge parish was to set up elements which would make for discord, rivalry and misunderstanding. The resolution was carried unanimously."

Mr. Harold Vigurs occupied the chair during the presidential address by Mr. Stewart:

It is my privilege for the third time to welcome you all to the A.G.M. of the Spiritualists' National Union. Conference assembles again in war conditions and we miss the presence of many valued members who are serving with the forces or engaged in other forms of National Service. Our warmest greetings go out to them all and our prayers for their safe return. Other members have "fallen," and we think of them now and of those they have left behind, and we strengthen our resolve to work all the harder for a world of brotherhood and cooperation. May this be no mere thought or phrase but be in each one of us an irresistible feeling. May it breed in us the conviction that we are, in part at least, responsible for the conditions which makes the practice of brotherhood in the widest sense impossible.

The A.G.M. is the Governing Body of the Union and our constant endeavour is to make it a satisfactory and efficient instrument, to correctly shape policy for the progressive elements in the movement. We have much to learn from each other and it is only by pooling our knowledge and experience and by the open-minded consideration of each other's views, that another step forward may be taken in the well-being of the Union. Most of you are out in the field, doing the spade work, unobtrusively and often in the face of many rebuffs, carrying on the day-to-day work of your Churches. We owe you much and I hope this Conference, though governed of necessity by standing orders, may be conducted in such a way that you may gather fresh inspiration and courage to go forward with renewed enthusiasm in the cause we all have at heart. If we are to see the scope of the problems before us, we must get closer together in our Churches and District Councils, for it is only by maintaining a strong united organisation that we shall be able to fulfil the tasks before us.

The Union has passed safely through many severe tests in its long history, but none more severe than the doubling of the capitation fee which took place at last A.G.M. The fact that our Churches have responded, almost without demur, is a fine tribute to the solidarity of the Union and is a matter we can all be proud of. There will be other tests to surmount as we go on, some perhaps to-day, for you may be faced with a conflict of loyalty as between your Church or District Council and the Union. This is inevitable in any democratic organisation. In fact, life itself is a progression from lesser to greater loyalties, and the greatest of all loyalties, is loyalty to truth as each of us sees it. In approaching our business, let us try to hold the balance, and endeavour to do the best we can for the movement as a whole. If the Union is not right, then we must put it right, for we are the Union. It has no soul but yours and mine. This is the key to the varying views, often uninformed, which are held about the Union.

While the major considerations of the war inevitably overshadow our lives, I am pleased to say that the work of the Union has gone on steadily during the past year. The demands upon the Officers have increased in volume and responsibility and I feel I am doing the right thing in making way for a younger and abler man as head of the Union, in Harold Vigurs, whom you have so wisely chosen to succeed me. In retiring, I wish to

express my sincere thanks to all my colleagues on the Executive and especially to the officers and the General Secretary for their comradeship and loyal support since I took office on the transition of Frank Blake.

If the Union has stood for anything during the past 41 years of its incorporation, it has been for higher standards. It has long endeavoured, by a system of examination and certification to improve the standard of mediumship and platform supply. It is recognised, however, that teachers are far more scarce than lecturers, and our Education Scheme is designed to enable Spiritualists to extend their knowledge of Spiritualism in its various aspects and its relation to other branches of knowledge, whether or not they wish to qualify for the Union's diploma.

We have also been gradually building up a panel of Spiritualist Ministers, who have the right type of personality to act with full sympathy towards those to whom they may be called upon to minister, and who are fitted to carry out with dignity and a due sense of proportion the responsibility the various services and civil acts required of them. A handbook for their guidance is in course of preparation, and almost ready for publication. We are now instituting a more comprehensive scheme of registration, recognising that such a register is fundamental to the securing of legal recognition for the practice of mediumship.

The Spiritualist movement has been badly handicapped in the past for lack of suitable buildings in which to meet and by means of the Pooling Fund and Trust Property Scheme we have made it possible to improve not only the "building" standard of many of our Churches and have made such buildings secure for Spiritualism for all time.

The Union's Fund of Benevolence has also done something to raise the standard of living for many of our aged workers,[8] and at the other end the interests of Youth are now being served by an organisation within the Union. I am sure it is a matter of regret to us all that the B.S.L.U.[9] at its recent Conference confirmed the previous decision of its Management Committee not to come in with us as a Department of the Union. We haven't gone very far yet with our scheme, but a beginning has been made and I hope it will be taken up widely so that we can provide a distinctive place for children and young people in our churches. One of our Youth Clubs has already received official recognition as an "approved" club in the Government Youth Scheme. The grey hairs and white locks I see around me, may mean an accumulation of wisdom and experience from the past, but they give no hope of providing our leaders for the future. We have to look to our youth, and I am looking hopefully to the Planning Committee, which was set up two years ago to carry us a stage further. The future of the movement depends upon what we can do for it to-day, for it is out of the present that the future grows.

I would like to say a word or two about the informal "unity" talks which have taken place during the past few months between members of the various sections of the movement, and in which I have been privileged to participate. An excellent summary of these meetings has been placed at the disposal of the Executive and I hope something good may come from it. I was very pleased to note the exchange of greetings between the London District Council of the Union, and the Greater World Christian Spiritualist League at the May Meetings. I am sure Conference will welcome this reconciliation, for it will pave the way for more cordial and friendly relations in the future. There is no doubt that the League is doing good work in its own way and is meeting the needs of those who find it difficult to leave the old landmarks and accept all at once the full implifications of Spiritualism. Even so, the Union has many Christian Spiritualist

[8] Volume 1, No. 3, April 2014: "Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists' National Union".

[9] British Spiritualist Lyceum Union (BSLU)

churches in full affiliation and they are happy with us for we have always tried to be tolerant in outlook and to preserve for them the widest liberty and greatest freedom.

I find that there is still a good deal of misunderstanding about the Union's attitude on the question of Jesus, and I am sure that I interpret the position correctly when I say that we all have a profound respect for life and His teachings, the essence of which was the "divinity of humanity." His was surely intended to be a representative life, and not an isolated experience, and our aim should be to say as He did "I and my Father are one," and not rest satisfied until we arrive at the consciousness of God as an Indwelling Spirit. One of the finest things ever said about Jesus was that "He went about doing good," and whatever view of Him we hold, I think the Union is taking the wisest course in leaving it a free matter for the individual. After all, the best exposition of a man's religion is his life.

Finally, and perhaps transcending all else in importance at the present time, is our campaign for religious liberty. So acute has the situation become since our last A.G.M. that the Executive decided to open a "Freedom Fund." It is almost unbelievable that it should be necessary to do so in the midst of a war that is being fought for freedom. You would think that the British Public is already sufficiently united in defence of freedom of thought, especially in view of the Atlantic Charter and President Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms." The fight is on, and sooner or later the Government will have to face up to the steadily progressive trend of public opinion in our favour. We are indebted to all who by public effort, by subscription or in any way have supported us in our endeavour to rouse public opinion on this issue, and later when you hear the report of what has been done to-date, I am sure that you will not only endorse the Executive's action, but give it a clear and unqualified direction to do everything in its power to ensure that these iniquitous restrictions are removed. Charlotte Perkins in one of her poems has an inspiring verse for the occasion: "Then rise as ye ne'er rose before, nor hoped before, nor dared before, and show as ne'er was shown before, the power that lies in you. Stand all as one, till right be done, believe, and dare, and do."

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Mr. A. H. L. [Harold] Vigurs

Spiritualists' National Union President 1943-1948 [10]

[10] Pioneer Volume 4, No. 2, April 2017: Harold Vigurs – Spiritualists' National Union President 1943-1948, Harold Vigurs – "Fourteen Group" & The Principles of Spiritualism, SNU AGM 70 Years Ago - Vigurs' Presidential Address.

1944:

The President's address reflects the mood of these days with the debates and fallouts of 1942 over the question, Is Spiritualism a Religion? The President emphasises the point …..

Taken from the Two Worlds, July 7th, 1944:

SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL CONFERENCE
Presidential Address

Addressing. the Annual Conference at Leicester on July 1st the President; Mr. A. H. L. Vigurs, said :—

The interest in our Conferences is an indication of a growing recognition of the part that Spiritualism and Spiritualists are playing in our national life. He would have been a bold man, however, who, at our last Conference, would have suggested that to-day we should be on the eve of our case being considered by the House of Lords. The Duncan trial has been the outstanding feature since we last met in conference, and, though we have been assured by the learned Recorder that courts were not trying Spiritualism and the beliefs of Spiritualists, I am sure that you will agree that we do not share his view. I cannot but regard that case as a direct attack upon Spiritualism, and I suppose that it is a tribute to our growing influence that our adversaries, though sheltering under the cloak of anonymity, have been forced to open this attack. I say forced to open this attack, as I feel confident that when this matter has been dealt with in the House of Lords we shall be subject to similar prosecutions in connection with other phases of our work.



Helen Duncan circa 1942

Spiritualism is Religion.

First and foremost, as a Union, we claim that Spiritualism is a religion, and, in the spirit of the Atlantic Charter, we demand the right to full and unfettered expression of that religion. Mediumship is the very foundation upon which it is based and it is in this direction that I see we need further and further publicity to educate public opinion. In the Duncan case the jury found that 'the performance at the seance was an elaborate pretence and constituted an imposture on human credulity.' As one not unfamiliar with our legal machine, I have a great respect for British justice, but one conclusion is forced: that however the House of Lords decides in this matter we must launch a nation-wide publicity campaign, so that people of this country can reasonably understand and assess for themselves the claims we make as Spiritualists, which are all based fundamentally on mediumship. I stress this feature, as I have been surprised at the bewildered amazement we have met when we have claimed Spiritualism as a religion, and I have found this state

of mind not only among prominent civil servants but among the professional classes generally, including Ministers of the Orthodox Churches.

They often sympathetically admit psychic science, but their traditional views as to what constitutes religion make them shy at any suggestion that Spiritualism is a religion. To those who look back into history to tradition and events as a source of their religion and revelation, it is not always easy to appreciate that others do not need this type of authority, but prefer to rest their convictions upon the experience of current happenings, systematically studied and followed to their honest conclusions.

We are asked what facts must Spiritualists believe. What is your creed and on what is it based? How do you select your Ministers and how ordain them, etc. ? These people do not understand that Spiritualism is based solely upon personal and individual experience of spirit communication. We can partly sympathise with some of their bewilderment, as such individuals are not always totally uninformed. Some have attended our Churches and found, in the main, that they use the normal orthodox form of service, with the addition of some clairvoyant descriptions. Naturally, in such circumstances, we can appreciate how they attach the same old scale of values to prayers, Bible readings, hymns, &c., and how often they think that we have adopted the form of service of orthodoxy without accepting the religious fundamentals upon which such Orthodoxy is based. This all arises from a misconception of our claims, and it might well be that our Churches made a big mistake when they chose the present type of Sunday Service, rather than something more simple and direct, such as the Quakers use, to emphasise our fundamental of Spirit communion. We are not tied to the conception that man is a fallen animal, and that our prayers, &c., should emphasise his unworthiness and need for forgiveness and grace. We accept the scientific fact that man is an evolving creation, or, as poetically expressed, that he is God in the making; that as in the process of time, under natural law, his five senses have been evolved, so he is evolving other faculties to-day, and that the discovery and use of these faculties is part of the larger life which is the essence of all religion.

Mediumship is Fundamental.

Through the use-of these faculties we obtain evidence of another type of world and find by experiment that that world is inhabited, in part at least, by people who formerly lived on this earth, and that under suitable conditions a bridge of communication can be established between the inhabitants of that world and this. This is fact, demonstrably established by individual experience. That many people are ignorant of these facts, or, having heard of them, dismiss them as pretence because they do not fall within the ambit of their own school of thought, does not affect the reality of these experiments. There may be differences of opinion as to the precise significance to be attached to these facts, but the facts themselves cannot be called into question by any fair-minded man. We are the first to appreciate that this bridge of communication is established through the instrumentality of a suitable human being, and that in consequence allowance must always be made for the colouration of the communication due to the use of a human channel. However, after making every generous allowance under this heading, there remains a residuum of fact that, we claim, cannot be explained by any other hypothesis than that the communicator once lived on this earth. On this fundamental fact we found our spirit hypothesis. The facts to establish this we derive through mediumship, and any attack on mediumship must necessarily be an attack upon the fundamental of our religion of Spiritualism.

It may have been just a coincidence that when we were fighting our case at the Old Bailey, the Archbishop of York, at the Convocation, slightingly referred to the revival of public interest in “crude and materialistic forms of Spiritualism.” I am not at all sure what Dr. Garbett intended when he used these words, but I was reminded of the closed upper

room, where a spirit form materialised and gave physical proofs to establish His identity to one whom He loved. I wonder if Dr. Garbett would care for this manifestation to be called "crude and materialistic" because it is typical of some of the phenomena that we seek to give to our own sceptical generation, and I wonder if he would be mortified if, in 1944, that experience was dismissed as but an elaborate pretence which imposed upon human credulity.

It is true that we do not possess valuable Churches and Cathedrals, or derive substantial income from a large national trust, but we do enjoy a direct contact with our friends in spirit, and that is priceless beyond treasure. We seek, Dr. Garbett, to bind up broken hearts by giving people tangible tokens that their so-called dead are not lost, but still live and welcome the opportunities we Spiritualists afford to assure those they have left behind of their continued love and affection. When you appreciate the real beauty of our Cause, Dr. Garbett, we are confident that you will regret your ill-advised criticism.

Let us stand together !

It seems to me that the time has come when we should shew more definitely that we have a distinctive contribution to make to religious life. We do not indulge in theological speculations about life and the hereafter, but seek along scientific lines to give material and psychic proofs shewing that man, irrespective of his beliefs and character survives physical death, and that the type of life in that after-death state depends entirely upon the individual effort made in this life. That as a result of our communication with those in the after-death state, all things that separate men, such as colour, creeds and social conditions founded on wealth or rank, are artificial and temporary, and that man is only worthy as he is generous in thought, and noble in character.

Our spirit friends have told us that they know little more of God than we do, and that the best advice they can give us is to forget self in serving our brother man. That is the law; that is the test of spiritual development. We are sufficiently separated from our brother man when we are clear of his weaknesses. Through the insight given to us by spirit communication we can perceive that the message that we receive to-day from the spirit world was the origin of all forms of religion, and that gradually that channel of communication has been closed as the prophet has been replaced by the priest. As Spiritualists, we are grateful to all those prophets, of all times and places, for the heroic struggle they endured to give light and truth to this world. To all of them we give honour, and we seek, in our own way, to share that vital link with a spirit world which was their common experience.

In our public appeal let us, therefore, concentrate our energies to educate man's mind to the proofs of spirit communication, content that, with this fundamental established, his life will be the sweeter for this knowledge and experience. We can shew in our Church Services that prayers, readings and singing of hymns are not essentials in themselves, but merely aids to prepare that frame of mind that will facilitate Spirit Communication.

Man needs evidence, not sermons.

War and suffering make men think. Thought leads to thought, and answers but open fresh questions. Our appeal will be effective only as we supply convincing argument and satisfactory phenomena to meet the demands of the sincere enquirer.

I believe the outlook is definitely encouraging. What though the Church condemn, and the legal machine is set in motion against us, our claims are founded on truth, and truth needs no protection.

If for a time we are persecuted, I am confident that any sacrifice we are called upon to make will only call forth a greater loyalty to our spirit friends, and in return we shall

receive from them the necessary inspiration and encouragement to so present our case that its own sweet reasonableness will win for us the freedom and recognition for which we are fighting.

S.N.U. ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

The Annual Meeting of the Spiritualist National Union met at the Causeway Lane Church, Leicester, on Saturday, July 1st. War conditions and restricted facilities limited the attendance to about 70. All districts, however, were represented. Mr. A. L. Vigurs, from the chair, welcomed the delegates and Mr. Wm. Henson (President of the Church) extended a welcome on behalf of the local friends. Messrs. Botham (Nottingham) and Ridgway (Southport) were appointed tellers and Mr. Luke (Seaham) messenger.

The minutes having been adopted, Mr. Harold Vigurs delivered his presidential address. This was accepted with thanks after a lengthy discussion. The Annual Report and Interim Report for the last six months showed a gratifying growth in numbers, both of Churches and associated members.

The Council has been largely engaged in litigation for the protection of mediumship. The Exponents Committee has been busy with the preparation of a National Register of mediums comprising (a) Diploma Holders and certified workers. This, despite the attempt of the authorities to suppress mediumship, shows the right spirit. The interests of Youth, Education, the Fund of Benevolence, Education and Healing have all shown progressive activities on the part of their respective committees. The Financial Statement showed a welcome increase in the stability of the Union while the Trust Properties and Building Fund Pool clearly showed the demand for better meeting places. Two small amendments to the constitution of the Building Fund Pool were adopted unanimously.

The Report of the Parliamentary and Freedom Fund Committee occupied considerable time and Mr. McIndoe gave a lengthy review of the efforts made to defend mediumship. In some cases these had been successful. The case which had attracted most attention however, was the prosecution of Mrs. Duncan, very full particulars of which were given. It was clear that we are suffering not only from archaic laws but also from decisions of the courts which were made when Spiritualism was far more misunderstood than at present. Many legal technicalities were involved but the courts had apparently decided that communion with spirits was a form of conjuration and was thus a pretence and illegal. The Committee had decided to seek permission to appeal to the House of Lords. It must not be forgotten that the decision of the courts in the Duncan case would guide decisions in any subsequent cases.

A lengthy discussion centred round this question. It was suggested that the law apparently held that prayer might well be conjuration. The churches certainly attempt to conjure the Holy Spirit but no action is taken.

A proposal to protest publicly against a case which was a careful “frame-up” and in which Spiritualists were convinced that they had not been fairly treated, but had been the victims of vindictiveness and sectarian persecution was withdrawn in view of pending proceedings.

Mr. Raffill stated that the Freedom Fund had now received over £3,000. They had paid out over £2,500 and there was more expense to come. He wanted to see at least £10,000 raised as it was fairly certain that other proceedings would be taken against honest mediums and they must be prepared.

It was proposed to hold a large Mass Meeting in London when the Duncan case was concluded.

Mr. Stewart then paid the Annual Tribute to those members and friends who had been promoted to spirit life during the year. “They have joined the vast company of the invisibles. All is well with them. They will be with us to-day. Their work had been transferred to us, and we must carry on and implement their efforts.” The Conference stood in silence.

A resolution was passed expressing dislike of certain astrological and other advertisements appearing in the Psychic Press, and calling upon the Council to use their influence to secure their discontinuance.

An invitation to hold the next Conference at Paignton, provided the war had ended, was well received. The final decision was left to the Council. Thanks for past services were expressed to Mr. W. Rawlinson who is retiring from the Council. Votes of thanks to Mr. Henson and the local friends for their excellent arrangements and welcome and thanks to spirit friends for their assistance and inspiration during the year concluded the Conference.

On Sunday morning a Primary Youth Conference was held Mr. E. A. Keeling in the chair. There was a good attendance.

After opening remarks by the chairman of the Youth Council, David. Dutton spoke on Youth Clubs, and emphasised the indirect benefits accruing to Spiritualist Churches through having a live Youth Club attached to them. He stressed the importance of the Church finding a Youth Club Leader who would enjoy the enthusiastic support of Club members. It was important to allow the Youth to choose their own Youth Committee and plan their own programmes. That being so it implied that Spiritualist teaching should not be thrust upon the Youth Club, but the initiative for talks on the subject should come from the Club members themselves.

Questions and discussion followed.

In answer to a question as to what a Church should do if it wanted to form a Youth Club, Mr. Dutton pointed out that members of the S.N.U. Youth Committee (who came from various parts of the country) would gladly help in the initial stages with advice either by post or in a personal visit.

Due to the illness of Mr. N. Ainley, who was to have spoken on Lyceums and amplify the leaflet on National Union of Lyceums he had drafted, Mrs. R. Johnson deputised at short notice.

She feared that the Lyceum Movement was in danger of dying out through failing to move with the times and adopt modern methods. The Youth Committee hoped to initiate in National Union Lyceums a more modern approach. She stressed that Churches had a responsibility towards their children and it was essential that the Lyceums should be a definite part of the Church and should receive every encouragement from the Church Committee.

The children in Lyceums should not be handicapped in their spiritual training by the presence of adults who monopolised the discussions. Those adults who attend should be more in the capacity of leaders, and children be divided up into appropriate age-groups.

This question of adults in Lyceums led to considerable questions and discussions.

In the evening a Mass Meeting was held, addressed by Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding who was followed by Sgt. C. R. Dell, R.A.F. The Church was crowded. Owing to pressure on our space particulars are carried over to next week’s issue.

1945:

Taken from the Two Worlds, July 13th, 1945:

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE AT PAIGNTON
PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

TWICE within living memory, Europe has been deluged in blood. Many living to-day have sacrificed ten years of life to war. Not only have they endured enormous sacrifices and hardships, but they have seen their sons and daughters taken from civil life to resume a fight which they thought had been won and which they once thought was to end war for all time.

To-day, with the collapse of Germany, we have gained a partial peace; but we are still living in stressful times, with a new world in the making. These new days demand new and courageous thoughts. We dare not contemplate the possibility of a third world war. The comity of Nations *must* be so adjusted that the issue is peace. Following the last war, with its terrifying loss of life, we were content to leave the management of our national affairs to the politician, whose job it was.

As a people, we were happy to have exchanged khaki for civilian dress, and our first thought was to make up, by hectic living, for the pleasures we had been robbed of by the locust years of war. Later, when disillusionment followed, we had lost the will to intervene effectively in the atmosphere of world depression that had engulfed us. To-day, we have another opportunity to try and regulate our affairs; not only within the State but between States. This will involve many sacrifices of thought and tradition, as well as of property and power. We must think out again our basis of relationship one to another, so that the causes of distrust and enmity are minimised, and-our principle of the Brotherhood of Man governs the practical application of our lives. In this we may fail (God forbid), but we dare not neglect the great experiment lest future generations curse us for our stupidity and selfishness.

Surveying the realm of human affairs, we have all been shocked by the revelations of sadistic cruelty at Belsen, Buchenwald, and other concentration camps under that self-styled superior race, which silenced the voice of a declining Church in Germany, and substituted a worship of race and might that has given the world a flood of unspeakable horrors. To-day, the panacea for our troubles is found in the key-word "Security." Security amongst the Nations, so that the voice of the small nation shall be heard in the councils of the Great Nations, and legitimate aspirations shall be accommodated by mutual consent rather than by resort to suicidal war. Security in the economic world, so that the man who fights or works for his country should not be haunted later in life by the spectre of want, but should be guaranteed a certain minimum standard of life which, if need be, shall be a charge upon the general effort of the community; security to think and express his thoughts without being compelled to submit to the patronising influences of State or Church; Freedom of conscious expression, to the limit in which it does not restrict the similar right of one's neighbour. Spiritualists are denied that liberty, in the same way that the Nazi Powers denied that liberty to the people of Germany. It is our profound conviction that no civilization can be sound and happy, no matter what measure of social security governs its civic and economic life, unless the right of the individual conscience to think and worship God without restraint is fully guaranteed to all its citizens.

In the eyes of British law, all Spiritualists are rogues and vagabonds, and now are stigmatised as conjurators, or should it be conjurors? Is it not strange that Spiritualism, which alone gives convincing evidences of that other world, characteristic of all religions,

should be spurned by an orthodoxy which itself is steadily declining because of the lack of this specific evidence?

It is both true and sad that Jesus Christ, the fountain head of Christianity, who offended the orthodoxy of his day, would, if living to-day and producing his so-called miracles, be guilty under British law, of being a rogue and a vagabond, and also of conjuration.

In spite of Mr. Morrison's statements, in reply to questions raised in the House of Commons, the position of Spiritualists under the law, has considerably worsened as the result of the Duncan case.

Before that case, it was a criminal offence to tell fortunes, or even to offer to tell a fortune. It did not matter that you believed you possessed the powers to tell fortunes; such an effort was an offence in itself, whatever the state of the mind of the person concerned.

The tender concern of the law is to protect His Majesty's subjects from "persons pretending or professing to tell fortunes, or using any subtle craft, means, or device, by palmistry *or otherwise* to impose on any of His Majesty's subjects." The words "or otherwise" have been so interpreted, in the case of Monck *v*. Hilton, that any Spiritualistic sitting or seance can be brought within the ambit of this offence. The sitting concerned was an ordinary one, where, in subdued light, objects were moved without contact, and messages given. The magistrates, in their limited knowledge, found that the phenomena amounted to "subtle craft, means and device to deceive and defraud."

In the high court of appeal, the findings of fact by the magistrate were accepted. In the words of Baron Pollock, "He" (i.e., the medium), "so conducted himself as to assume the power of communicating with, and calling in the aid of unseen spirits, who could do certain acts, such as the winding and playing of a musical box, and the communication of messages from persons who had died. We have therefore a craft, means and device which is beyond that of physical dexterity and a professed dealing with some spiritual agency, which is enacted, not for the purpose of individual experiment, or so-called scientific pursuit, but to deceive and impose upon others." That was the position prior to the Duncan case, and, as our counsel Mr. Loseby has pointed out, any medium similarly charged with demonstrating what we call our phenomena, and who says "I am an honest medium," has no defence whatever.

At Portsmouth, Mrs. Duncan was charged, with others, "that they did unlawfully conspire and cheat, to defraud of their money, certain peoples by falsely pretending that at so-called Spiritualist seances, that the said Helen Duncan was capable of holding communication with dead persons, and causing the spirits thereof to materialize, etc." At the Old Bailey, this was changed to the charge that the same defendants "conspired together, with other persons unknown, to pretend to exercise or use a kind of conjuration, to wit; that through the agency of Mrs. Duncan, spirits of dead should appear to be present, in fact in such place as Helen Duncan was then in, and that the spirits were communicating with living persons then and there present."

The emphasis of the charge is just common fraud. When passing sentence on the Duncan case, the Recorder stated that the defendants were guilty of conspiring together to commit an unlawful act, namely, to pretend to recall spirits of dead persons in a visible and tangible form. The emphasis is on the word "pretend." "The jury have found." said the Recorder, "that the methods adopted by you in the exhibitions covered by the charge, amounted to a fraud on those who witnessed them." He added, "In this case the jury appear to have little hesitation in finding that all of you participated in a common fraud, and I must deal with the case on that footing. The Recorder added this proviso, "Whether genuine manifestations of the kind are possible, the verdict of the jury does not decide."

Similarly, in the Monck *v*. Hilton case, it was stated, "We are not called upon to express any opinion upon the subject of Spiritualism generally; whether there does exist any real power in a medium of the nature set out, or whether its existence is a mere delusion. Such a subject would be a very improper one for argument or decision in a court of law."

This possibly means something to somebody, but it certainly means nothing to Spiritualists. Because of their unfamiliarity with these phenomena we challenge the competency of a jury to decide what is fraud.

Spiritualists are the first to condemn fraud. They are also the first to appreciate that much that is accepted as evidence of fraud by the general public is not fraud to the experienced investigator.[11]

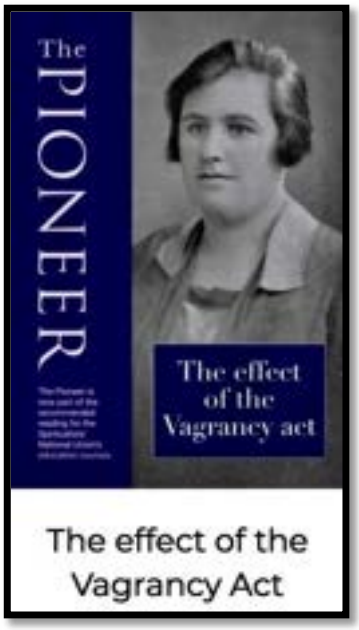
Dr. Schrenck-Notzing, in the work "The Phenomena of Materialization," says, "Many so-called exposures have exposed nothing but the ignorance of the exposers."

That is probably also true of the general public in their attitude to Spiritualism. Our main difficulty is to provide evidence that can overcome this great prejudice.

When the Duncan Case was taken to appeal, the Lord Chief Justice said, "What was aimed at, as shown by the language of the Statute itself, was that ignorant persons should not be deluded or defrauded, by the pretence to exercise any kind of conjuration," and later, "it was repeatedly emphasised by the Recorder, and must be emphasised here again, that the only matter to be decided by the jury was whether there was pretence or not. That is the law as it stands at present. *It is not free from doubt*, but, inasmuch as *pretence* is the crime, the 'conjuring up' of real spirits is not, apparently, a criminal offence."

As Spiritualists we can hardly be expected to be grateful. In the Duncan case, Mr. Loseby sought to establish, by evidence, and in fact did so, to knowledgeable minds, that Mrs. Duncan was a genuine materializing medium, both prior to and after the Portsmouth incident. He offered a séance to the jury, so that they could become better informed of the nature of the phenomena, and be better able to appraise the evidence. This was declined. Following the *dicta* of the Lord Chief Justice, such a course will be impossible in future, and we shall have to rely on the evidence relating to any particular seance.

I have mentioned this matter to bring home to you how much our legal position has worsened as a result of the Duncan Case. We can now be charged under the Witchcraft as well as the Vagrancy Act, and the restrictions imposed as to what evidence is admissible makes the possibility of a successful appeal to the courts more and more remote. In general we disapprove of fortune-telling, but we cannot admit that all statements concerning the future fall into that category. There is fortune-telling, but there is also prophecy, and we are fighting for the unhampered expression of the gifts of the Spirit. As to our future line of action, it is probable that our main policy will be to secure the redress of our disabilities through Parliamentary action. For this purpose we shall have to educate not only our M.P's, but the general public.[12]



[11] See Pioneer over three issues, "A Question of Fraud!", starting in Vol. 7, No. 3, June 2020.

[12] See Pioneer's six-part series, "The Effect of The Vagrancy Act – The Work of The Spiritualists' National Union", started in issue Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2014. All six parts on one PDF is available on the Pioneer page of the SNU website: https://www.snu.org.uk/the-pioneer-journal

Our object must be more and better Spiritualists; more and better propaganda. One of the steps in this direction is the work being done by our diploma and registration of workers scheme. We are anxious that our members should be better informed about Spiritualism and more capable of demonstrating its truths. Our greatest dangers are uniformed emotional enthusiasm and premature mediumship.

Development means effort, both mental and spiritual. Mediumship does not mean that your guide does *your* thinking by *your* proxy. Our Education scheme aims at removing the ignorance which retards your mental make-up, so that you can become a better and more worthy instrument for spirit use. There is nothing of less use to the Spirit World, than a mind that has become fossilised. Our educational scheme can make you, as a medium, a more capable exponent. The mere fact that a name is included on our register should be a guarantee to the general public that the person concerned has genuine powers. It is a guarantee to the sincere, enquiring public that if they come to us, they will not be exposed to fraud or incompetence. I know that some, whilst appreciating the need for the scheme, have reservations. They fear lest the organisation, with its rules and regulations, might strangle the spirit it is designed to foster, and they point to the history of the Church as an example. I want to assure you that every member of your National Council is fully alive to the danger, but in view of the National and democratic character of our organisation, they will always be zealous to see that the spirit is not hampered by technical regulations.

We face the future undaunted. Our difficulties are great, but our fighting qualities greater. What though Parliament treats us with contumely, we have the blessing of the spirit world on our mission. We have fought, we are fighting, we shall continue to fight, to bring the light and understanding of Spirit into all questions of security; to bring our principles of brotherhood to bear on all questions, both Social and economic, and not only in the structure of our Nation, but in its relations to all the Sister Nations of the world; to bring that knowledge to mankind that shall reconcile his deepest fears with an illumined understanding; to reveal that all worlds are one, both seen and unseen; that man may use the stepping stones of his worn-out ideas as a means to prepare himself for that greater vision; that wider inspiration, which leads to the wider God-given Freedom, which is the inheritance of those who truly seek.

* * *

The Spiritualist Conference held at Paignton on July 7th, was one of the happiest I have attended for some years. Doubtless the cessation of warfare on the Continent was largely responsible for the improved fraternal and friendly atmosphere everywhere prevalent, and for the improved attendance of about 116 delegates and members.

At 10 am. Mr. Harold Vigurs called the delegates to order in the well-appointed Church at Manor Corner, Paignton, and Mr. Joe Rossiter the local President welcomed the delegates.

Mr. Geo. Stabb, J.P., in his chain of office, then extended the greetings of the civic authorities to the assembled company. He hoped that they would enjoy the amenities of the township, and that their Conference would strengthen the spiritual life of the people and add to the well-being of the movement of Spiritualism. He hoped too that they would have pleasant memories and someday return.

Messrs. Ridgway (Southport), and J. Rossiter (Paignton), were appointed tellers, and Mr. Tom Ellis, messenger. Miss May Price the new secretary of the Union was introduced to and welcomed by the delegates and in a neat speech stressed her desire to

win the friendship of all. She would put her best into the work and asked their confidence.[13]

Mr. Vigurs then delivered his Presidential address. It was comprehensive, analytical and stimulating, and won high compliments.

A lengthy discussion ensued in which the relationships between churches and mediums figured prominently and many useful suggestions were offered. Mr. Vigurs was heartily applauded for his fine address.

Mr. Harry Dawson (Newcastle), moved the congratulations of the Conference to "arisen Friends." Year by year the rank thinned only to be filled again, but they could not forget the faithful service of those who had been called, during the year, to a fuller life. We welcomed them in our midst to-day, for they were still ours. We thanked them for their service and fellowship. The audience stood in silence as a tribute of respect.

The minutes of the previous conference were adopted, as was the Annual Report and Balance Sheet. Interim Reports for the past six months were next considered. Mr. Wilson, for the Exponents Committee, reported that 154 Diplomas (including 81 ministers), had been issued, and 83certificates to workers. A supplementary list would be issued shortly. Three new ministers and 18 diplomees were approved and two Diplomas had been withdrawn under clause 5. (Mr. J Benjamin and Mrs. Helen Duncan[14]). The Education Committee reported that examinations had been recently held and there was a large increase in the number of students applying for examination. Discussion took place on Mr. Dutton's suggestions for publicity and on the restrictions regarding the admission of strangers to seances.

A very interesting debate centred round Mr. Davison' report on the Healing Committee's work which raised general interest.

Mr. Haig reported on the work of the planning committee. In three years time (March, 1948), they would celebrate the Centenary of Modern Spiritualism. They planned to raise a Centenary Fund for the further propagation of the "Cause."

They were preparing a series of volumes under the title "Spiritualists Centenary Library." These would comprise books newly written as well as re-issues: a Hymn and Tune Book and a Ministers Handbook. They further proposed to consider the possibility of Homes for the Aged, under the Fund of Benevolence. An International Congress: Propaganda Meetings throughout the country which would conclude with a united meeting at the Royal Albert Hall on March 25th, 1948.

Mr. McIndoe reported that the Council were making an effort to re-establish the International Federation which had been broken up by the war. They were inviting delegates from Continental Countries to meet them in London next spring, with a view to an International Congress in 1948. In view of the terrible state of Europe the S.N.U. were prepared to meet the travelling and hotel expenses of the delegates to next year's meeting. It was hoped to establish International Headquarters in London. The scheme was generally approved. Mr. Stewart recounted the work of the Freedom and Parliamentary Committees and especially emphasised the efforts of Messrs. Hannen Swaffer and Clement Davies, K.C., M.P. They had decided to affiliate with the "Committee of Civil Liberties" and had established a Council of Action on which Mr. Loseby had been appointed.

[13] Pioneer, Volume 1, No. 5: "General Secretaries of the SNU".

[14] Pioneer, Volume 2, No. 5: "Why did the S.N.U. remove Helen Duncan's diploma in 1945?"

Mr. Raffill reported that he had received in all £5,040, for the Freedom Fund, but money was still needed. The receipts for the F.O.B. had been a record, and he thanked the delegates for their efforts. There were now 44 pensioners on the list, one of them 94 years of age. There had been seven transitions since January. The work of the F.O.B. was steadily increasing and he had received and replied to over 7,500 letters in the year. The fund gave advice as well as money, and had endeavoured in every way to help the old people.

There were three notices of Motion on The Agenda. No. I was withdrawn. No. 2, advising all churches to adopt the words "Spiritualist National Church'' in its title was unanimously adopted. No. 3, *re* appointment of a sub-committee obtained no proposal and therefore dropped.

The only change on the Council is the election of Mr. Bleasdale for the Lancashire Area.

The Conference ended with hearty votes of thanks to all the local friends for the excellence of their organization.

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The reader no doubt will have noted the absence of Swaffer's resignation in the Union's reports; it appears to have been somewhat cloaked in mystery for whatever reason by the Union. Below are some remarks by Maurice Barbanell on the resignation of the Union's Honorary President, Hannen Swaffer:

Psychic News, July 18th, 1942 – **S.N.U. President John M. Stewart remarked:**

"… the resignation was withheld from the annual general meeting, it will not be dealt with now until the next meeting of the national' executive in October. In the meantime I hope that wiser counsels will prevail and that Hannen Swaffer can be induced to reconsider his decision. Apart from its effect on the Union and in other directions, I should take his withdrawal as a personal loss, for I hold him in the highest esteem and am honoured to have him as a friend."

Psychic News, July 25th, 1942 – What Happened After Hannen Swaffer Threw His Bomb:

WHAT has happened since Hannen Swaffer threw his second bomb, his resignation from the Spiritualists' National Union as its honorary president ?

One extraordinary thing is that the "Two Worlds," more or less the Union's official organ, did not refer to his resignation last week !

This week, however, it will publish a copy of the letter—we printed it last week—that John Stewart, the Union's president, sent to *Psychic News* expressing his regrets at Swaffer's resignation. John's letter is being reprinted in the "Two Worlds," says the Union, ''so as to ensure its widest possible publicity."

This is curiously one-sided. Why isn't Hannen Swaffer's letter of resignation reprinted so that the "widest possible publicity" should be given to both sides ?

Psychic News, July 10th, 1943 – S.N.U. Leaves It Out:

"No mention of Hannen Swaffer's resignation of his honorary presidency appears in the annual report of the Spiritualists' National Union. Officially members have not yet been told about his resignation. And the line, "Honorary President: Mr. Hannen Swaffer," which has regularly appeared on the front page of the report is this year deleted. In the S.N.U. Diary for 1943 under the words, "Hon. President," there is a blank."

"When I (Barbanell) raised this question at the annual conference, the reply was that Swaffer had never "officially" resigned. Nevertheless the council had asked him to reconsider his resignation, but as he did not reply they had declared the office vacant. I insisted that in view of his long service to the Union some mention should have been made in the annual report."

Psychic News, April 15th, 1944:

One old controversy has been settled. Shrewd observers may have noticed that in an advertisement in last week's *Psychic News* Swaff is referred to as the honorary president of the S.N.U.



Today Hannen Swaffer still remains as ***Hon. President-in-Spirit.***

This series shows the Union sustained no substantial long-term losses during the war years

Year-end 1939: there were 474 Churches and a 15,000 membership

Year-end 1945: there were 460 Churches and a 14,924 membership

By the end of 1946 there was an increase to 486 Churches and a 16,446 membership

The full three-part series of "The Spiritualists' National Union & World War II" is available on one PDF from the SNU website:

https://www.snu.org.uk/important-subjects-pioneer-journals

Emma—Floyd—Hardinge—Britten

May 2nd, 1823 – October 2nd, 1899

Recently Pioneer was asked where the name "Hardinge" came from.

Given that Emma was born Floyd and married Britten, where does Miss / Mrs Emma Hardinge fit in?

Marriage of Emma Hardinge:



Married, at Grace Church Rectory, Jersey City, Tuesday October 11th, by Rev. L. Rice. EMMA HARDINGE to Wm. G. P. Britten, both of London, England.



William Britten

Mrs. Hardinge is no more! – but "she still lives," – proving Spiritualism to be true.[9] She is now the happy Mrs. Emma Britten; has married one of her own countrymen, Mr. Wm. G. P. Britten, a gentleman of culture and a devoted Spiritualist. We wish them joy such as angels love to record. Having been born in England, she may now be regarded as really and truly a "Briton." – Cleveland *Spiritualist*.[10]

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Emma Hardinge Britten needs little introduction; however, there are many mysteries which still surround her life. Her autobiography was edited and published by her younger sister, Margaret Wilkinson, around June 1st, 1900, eight months after Emma's death on October 2nd, 1899; however, the autobiography draws a veil over much of her life.

As to the origin of the name "Hardinge", it is open to speculation, with two possible *general explanations*. By 1836, before her thirteenth birthday, Emma was working as a clairvoyant and magnetic subject in a London secret occult society called the Orphic Circle. In the 2001 Robert Mathiesen publication, "The Unseen Worlds of Emma Hardinge Britten: Some Chapters in the History of Western Occultism" (Theosophical History, Occasional Paper IX) Mathiesen identified her earliest work as a medium with Dr E. Hardinge, to whom she may have been married.

Support for a connection with Dr Hardinge is published in Psypioneer, Vol. 1, No. 5, September 2004, "Emma Mystery deepens". Duncan Gascoyne, who had revived the Britten Museum at Stansted before becoming SNU President, made a dramatic discovery; by referring to the first regularly published UK Spiritualist periodical he found new information on Emma's presumed movements if she separated from Dr Hardinge.

Duncan reported:

> Dr Hardinge writes to the editor of the Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph on the 15th October 1855 from his address at 5 Tabernacle Walk, Finsbury Square, London stating that

[9] Emma continued to be called Mrs Hardinge for some time after her marriage; for example, when she first gave her "four principles" on April 30th, 1871 at Cleveland Hall in London, it is stated: "A lecture delivered by Mrs Emma Hardinge", later known as Emma Hardinge Britten.

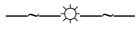
[10] Notice taken from: The Ohio Democrat, Friday, October 28th, 1870.

"he would have communicated with them earlier, had not our circle been broken in consequence of the long and protracted illness of my dear and valuable partner. etc etc."

"Mrs Hardinge has been used as a writing medium for the last three years, and much, very much of important information have we received through her hand. She is now being developed as a speaking medium. Lectures or discourses, occupying from fifteen to sixty minutes, have been delivered through her.

On Sunday evening, when she passed into the state of trance, it was requested by the Spirits that, for the future, one of the company should propose a subject, and then a lecture would be delivered upon it through her, providing the subject was one calculated to benefit the whole human family.

We have in progress, by the Spirit of Cowper, 'Lines upon the Mormons'.[11] This reference to Mormons ties in with the fact that the medium herself was to take the sixth lecture in which she would give an account of a conversation which the medium had with a company of Mormonites.



If this is correct then Emma cannot have arrived in America on 22nd August 1855 as it would appear that she was still in London.[12] A communication dated 28th December 1855 to the Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph appears to indicate by the statement that they are gathering new enquirers around us, that Emma has departed and that there has been a change in circumstances.

This discovery in the Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph suggests that Emma was already engaged in one of her most characteristic mediumship feats – the entranced address – by 1855.

Duncan Gascoyne offered further research on Emma in Psypioneer, Vol. 3, No. 2, February 2007: "Search for Emma intensifies". Duncan noted:

1844:
Actresses listed at the Adelphi Theatre from 1806 to 1900 show that an Emma Hardinge worked there annually from 1844 to 1853. Emma was not using her maiden name of Floyd.

This brings us the other, simpler possibility, given that Emma worked as an actress in various theatres in London, including the Adelphi noted above. Emma changed her name from Floyd to Hardinge and went to live and work in Paris, later to America, using Hardinge as her professional name and continuing to use it throughout her life.

Emma's first pseudonym, at age 15, for her musical work was E(rnest) Reinhold; see the excellent downloadable paper: "Back From Jerusalem: Emma Hardinge Britten, Spiritualist Propagandist", by Marc Demarest.[13]

Emma would also have used occult name/s originating from her early days in the Orphic Circle – "Emma gives the impression that the Orphic Circle enjoyed the services of many young clairvoyants, and that it was part of a network of occult organisations"; see Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 12: "What We Don't Know About One Who Knows". See also Pioneer, Vol. 7, No.2: "Astral Projection – Liberating *the Double"*.



[11] See the "Unseen Worlds of Emma Hardinge Britten", top of page 8.

[12] See page 12 of Emma Hardinge Britten's autobiography.

[13] http://www.ehbritten.org/video/ehb_life_bw_version.pdf
See also the Emma Hardinge Britten Archive: www.ehbritten.org

1901 MANCHESTER LYCEUM PARADE

—~—☼—~—

Alv Hirst is the Director of Communications for the Spiritualists' National Union. Alv contacted me and asked if I had seen the old silent film lasting around seven minutes of the "Manchester Spiritualists Procession (1901)".[1] The film is of very good quality, showing many of the Union's early pioneers.

At the time of this film the reconstitution of the Spiritualists' National Federation into the Spiritualists' National Union was nearing its final legal stages.



At the front on the left (facing) of the parade is James J. Morse, who had been fighting for a *National* Spiritualist movement, along with William Johnson (next to Morse), for over two decades.[2]

The gentleman in the top hat behind the three ladies[3] is John Venables. Venables was the President/Chairman[4] of the Spiritualists' National Federation during the trying period when it was becoming incorporated as the "Spiritualists' National Union" and occupied the chair in 1901 at the Annual Meeting at Sheffield, which finally decided on its incorporation.

[1] Google: "Manchester Spiritualists Procession (1901)" and watch free.

[2] See Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 8: "The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union" (over several issues).

[3] The lady behind Johnson I believe is Morse's wife Marion; they married in 1870.

[4] See Volume 7, No. 2: "President or Chairmen?".

At the Annual Conference held at the Music Hall, Surrey Street, Sheffield on Saturday and Sunday July 6th and 7th, James J. Morse, on behalf of the Executive, proposed:

> 'That this Conference adopt the advice of Mr. Bateman that the Federation be incorporated under the Joint Stock Companies' Act, with liability limited under guarantee, under the style of 'The Spiritualists' National Union Limited.' Mr. Johnson seconded, thinking it was the best scheme possible.[5]

William Johnson would incorporate our Seven Principles into the new constitution; the basis of these statements given by Emma Hardinge Britten were already in use in the Lyceum just prior to the formation of the Federation.[6] Please see Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 1: February 2016.

National Federation to National Union

William Johnson would be the last Federation President/Chairman and the first Spiritualists' National Union President. This beautiful historic film no doubt shows many of our pioneers and most probably included in the march are some of our later Union Presidents such as our first lady President (1923-1925), Jessie Greenwood. She was Lyceum President 1887-8 and, together with Messrs Kitson, Kersey, Venables, Morse and others, she was instrumental in laying the foundation of the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union (BSLU).

Pioneer has frequently emphasised the great impact the Lyceum movement had on the growth of our National Spiritualism. Some months earlier to this film no doubt many of these Lyceumists captured walking would have attended the funeral of Emma Hardinge Britten.

Below, appendixed to Emma Hardinge Britten's autobiography by her sister Margaret Wilkinson, are quoted some details of the latter part of her life and funeral:[7]

> The latter part of her life was a sad and suffering one, and more especially so, as her active brain and spirit still wished to do the work she had been accustomed to, and the poor enfeebled frame and worn-out constitution prevented her carrying out her desires.

Last public appearance:

> Mrs. Britten's last public efforts for the cause she had done so much to found, and which she loved so dearly, were the opening of the Jubilee Bazaar and the unveiling of a stained-glass window in the Salford Spiritual Church.[8] The following extracts are also from the pamphlet referred to:—
>
> At the Jubilee Bazaar Mrs. Britten threw aside the oncoming weakness, and appeared upon the platform to open the bazaar on the first day. She was greeted with the warmest marks of appreciation, and her appearance evoked the enthusiasm of the great crowd which had assembled.
>
> Loved and respected by all who knew her, she retains in our hearts a place of honour. She laboured for a cause which was all in all to her; for by its wondrous revelations she

[5] In October 1901 the Spiritualists' National Union Limited was incorporated under the Companies Acts as a company not for profit and limited by guarantee, and in July 1902 it succeeded to, and took over the property, rights and obligations of, the Spiritualists' National Federation.

[6] Except: "I believe in the communion of spirits as ministering angels".

[7] "At the request of some of the friends and workers in the Spiritual movement, I have annexed to these auto-biographical sketches a few extracts from a small pamphlet published after Mrs. E. H. Britten's decease." The Autobiography of Emma Hardinge Britten, posthumously published and edited in 1900 by Emma's sister, Margaret Wilkinson, is available as a free download via Google.

[8] Taken from her funeral service (Light, October 14th, 1899): "…and a beautiful floral harp from the Salford Spiritual Church, of which Mrs. Britten was an honorary life member and in which her last public service took place, when she unveiled the stained glass window."

had found the shining path of truth; and having her own spiritual wants relieved, she strove her utmost to meet the necessities of her fellowmen.

The last public ceremony which she performed was the unveiling of a stained-glass window in the Salford Spiritual Church, when she also made her last public appearance. Her wondrous strength and power were again manifested there, for, although weak and feeble, she rose to the occasion, and with much of her old accustomed vigour she spoke of the possibilities and progress of Spiritualism.

This last public act had in it a touch of deep significance. She found Spiritualism in the throes of its arduous birth struggle, and watched it and laboured for it through her life, beholding its steady growth with the intense interest of a parent for her child; and then, when her time was nearly come, her unveiling of the beautiful stained-glass window was a sign that Spiritualism was consolidating its forces, that gradually it was realising the full dignity of its position, and that it was commencing to bestir itself for a greater effort, which should appeal to the outer world, and answer its great need by providing a beautiful setting for the more lovely jewel of the Gospel of Spiritualism.

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Emma died on October 2nd, 1899; her funeral was held on October 7th:



FUNERAL RITES

The first part of the funeral service was conducted in the house, and only a few of the close personal friends of Mrs. Britten joined her relatives in her study, where, hushed by the icy hand of death, her body lay in calm repose, encased in a neat coffin of polished elm.

The face was calm and reposeful, bearing no trace of the suffering she had undergone. Age only had left its mark; her years numbered only 76, but into her active life she had crowded many times the number of experiences falling to the lot of the ordinary man or woman.

At Emma's request, her old friend, John Lamont, [9] performed the funeral rites, as he had done previously for her mother and her husband William. After his personal tribute to his old friend, who thirty years previously had heard her speaking at Hope Hall, Liverpool, Lamont read the short funeral service, with comments:

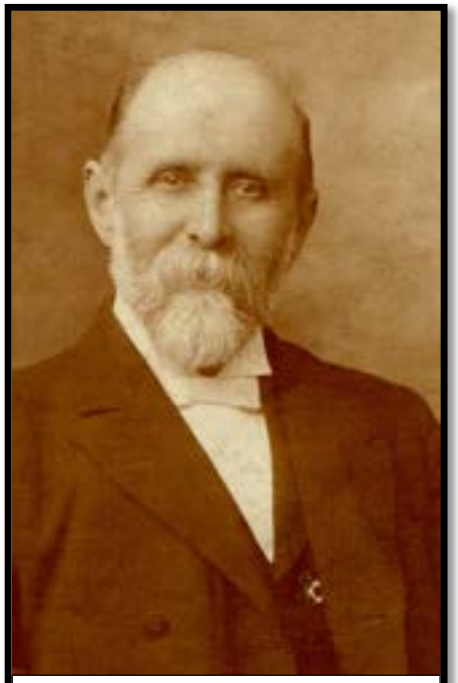
> Speaking of the natural body and the spiritual body, he said that "truly the spiritual body which was now hers was as natural as that decaying form which they there beheld. Both physical and spiritual bodies had their glories; and who, having looked upon the noble bearing and commanding presence of their sister, her face lighted up with the beauty of divine inspiration, could refuse to believe that there was a glory of the physical body ?"



John Lamont

[9] See Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: "John Lamont – Our first President", "The Passing of John Lamont – Two Worlds".

Then, amid a profound silence, broken only by the voice of the speaker, Mr. Lamont said: "Dear sister, we see and recognise you now in your radiant, celestial body, putting that away which you have left. We rejoice on this occasion that we have an opportunity of congratulating you upon your entrance into the higher and brighter life, of which you have so often spoken. We recognise you, not as an influence afar off, but as a living, sentient spirit in our midst, with a large number who have congratulated you on your second birth and entrance into the higher life, where you are surrounded by hundreds who received messages of love and liberty from your lips. We consider it our privilege to enter into the sacred circle of visible and invisible friends who have met together; and we earnestly pray that in some measure we may be able to follow in the steps of the noble reformers who have gone before. May the Holy Spirit bless us with light, and liberty, and goodness, now and ever. Amen."



James J. Morse

Mr. J. J. Morse, president of the National Conference and the British Lyceum Union, then delivered a brief but impressive oration. He said: "My esteemed friends and fellow-workers, I consider it an honour and a privilege just to add a few feeble words of my own to the feeling and eloquent testimony that our venerable senior, Mr. John Lamont, has just offered.

Earth has been made the richer by Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten having lived upon it. Thousands of men and women have had their souls touched and the divine spirit kindled to brighter beauty by the eloquence which has flowed from her lips. Not only her eloquence but the intelligence uttered in those rich reverberating tones echo in our hearts to-day. I treasure as a beautiful and precious possession that I, as a young man, was stimulated to greater and more arduous toil by having had her hand-clasp and encouragement to urge me on. If I can offer no more on the altar of her memory than my esteem for her because of this, I can offer no better nor richer treasure. She fainted not nor spared herself.

Consistent and earnest at all times and in all places; in the new life of a new country, and amid the polish of the great cities in the civilised world. Speaking bravely, living earnestly, she never held back to gain a favour, nor for fear of any living mortal. No one has done more to rationalise, to strengthen, and to beautify our Spiritualism than she. She is with us to-day, and the spirit of her life will, I am sure, linger in our minds and in our souls as long as Reason holds her throne and Memory retains her power. I will only say, 'God bless her for her work, and may the echo of her voice ever resound in our inmost beings, causing us to look higher and to be even more zealous than she, if that be possible.' If her life does this for us it will have preached the best sermon that has ever been given to us even through her noble inspiration. Let us remember these things; but let us also remember the sister who has to live for a while without the personal presence that we, too, loved. We know that death is not death, that our dear sister lives; but there is that sense of personal loss that *must* come to us; and the tears must flow to give relief to our overburdened souls. Looking beyond, we shall each of us come to that time when we shall be able to clasp her hand again, and say 'God bless you,' to her whom we all loved and honoured for her life and for her work."

This was followed with a tribute by fellow pioneer Mr Walter Howell:[10]

This concluded the ceremonial in the house, and then the coffin was borne amid the lines of assembled friends to the hearse.

"The funeral *cortége* was a long one, and contained representatives from all parts of the country."

"First came a wreath-car, covered with lovely floral emblems, and then the hearse, also loaded with beautiful wreaths, which literally hid the coffin from sight. Punctually at two o'clock the *cortége* left the house, and passing through the heart of Manchester attracted widespread attention. The line of carriages was so extended that when the wreath-car was well out of Albert-square into Cross-street the last conveyance was just entering the square at the other end. Beside the Yorkshire Union, *Light*, the London Spiritualists' Alliance, and The *Two Worlds* Company were represented; but it would be invidious to attempt to record the names of the societies represented, for from far and near all had united to pay one vast tribute to the memory of our sister's noble work.

From the entrance of the cemetery to the graveside the pathway was lined with Lyceumists, clothed in white, having been arranged in their places by Mr. J. B. Longstaff, ably assisted by Messrs. T. Taylor and Stafford. Mr. A. Rocke conducted the singing.



Around the grave there speedily gathered a great concourse of people. The Lyceum children were in the centre.[11]

Mr. John Lamont gave out a hymn, which was heartily sung, and Mr. J. J. Morse offered an impressive invocation, after which Mr. Lamont spoke briefly in committing the coffin to the grave. He said: "We have not met to bury a woman, but to do honour to a woman who has been resurrected to the spiritual realm of life. She bore the holy flag of reform for many years unsullied and with bravery unexampled. We can here congratulate our sister on her resurrection. Here, standing over these remains, we simply say we are here to give back to nature the physical form through which our sister appeared, while she has arisen to wear the wreath which she wove by her earnest work and loving endeavour."

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Psypioneer published the funeral of Emma Hardinge Britten as published by Light, October 14th, 1899; below is a quote to finish:

The coffin having been lowered, Mr. Lamont gave out a hymn which was sung by the Lyceum children, led by Mr. A. Rocke, and taken up by the whole of the people, numbering about two thousand. Mr. J. J. Morse then offered a fervent and impressive invocation, and Mr. Lamont, in a few well chosen words, committed the body to the care of



[10] Walter Howell was a trance medium; he was born blind but after some surgery limited sight was restored with the aid of strong spectacles. Howell was an active speaker in America and in the UK from around 1879.

[11] Images are screen shots: "Manchester Spiritualists Procession (1901)".

'mother earth' and bore sincere testimony to the worth and work and nobility of Mrs. Britten.

The children then walked past the grave dropping flowers upon the casket until it was almost hidden from view. After another hymn had been sung, Mr. Lamont called upon the secretary of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Mr. E. W. Wallis,[12] who in a few earnest words referred to the unique personality and generous spirit of Mrs. Britten. He thought no other occasion could have called together the large and truly representative concourse of Spiritualists, who, prompted by love, had assembled from all parts of the land to show their affectionate regard for their brave and loyal teacher and friend. 'For her the day has indeed dawned and for us this spot is sacred ground. Here,' said the speaker, 'the two worlds meet and we join with the angels in congratulating our sister upon the completion of her work and her entrance into the light and liberty of the spirit life. Such occasions as the present should teach us the necessity for greater sympathy, tolerance and kindliness. Mrs. Britten always stood forth firmly and consistently for Spiritualism, as an education, as a reform, and as a religion.



Edward Wallis

Let us remember her statement of principles:

"The Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the immortality of the soul, inter-communion between the two worlds and the path of eternal progress open to every soul who wills to tread therein"; and let her example and fidelity be an impetus to us all to continue the work to which she so fully and faithfully devoted her life.' With the singing of another hymn the proceedings terminated. Mr. A. W. Orr and Mr. W. Phillips kindly rendered every assistance possible to Mrs. Wilkinson and the relatives in carrying out the necessary arrangements, and the bright sunshine of the autumn day fitly symbolised the spiritual brightness following the close of the autumn time of physical life and the sunshine of the spiritual day.

Continued in the same edition of Light:

On Tuesday last a mass meeting in commemoration of the life and work of Mrs. Britten was held in the Co-operative Hall, Downing-street, Manchester,[13] when there was a large and representative audience. The hall was tastefully decorated with mottoes and flowers. The chair was occupied by Mr. J. J. Morse (president of the National Federation Conference) who was supported by a number of veteran workers and mediums. In opening the meeting the chairman gave an exhaustive review of the life-work and career of Mrs. Britten, and Mr. Johnson, of Hyde, one of the earliest lecturers, moved a resolution of loving sympathy with Mrs. M. Wilkinson, and of recognition of her faithful sisterly devotion to Mrs. Britten.

(Please see the Psypioneer issue to continue) [14]

[12] Edward Wallis has featured many times in Pioneer for his work within the Spiritualists' National Federation and more can be found in the Pioneer pdf booklets, "SNU History", as advertised elsewhere in this issue: "New SNU Pioneer Page".

[13] It was in this Hall that the Spiritualists' National Federation/Union was founded in 1890; for more information please see Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 3: "The Constitution of the Spiritualists' National Federation".

[14] Vol. 3, No. 2: "Funeral of Emma Hardinge Britten".

Editor's Note:

In time, sadly, the grave (No. 2111) was not kept up, becoming overgrown, and consisted merely of an engraved slab of stone, which had become broken over the years.[15] By 1912 the grave held five members of the family; they are:

Emma & Margaret's mother— Anne Sophia Floyd (93), d. March 31st, 1886.

Emma's husband—William Britten (75), d. November 24th, 1894.

Emma Hardinge Britten (76), d. October 2nd, 1899.

Margaret's husband—Gilbert Robinson Wilkinson (81), d. May 17th, 1906.

Emma's sister—Margaret Floyd Wilkinson (82), d. October 24th, 1912.



The original gravestone, now repaired, was removed to the beautiful grounds of the Arthur Findlay College (further news on this in the next issue).

[15] Please see Psypioneer, Vol. 1, No. 9: "Emma Hardinge Britten: grave news"; this was then followed up in issue Vol. 1, No. 18: "Grave News update by Malcolm A Lewis".

The Spiritualists' National Union Annual General Meeting July 16th – 17th 2022



For the third year running the AGM was presented on Zoom. Minister Jacqueline Elizabeth Wright—known as "Jackie"—became the third woman President in the history of the Spiritualists' National Union; the outgoing President, David Bruton, became the second longest-serving SNU President, 2010 – 2022.

I will not comment on the AGM, as this will be covered by the Union in various avenues, except to wish our new President our very best wishes. Those who watched the AGM may be interested, *in comparison*, to read our *first lady* President Mrs Jessy Greenwood's Presidential address after her first year in office 98 years ago. Greenwood was elected in 1923, which was the Union's 21st birthday; she held office for three years. Jessy and her husband William held numerous positions within the Union and the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union (BSLU).

The 1923 AGM was held at Rectory Hall, Gateshead on Saturday, July 7th. Ernest Oaten had stepped up to the position of President owing to the fact that on October 2nd, 1922 George Berry was appointed General Secretary, resigning his office as President. Ernest Oaten moved from Vice-President to fill the Presidential chair and Jessy (also spelled Jessie) Greenwood was elected to be the first lady Vice-President. Oaten's name had been put forward to the 1923 AGM to stand for President or Vice-President; however, just prior to the election,

> "Mr. E. W. Oaten asked permission to withdraw his nomination as President and Vice-President, he having been nominated without his consent."

Greenwood made a pointed but a brief address at the AGM on July 27th, 1923; the Two Worlds shortly afterwards published this short statement:

Spiritualists' National Union.

A Word from Our New President.

TO FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION.—The Conference has passed and another year entered upon, the work of which, we trust, will reveal steady progress in all departments of the Union's activities. The SNU attained its 21st birthday and is at age—a fact we all need to remember. It signalled this fact by appointing me to the highest post of honour it can confer, the Presidential chair.

I want to express my appreciation to all delegates and associates who considered me worthy of this exalted position, and who honoured the principle of the Vice-chair preceding the Presidency.

In acknowledging my gratitude to you, to Mr Oaten for the splendid way in which he performed the installation, and to those of the higher life, who, perhaps, are really responsible for the whole proceedings, let me say I am conscious of the great

responsibilities involved in this position, which for the first time are placed in the hands of a woman, and I KNOW I shall be rightly guided in their fulfilment.

I rely on the goodwill and commonsense of Spiritualists everywhere to help the President to maintain that high standard of efficiency the Union has attained under the wise direction of the past-President, Mr. E. W. Oaten (whose services are retained on the Council), and the men and women who constitute the Council—the representatives of District Councils. Visitations to every Society affiliated to the SN.U. may not be possible, but it shall be my endeavour to fulfil all duties conscientiously which tend to further our cause.

Let us hearten each other in the good work, forget self and remember our Lyceum principle, "In honour preferring one another," and the influence thus created will make possible the reign of love amongst peoples and nations, and our beloved Spiritualism become an universal religion

(Mrs.) Jessy Greenwood.

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For decades one never needed to make a note of the dates of the SNU AGMs in one's diary, only its venue, as it was always (except on occasion in the war years) the first weekend of July. The twenty-second Annual General Meeting was held at Birmingham Spiritualist Church, Loveday Street, over July 5th and 6th, 1924. On the first day over two hundred delegates and members were assembled, representing some 370 churches;[1] England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales sent delegates, and there were also visitors from South Africa, Canada and America; it took eight hours to complete the agenda on the first day.

Below is the President's address after completing her first year in office: [2]

The Presidential Address.

GIVEN AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SNU.
BY JESSY GREENWOOD, J.P.

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OBJECT.



EVERY democratic organisation has a two-fold task: (a) that of building up and maintaining its own machinery, and (b) that of sustaining publicly its ideals. Your Council has continually to try to keep the balance between the two.

The S.N.U. is a progressive and virile body, and its machinery needs careful adjustment at times to keep pace with its ever-growing need of means to carry forward the work entailed. A glance at the various committees is sufficient sign of the nature of its ramifications: Organisation, Publication, Exponents, Parliamentary, Trust Property, F.O.B., etc., all of which receive whole-hearted service from the members composing each committee, and the welfare of the S.N.U. is the determining factor of all deliberations. To meet the financial demands of such

[1] "The interim report of the Council for the six months ending July 30th showed 371 churches in affiliation and paid up, an increase of two on the half year" – Two Worlds, July 18th, 1924.

[2] The Two Worlds, Friday, July 25th, 1924.

work the vexed question of affiliation fees being raised to an adequate figure has again appeared on our agenda, and will become, *again*, a test question as to ways and means to enable the Union to carry out the plans the various committees have evolved at their meeting. I trust the matter may receive full consideration and the motto, "The greatest good for the greatest number," be in the minds of the Conference during the consideration of this great problem.

GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT.

We are told in the Council's Report that affiliation fees have been paid on 16,438 church members, an increase of 434; that 369 churches were on the roll at the end of 1923, a gain of 23. These figures do not represent the thousands of Spiritualists who regularly attend our meetings, nor the number of men and women who find comfort from our teachings – there are many who do not identify themselves with our Societies for various reasons – nor the list of Societies who are not affiliated with us, so that a great amount of propaganda needs to be inaugurated to help to tap this reservoir of unused talent. We see from the above statement the results of at least 22 years organised labour for Spiritualism, whilst ante-dating that time the old Federation laid a fine foundation for the present union.

The Union is cognisant of the very fine efforts of the Manchester Propaganda Committee in this direction, and of Sir A. Conan Doyle's London meetings, of the Rev. Vale Owen's toils, and the big meetings held in Bradford and Huddersfield, all of which stand out from and apart from ordinary propaganda meetings associated with the Societies; I am satisfied that Spiritualism is better known and understood today. If Hanson G Hey, whose never-to-be-forgotten labours for the Union and Spiritualism are ever present, was writing this report instead of myself he would, no doubt, compare its present status with that of the old Federation, and glory in its splendid growth and organisation.

To us, then, is entrusted a heritage worthy of our highest endeavours, for the field is white unto harvest, but labourers are few. Growth is everywhere seen, especially in the list of Societies whose buildings, goods and chattels and monies have been placed under the Union's Trust Property Committee, which fact in itself is evidence of a blossoming of that little flower called confidence. A pooling scheme is before this Conference, which shows the Union is going on the high road to efficiency in brain power by materialising such a scheme. The working of it will entail more labour in the office, and if the Britten Memorial becomes something more than a dream, and is ever vested in our Union, still more work will make demands on the office staff. The penalty of organisation is always added expense. Supposing, too, the College for Psychics we deemed an expediency. More expense ? Why, yes !

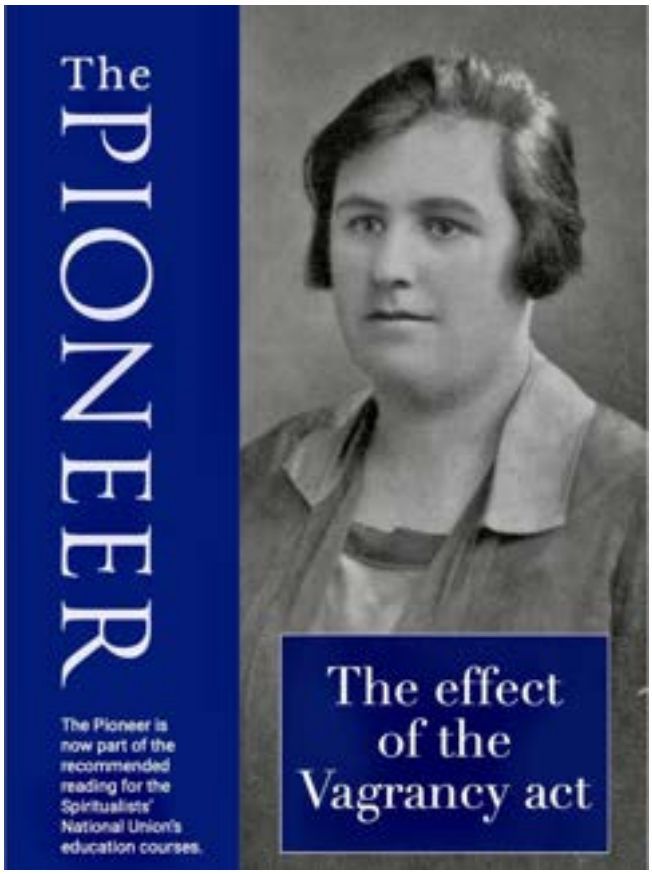
Mrs. E. H. Britten initiated the idea, which still hangs fire. Perhaps some future Conference will be dealing with this vital matter—vital to its own interests—and the need of doing something for young and rising mediums, who show outstanding psychic ability, will receive the consideration it deserves, and the need of training speakers and demonstrators for our platforms will be urged by the clamant voice of an intelligent Spiritualistic body. There is one objection I have heard a few times, "that we do not want a new priesthood, that a danger of new shackles lurks in the practice of training people for our platforms." Be that as it may, no such objection should be urged against a good general education, e.g., one which would fit persons for platform presentation either of the philosophic or the phenomena, and which certainly would be the main essential in the curriculum of any place of training. Anyhow, we want the best, at its best, for the best of all Movements.

COUNCIL MEETINGS.

Your Council have sought to minimise expenses as far as possible during the year by taking advantage of cheap bookings, whilst Societies visited by them have generously donated the collections to the Union, excepting in the case of Glasgow, when another method was introduced of charging a common fee to all Societies served by the members of the E.C. This was to the advantage of the Union. Service by these ladies and gentlemen has been rendered free and given satisfaction to all concerned. I may mention here the fact that each one gives help willingly to the Union without fee or reward at all meetings arranged under the auspices of the Union.

My thanks are due to the Councillors each one, and the officers, especially do I wish to name the Secretary, who has proved to be an excellent officer. He is qualified by experience in trades union work to lead us carefully in matters needing tact and judgment, and on these lines I have found him ever ready to assist the President and incidentally the Union's interests.

DIFFICULTIES.



We have had our difficulties, the greatest at the moment being our action—or apparent lack of action—in regard to the Repeal of the Vagrancy and Witchcraft Acts. The history of the agitation as given by Mr. John Lewis, editor of the "International Psychic Gazette," in the April number of that paper, is a just account of the proceedings carried through so finely by that indefatigable secretary, Mr. Robert H. Yates.

We have found out that a Petition only would not give the status asked for; it must be followed by a Bill. A Bill must be introduced by a Member of Parliament. Thus far the Council has gone, and a promise has been given by one to bring in a short Bill which an eminent K.C. has drafted. A good deal of criticism has been levelled at the Council because of the delay in getting this matter through Parliament. The Secretary has power to be in attendance at short notice whenever a chance arises for our short Bill to be presented. Mr. R. Boddington, too, who is on the spot, has agreed to assist.

I am persuaded these reminders from outside our Union are good for us, and help us to realise the truth of Emerson's words: "What is man born for but to be a reformer, a re-maker of what man has made, a renouncer of lies, a restorer of truth and good, imitating that great Nature which embosoms us all, and which sleeps no moment on an old past, but every hour repairs herself, yielding us every morning a new day, and with every pulsation new life ?"

SPIRIT ASSISTANCE.

We are heartened in our work by the knowledge that through all our difficulties the help of our "arisen ones" is guaranteed. The future of our Cause is assured, as is evidenced by the number of eminent people who have joined the ranks or shown deep interest in Spiritualism. To us who read the signs of the times is revealed a power at work more wonderful than the old materialistic philosophy. To mention just a few, there is Blatchford, Sir E. Marshall Hall, K.C., Duchess of Hamilton, Rev. C. Drayton Thomas and many others of note; also the missionary labours of Sir A. Conan Doyle and Lady Doyle both at home and abroad. The forward movement of the Church gave us Rev. Vale Owen, whose services have been enjoyed by his crowds of people. The secular Press has ceased its futile jibes, and is more respectful in its attitude towards a steadily growing revelation of spirit power. These matters are all recognised by us and acknowledged as the governing factor of all our works. Our gratitude is due to those of the higher household, under whose guidance we are led.

Several new churches and Lyceums have been erected, which gives us joy, and we feel our labours are yielding a rich harvest, that the lives of our pioneers were as good seeds sown by iconoclastic methods in the Garden of God, which no human hand could repress, and lo ! we find them strong and stalwart in our friends, neighbours and associations, carrying forward to other days such results as make for the general uplifting of mankind. The poet says:—

"For countless hearts on countless years
Had wasted thoughts and hopes and fears,
Rude laughter and unmeaning tears,
Ere England Shakespeare saw, or Rome
The pure perfection of her Dome.
Others, I doubt not, if not we
The issue of our toils shall see;
Young children gather as their own
The harvest that the dead have sown—
The dead, forgotten and unknown."

INTERNATIONAL.

Spiritualism is growing in other lands, as is shown in our Report on International Spiritualism and Relationships. The Conference held in Liege in 1923 made history in linking up the various national bodies of the world into an International Federation of Spiritualists, with its headquarters in Paris. Our Mr. Berry is its President, and Mr. Oaten a member of the first Council. It was a privilege I appreciated greatly to be the delegate to that Conference.

The principles agreed upon as the basis of the religion of Spiritualism are practically our own, so here again we notice the influence of organisation as established in our country affecting the status of Spiritualism in other countries, binding in bonds fraternal, Who shall say whether this Union of interests may not prove to be the very means of preventing future wars. If Spiritualism were the universal religion of the world war would be impossible. I think the Union is wise in endorsing the resolution asking for membership in the League of Nations and Peace Society.

"And though age wearies by the way
And hearts break in the furrow,
We walk the wilderness to-day,
The promised land to-morrow."

—GERALD MASSEY.

India, too, has inaugurated a new movement with V. D. Rishi, B.A., LL.B., Bombay, as its pioneer. Our Union, through its then President, Mr. Oaten, rendered assistance and advice.

The National Associations and our Oversea Societies join issues with us in this great missionary purpose which is being gradually unfolded, whilst behind and above all the benediction of those of the higher household is bequeathed, and we go forward to victory

OUR NEW JOURNAL.

One word respecting our new journal, which makes its first appearance this month. It is considered by the Council to be a much-needed mouth-piece for Union purposes and relationships. It is expected that the District Councils will make good use of it to ventilate the difficulties they encounter in administering the constitution of the Union and incidentally their own.

THE B.S.L.U.

I have had the whole-hearted support of the B.S.L.U. Its Secretary, Mr. Knott, has lost no opportunity in presenting his committee's point of view on all matters affecting his own Union. The bond of Union is further cemented by a joint body of trustees, six members from each Union, also a joint Education Committee, whose aim is to further the scheme so splendidly outlined by Miss Kitson, B.A. *Vision is needed* here, which in time will be of greater use to the Cause than it is at the present time.

In closing I desire to thank all those who have, by voice and pen, helped to make this a record year. Increased membership, churches, general propaganda, better constitutional methods in Society government, new entrants to the ranks of Spiritualists, International activities, press sympathy and the many loving expressions of goodwill on all sides have made it a pleasure and a privilege to occupy the highest position yet granted to a woman in our S.N.U.

The Union sustained a severe and unexpected loss in the passing of Mrs. Stair, the respected Secretary of the Fund of Benevolence, whose services on the platform covered many years—in fact, from girlhood onward. Her place is yet to fill, for the work of the Fund must go on. She, too, was a member of the old Federation. Then Mr. Knight slipped away in the gloaming of his long years of interest in our Movement. He was formerly on our Council, and did splendid work on the Trust Property Committee. These and many others have left us and joined the ever-growing band of pioneers "over there." We must follow in their footsteps, we must build forward where they were forced to leave off, and bring to perfection the great edifice they began.



Mrs. Mary A. Stair (Keighley)

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It was further noted:

> "Whilst the delegates to the Conference were transacting the business arising from the growing organisation at the rooms of the Birmingham Spiritualist Church in Love day-street, public meetings were held at the Town Hall, Birmingham, morning, afternoon and evening. In the morning the chief speaker was Mr. Frank T. Blake, …"

In the afternoon Ernest Hunt presented a Conference essay for questions and discussion.

> "In the evening, despite the summer weather, the Town Hall was nearly full when Mrs. Jessy Greenwood, J.P., took the chair."

Greenwood was followed by Ernest Oaten and meetings were continued in the town hall into the second day. Various speeches during the weekend are published in the Two Worlds over several issues.

I have given little in the way of references to the above AGM covered by Jessy Greenwood in her Presidential address, as much information is contained within the searchable Pioneer booklets as shown at the end of this issue – for example: Fund of Benevolence – Britten Memorial – Hanson G Hey – College for Psychics initiated Mrs. E.H. Britten – Our New Journal – Mrs. Stair – Frank T. Blake – Ernest Oaten – B.S.L.U., etc.

To conclude the 1924 AGM, I wonder how this would be discussed today within the membership of the Union! Taken from "The National Spiritualist" May 1st, 1925:

The Problem of the Restricted Platform.

> The 1924 Annual General Meeting passed the following resolution:—"That the question of confining the platforms of affiliated Churches to workers within the Union be considered and, if necessary, that legislative measures be promulgated for confirmation." In the ensuing discussion the term "worker" was defined to mean "all who accept the Diploma of the S.N.U. and come under the control of the Churches, and who serve Churches who accept the Seven Principles."
>
> The definition seems either awkwardly framed or it accepts a situation very strenuously opposed in some quarters. The qualification "and serve Churches who accept the Seven Principles" seems to suggest the legitimacy of serving unaffiliated Churches providing they conform to the required qualification, because no Church would be accepted into affiliation who refused to accept these principles. As a matter of fact the logic of facts which cannot be set aside compels the most inveterate exponent of the restricted platform to regard certain outside Churches during some portion of their existence as fit and proper subjects for service by the credentialed platform workers.
>
> With these preliminary observations it is interesting to follow the efforts which the above resolution appear to have given birth, and some inevitable reactions thereto. Efforts have been put forward to accomplish a dual effect; first to prevent the platform of any affiliated Church from being served by workers not pledged to work only for such Churches, and secondly to exclude from the platforms all workers not members of some affiliated Church, even to the surrender by both Churches and platform workers in such area, to a Committee of a D.C. the right to cancel dates at the discretion of such Committee. Other efforts confined themselves to curtailing the services of workers to outside Churches, and in particular the so-called One Man Church; or aimed at preventing the exposition of semi-Christian Theology under the guise of Spiritualism. Better still, other efforts were directed towards preparing local workers for the platform, and producing lists of such available workers for the use of Churches in the area.

The inevitable reactions have shown themselves in the secession from the S.N.U. of at least one Church as a protest against the policy of the restricted platform. Another Church has appealed to the Council of the S.N.U. on the ground that the policy of its D.C. is an infringement on the rights of the Church to manage its own internal affairs as secured to the Church in the Articles of Association. The Spiritualist Press bears witness to the protest of the individual workers whose ground of complaint is generally that "The Spirit goeth whither-so-ever it listeth," and asserts that the attempt to dictate where and to whom the worker shall serve is a betrayal of Spirit World.

The problem has many aspects, and a little reflection shows that something can be said for and against each position outlined above. The difficulties arise mainly from the really extraordinary growth in the number of Churches and members during, say, the last ten years. This rapid growth has given us three outstanding difficulties: (a) an acute scarcity of fully qualified platform workers, (both of exponents and demonstrators), (b) the gradual inflow of a membership desirous of hearing a more intellectual and cultured type of exponent, and (c) the inflow of exponents recruited from the surrounding religious bodies who cannot completely shed their old orthodoxy, and who find some welcome from class (b) in consequence of their own spiritual affinities in the same direction.

In addition to these problems there is one other not so clearly recognised, but upon which much depends. The spread of Psychic knowledge and the investigations and declarations of faith in the facts of Spirit Return by prominent persons of Scientific, Literary, and other Professional attainments creates an interest in our Movement among classes whom ordinarily our speakers and demonstrators would not touch. This results in an influx of membership, intellectually and often socially, higher than has been the case in former periods in our history. The demands and criticism of this new membership produces an undercurrent of opposition between the older and newer elements.

The position is not unlike that created in the Labour Party when it opened its ranks to the professional and middle classes. For them and for us the question confronting us is, whether to put obstacles in the way and so prevent the entrance of this newer type of member, with the almost inevitable result that the Movement would decline in power through the inefficiency of its workers, while its place and prestige would pass to some more progressive body built up from the units driven out of our ranks, or whether it is wiser to absorb this new potential membership, and accept the necessary alterations required by such adhesions; and profiting by the infusion of new energy see the Movement go on to greater heights of accomplishment, and to a greater destiny.

If it be decided that the larger membership and the increasing numbers of Churches must be maintained then it must be fairly obvious that this moment is not the right one to adopt a rigorous policy of restricting the platforms of affiliated Churches to the present inadequate numbers of efficient workers. To do so would necessarily starve the Churches. The disastrous results of such a policy will be best understood by those Churches who have provided good Halls in creditable situations, and have incurred heavy financial obligations in order to realise their ideals. Their demand is for more and better exponents.

Again, the demand for pure Spiritualist philosophy on our platforms cannot be assured at this present juncture by the policy of a restricted platform, for it is admitted that some of those now serving, and who in many cases are keen advocates of the policy of restriction, are guilty of the faults due to prior orthodox training. Mere restriction to workers within the Movement is therefore no remedy against this particular difficulty at this stage of our evolution.

Something more is needed. We shall never be free of this problem until the Movement is prepared to support something in the nature of a Training College where the Exponents and Demonstrators can receive adequate training in all branches of knowledge pertaining

to the art of exposition, etc. Then it will be possible to put on our platforms thoroughly equipped workers, and the rule would be to find the few holding no Diploma, and the many proud of their distinctive badge of proficiency. The foundation of a College may be a big thing, and may be long in realising itself. But there is no obstacle to beginning on a more modest scale. With this end in view the attention of the reader is directed to another page of this issue wherein is outlined a scheme of Education for Spiritualism.[3]

The scheme is the work of a Joint Education Committee of the S.N.U. and B.S.L.U. It is offered as a practical working proposal, and is to be considered by both National Unions, and in all probability it will come before both Annual Conferences. Study therefore the proposals in all their details in this final thought, the responsibility of fastening upon the Movement a policy of a Restricted Platform carries with it the onus of providing adequately and without stint for all the service and needs of the Churches.

GEO. F. BERRY. Dipl. S.N.U

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Below is a full updated list of all the Chairmen – Presidents:

National Conference of British Spiritualists – July 1890

Spiritualists' National Federation (SNF) Chairman July 1891 – July 1902

1890 John Lamont (-1900), Liverpool
1891 Samuel Southern Chiswell (1852-1910), born Barleston, Leicestershire
1892 Samuel Southern Chiswell (1852-1910), born Barleston, Leicestershire
1893 James (Jas) Robertson (1844-1913), Glasgow
1894 Peter Lee (1841-1908), born Bolton
1895 Samuel Southern Chiswell (1852-1910), born Barleston, Leicestershire
1896 A.J. Smyth (-1913), Birkenhead, died aged 60
1897 Joseph Armitage (1843-1924), born Dewsbury Moor, Yorkshire
1898 Edward Walter Wallis (1855-1914), born Teddington
1899 James Johnson Morse (1848-1919), born Strand, central London
1900 James Johnson Morse (1848-1919), born Strand, central London
1901 John Venables (c1853-1931), Walsall (incorporation into the SNU) [4]
1902 William Johnson (1838-1914), born York – last elected SNF – First SNU President

Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) Presidents July 1902 – present

1902 William Johnson (1838-1914), born York
1903 John James Parr (1860s-1946), born St. Helens, Lancashire – First elected President
1904 John Adams (1841-1922), born Devon
1907 George P. Young (-c1928)
1909 Frank Thomas Hepworth (1859-), Clayton West, Huddersfield, Leeds
1910 Albert W. Wilkinson

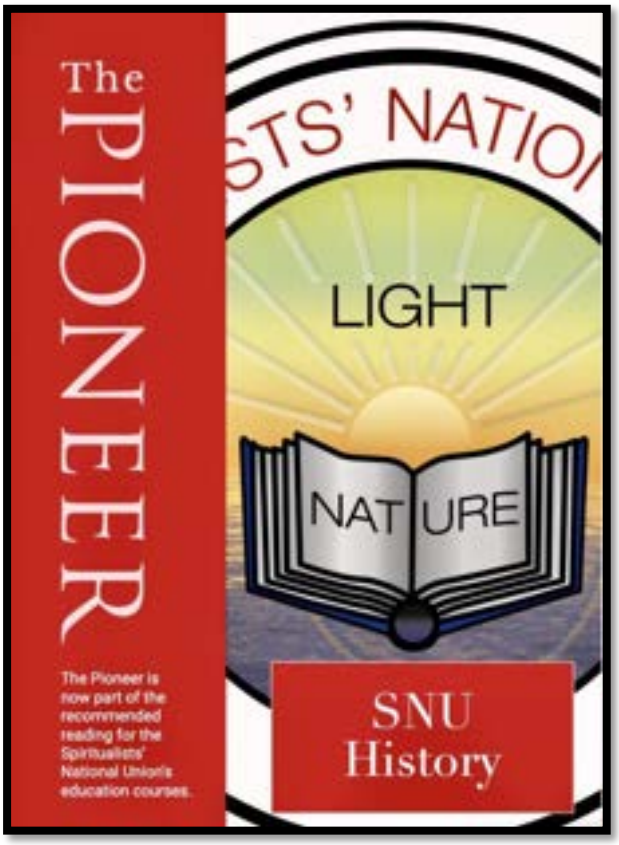
[3] See Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 4: Early S.N.U Education History - S.N.U. Committees - The Exponents Committee.

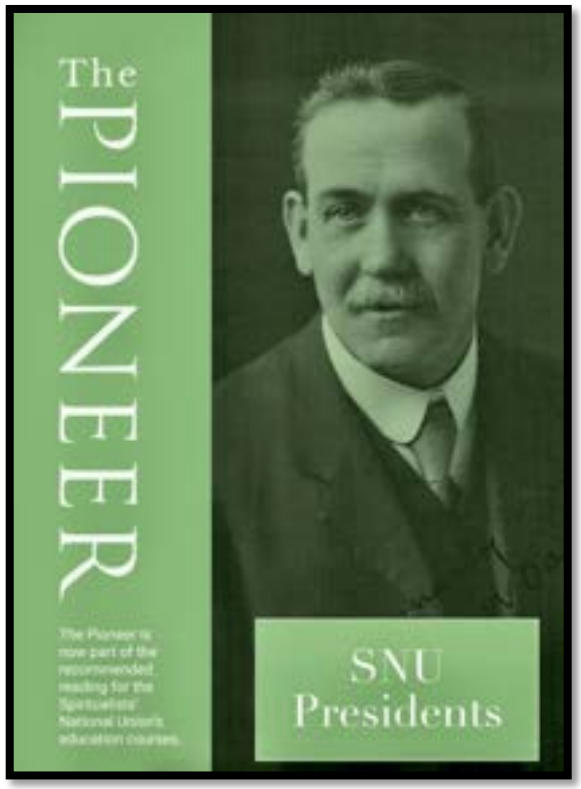
[4] Mr. James J. Morse, on behalf of the Executive, proposed: 'That this Conference* adopt the advice of Mr. Bateman that the Federation be incorporated under the Joint Stock Companies' Act, with liability limited under guarantee, under the style of 'The Spiritualists' National Union Limited'. Mr William Johnson seconded. In the afternoon session, after it was debated and amendments made, James Morse moved the adoption of the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Mr. J. Burchell seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously. When the registration was affected the body would be known as 'The Spiritualists' National Union Limited'.

(Information taken from the Conference report published in the *Two Worlds*, Friday, July 12th, 1901.)

*Held on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th July, 1901 at the Music Hall, Surrey Street, Sheffield.

1911 George P. Young (-c1928) (term not completed, moved), British Columbia, Canada
1912 George Tayler Gwinn (sometimes spelt Taylor)
1915 Ernest Walter Oaten (1875-1952), born Bristol
1920 George F. Berry (1873-1947), Birmingham
1922 Ernest Walter Oaten (1875-1952), born Bristol
1923 Jessy Greenwood (1860-1958), Cawkwell, Lincolnshire – First woman President
1925 Robert Anderson Owen (1881-), Bootle, Lancashire
1928 Ernest Allan Keeling (1877-1958), Anfield, Liverpool
1930 John Brown (Mac) McIndoe (1875-1958), born Paisley, Scotland
1938 Frank Thomas Blake (1875-1941), born Bristol – First President to die in office
1941 John Macintosh Stewart (1883-), Glasgow
1943 A.H.L. (Harold) Vigurs (-1970)
1948 W. Lorraine Haig (1891-1953), Glasgow
1950 Percy Wilson (1893-1977), Halifax area, West Yorkshire
1953 Harry Dawson (1886-), born Bolton
1958 Charles Ivan Quastel – First Jewish President
1965 Dr John Winning (c1886-1975), Scotland
1968 Charles Ivan Quastel – First Jewish President
1970 Gordon Mons Higginson (1918-1993), Longton – Second President to die in office
1993 Eric Leslie Hatton (1926-2015), born Brierley Hill, West Midlands
1996 Judith Jane Seaman (1946-), Methley, near Leeds –Second woman President
2000 Duncan P. Gascoyne
2010 David Robert Bruton (1960-), born Sutton Coldfield
2022 Jacqueline ("Jackie") Elizabeth Wright (1962-) born Middlesbrough





Christian versus Rational Spiritualism


PERCY WILSON

With his wide knowledge and experience of legal affairs, Mr. Wilson should prove to be an excellent President and 'Protector' of Union interests.

Early in 1950 Christian versus Rational Spiritualism was debated exhaustively in the psychic press. This was by far not a new issue of debate; however, each time it was brought to attention it was clear that Christian Spiritualism had gained a stronger hold on the Spiritualist movement. By 1950 Christian Spiritualism was not only a large movement outside of the SNU but held great influence within the Union. Those who wished to maintain and hold to a rational interpretation of Spiritualism wanted to save the SNU from becoming a Christian Spiritualist movement; many felt it was now time for the Union to act.

Christian v. Rational Spiritualism would be brought to attention at the SNU AGM held at Gateshead on July 1st and 2nd 1950 under its new President, Percy Wilson. The debate took place on the Sunday morning session on July 2nd.

Taken from the *Two Worlds*, July 15th, 1950:

CHRISTIAN v. RATIONAL SPIRITUALISM DEBATED AT GATESHEAD

Lively S.N.U. Annual Conference

THE long expected battle, between those who favour the propagation of Christian Spiritualism from S.N.U. platforms, and those who wish to keep Spiritualism free from Christian dogmas, broke out at the Sunday morning session of the S.N.U. National Conference at Gateshead on July 2nd.

The conflict of opinion started immediately after Mr. Percy Wilson had read the following resolution which invited all shades of theological opinion to join the Union.

"That this Annual General Meeting of the Spiritualists' National Union *Reaffirms* that the Union stands for the freedom of the individual conscience in matters of religion and aims at uniting in federal union all those Spiritualist organisations and individual Spiritualists who can conscientiously subscribe to the Seven Principles:

"*Recognises* that spiritual values are to be found in all world religions that have been given to mankind by inspiration from the spirit world, including Confucianism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam, as well as in the Christian revelation which the Western World has made peculiarly its own;

"*Endorses* once again the policy unanimously adopted by Conference in 1929 on the recommendation of a special committee, which leaves each member of the Union free to seek for Truth wherever he may find it; and

"*Invites* Spiritualists and Spiritualist organisations of all shades of theological opinion to join the Union and so help to spread abroad the knowledge of the spiritual nature of man."

A Grave Danger

Mr. Thompson, who opposed this motion, pointed out how the first three paragraphs which introduced nothing fresh or original had been designed to provide a smoke screen for the last and positively dangerous paragraph.

"The last paragraph," he said, "constitutes a grave danger to our Seven Principles. This paragraph invites Spiritualist organisations of *all shades of theological opinion* to join the Union.

"If you approve this resolution you authorise the inclusion of all shades of Christian Spiritualism in our Union.

A Contradiction

"How can you accept an organisation which holds to the belief of a Saviour, the virgin birth etc., and hold fast to the Seven Principles, particularly the principle of personal responsibility, which has always been the chief distinguishing characteristic between Christian Spiritualism and S.N.U. Spiritualism.

"If you accept this resolution, you will destroy true Spiritualism, and all that our pioneers established for us, under the guidance of the spirit people, and allow any crank to expound ridiculous nonsense from our rostrums."

Seven Principles Only

After a long, tense and eager discussion among the delegates in which there were arguments both for and against, Mr. C. I. Quastel, moved an amendment, substituting the words "Spiritualists and Spiritualist organisations who subscribe to the Seven Principles" instead of "all shades of theological opinion," which was carried by a majority, and thus scored a victory for Rational Spiritualism.

Council Advises Churches and Workers.

Mr. Wilson's second resolution, which no doubt arose from the N. Lancs. District Council's decision to ban Christian Spiritualists exponents, and which called for non-interference by the Council in the question of engaging speakers, and with freedom of exponents in deciding which churches they shall serve, was also amended by the addition of the words "but advises S.N.U. Churches to engage the services of S.N.U. registered workers and diploma holders, and advises S.N.U. registered workers to give preference of service to S.N.U. churches," thus giving specific advice to churches and workers alike on this important question, which policy it is hoped, will be maintained by the Union, without fail, in future.

Red Tape Methods

Mr. Haig, the retiring President, who had been so careful on the previous day to point out to delegates that the Union was now no longer master in its own house, because of rules and regulations, and had advised them to "avoid red tape methods like the plague," nevertheless did not hesitate to rule out of order, at the last moment, and without previous notice, one of the most important resolutions of the conference.

When questioned, he stated that it was a ruling of the *Standing Orders Committee*, the application of which appeared to some delegates as a typical example of red tape and most unfair.

Christian Spiritualism

This resolution was in the name of the Manchester Church and read as follows:— "That this Union notes with concern the growing tendency in certain areas to permit exponents of Greater World Christian Spiritualism to expound their doctrines from our

rostrums, and affirms that as the doctrines of this organisation are contradictory to the teachings of Rational Spiritualism, churches are recommended not to engage such exponents or exponents of any doctrines which are in conflict with the approved principles of the Spiritualists' National Union."

A Protest.

The ruling given was, that as this resolution attacked the principle of the right of individual members to interpret the Seven Principles it therefore contradicted the *Articles of Association*.

A protest was lodged to the effect that the resolution did not in any way attack the right of members to interpret the Seven Principles, but concerned itself with what was expounded to the public in the name of S.N.U. Spiritualism from the rostrums of our churches, and therefore the basis of the ruling was wrong and an explanation was asked for.

Insufficient Notice

No explanation was offered, and the President merely held rigidly to his ruling that the resolution was out of order, and that the protest would be referred to the Committee.

Further protests were lodged to the effect that it was insufficient notice to announce such a ruling at the last moment, as there had been plenty of time to advise the Manchester Church, so that the necessary steps to overcome the situation could have been taken. Mrs. Guy, President of the Manchester District Council, then rose to speak, but Mr. Haig would not let her proceed and passed on to next business.

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Psychic News, July 8th, 1950, gives a wider overview of the SNU Annual Conference, which does in part repeat, but gives a good overall balanced understanding of, some of the points raised:

S.N.U. Refuses To Oust Christians

MEMBERSHIP STILL OPEN TO ALL SPIRITUALISTS

Restrictive Motion Ruled Out Of Order

THE EYES OF SPIRITUALISTS WERE FOCUSED THIS WEEKEND ON THE 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION HELD AT GATESHEAD TOWN HALL.

Focal point was the motion tabled by the Manchester Spiritualist Church recommending that societies ceased to engage exponents whose teachings were in conflict with the approved principles of the Union.

The notice viewed with deep concern the increasing tendency in certain areas for workers from the Greater World League to expound their doctrines from S.N.U. platforms.

The question on everyone's lips was: Are Spiritualists going to split on this vexed issue of Christian Spiritualists demonstrating from S.N.U. rostrums ?

But the expected battle over the motion was never fought because Percy Wilson, newly-elected president of the Union moved that this, along with several other controversial issues, was out of order.

His claim was that it interfered with the basic trust position by not permitting individual interpretation of religion and moreover the laws of the Union already protected churches from demonstrations that were not in accord with the principles.

There were some scattered protests, Ernest Thompson declaring that in his view it did not interfere with personal interpretation.

Notwithstanding this, however, Lorraine Haig, from the chair, ruled it was not in order.

ANTI-CLIMAX

This turn of events produced something in the nature of an anti-climax and it was from an earlier motion, proposed rather ironically by Percy Wilson himself, that the pulse of this vital question could best be felt.

His motion which was in four parts read:

"That this Annual General Meeting of the Spiritualists' National Union REAFFIRMS that the Union stands for the freedom of the individual conscience in matters of religion and aims at uniting in federal union all those Spiritualist organisations and individual Spiritualists who can conscientiously subscribe to the Seven Principles;

"RECOGNISES that spiritual values are to be found in all world religions that have been given to mankind by inspiration from the spirit world, including Confucianism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam, as well as in the Christian revelation which the Western World has made peculiarly its own;

"ENDORSES once again the policy unanimously adopted by Conference in 1928 [2] *on the recommendation of a special committee, which leaves each member of the Union free to seek for truth wherever he may find it;*

"And INVITES Spiritualists and Spiritualist organisations of all shades of theological opinion to join the Union and so help to spread abroad the knowledge of the spiritual nature of man."

Rising to propose his resolution, Percy Wilson declared that the important thing in the history of the S.N.U. was the preservation of a vigorous Union. The purpose of his motion, he said, was not to suppress views but to look to every source for a united action.

All the statements which he had tabulated had come from public announcements within the Union and were not of his own invention.

Referring in particular to his first paragraph he said:

SERIOUS RESULTS

"That's one of the fundamental things that my forbears fought for. They were rebels against the orthodox church of their day, but at the same time they fought for religious freedom.

"They were not seeking liberty for themselves but for others. If we once depart from that principle," averred Wilson, "I feel that we will be making a serious mistake."

Spiritualism, he said, was one of the bulwarks of freedom. If it ever ceased to be that then it would cease to have the support of the spirit world.

[2] We can note in the (above) *Two Worlds*, July 15th, 1950 the article it states: " "*Endorses* once again the policy unanimously adopted by Conference in 1929…"

"The people who founded the Union," asserted the new president, "did not want the seven principles to become dogmas. . . . Let us have plain Spiritualists without prefix or suffix."

Mr. Owen, of Dublin, a past president of the Union, was the first to reply and from the start he made it abundantly clear that the phrase "of all shades of theological opinion" which appeared in the last paragraph was going to be hotly contested.

It left the door open for the preaching among other things of such dogmas as the vicarious atonement. He moved that the entire paragraph be deleted. With the rest he was in entire agreement.

This appeared to be the attitude of a large body of opinion. Few contested the first three paragraphs, but controversy arose from the phrase singled out by Owen.

Ernest Thompson thought that to accept the resolution would put an end to rational Spiritualism, while one delegate went so far as to declare that if the motion were passed as it stood his church would consider banding together with others to promote a rational movement.

Mrs. Godfrey, of Meersbrook, made the point that you could have survivalists with shades of theology, but you couldn't have Spiritualists with any shades of theology.

Someone who invariably contributes a forthright word at these conferences is Mr. McNee, of Glasgow. At Gateshead he declared:

> **"I believe I have as much Christian background as anyone in this hall, but it was because I saw the emptiness and stupidity of it all that I became a Spiritualist. If it's a question of supporting the Nazarene it's a different story, but," he asserted almost vehemently, "I can't support these appalling doctrines."**

It was Ernest Keeling, stormy petrel of some past conferences and newly-elected vice-president, who made the first serious challenge to the opposition.

"I contend," he said, "that this conference is endeavouring to do something which we have blamed the Christian movement for doing. It is trying to divide Spiritualism into sects."

He went on to point out that in any case people could only become members of the Union by abiding by the seven principles. In supporting the motion he said that the opposition views were tantamount to turning people out and saying, "My road is the only road to God."

> **Keeling concluded: "I say there are many hundreds of ways to God and we should be prepared to join and work with all these who are working for the spirit world."**

NEED TO UNITE

An entirely new angle to this thorny problem was brought to light by John Stewart, secretary of the Freedom Committee, who has done so much to try to bring legal recognition to Spiritualists.

It was the belief of Mr. Stewart that the hall was magnifying the difference between Christian Spiritualists and the S.N.U.

He revealed that for some time he had been liaison officer between the Greater World and the S.N.U. with the object of improving friendly relations.

The Greater World, he said, was as anxious as the S.N.U. to have decent Churches. Moreover, unless the organisations banded together they would have a poor chance of legal representation.

As to the vicarious atonement being preached from G.W. churches, Mr. Stewart waved a letter before Conference which he had received from Mr. Bendall, the G.W. president. This letter denied that the vicarious atonement was preached from their platforms.

"Christian Spiritualism makes no appeal to me," continued Stewart, "in fact, I think it is presumptuous to qualify it by the term Christian, but many of our own churches have this leadership of the cross, and if you are going to criticise the Greater World you will first have to clean up your own churches."

The answer to the problem, in Stewart's opinion, was not to advise churches to debar Christian Spiritualists but was to be found in proper education.

It was at this stage that C.I. Quastel, the Meersbrook. delegate, solved the problem expeditiously by proposing an amendment.

It took the form of deleting the offending phrase and substituting the words "who subscribe to the seven principles."

This seemed to appease the majority and after Mr. Vigurs, another past-president of the Union, had reminded the assembly that we were living in critical times and should co-operate in all matters that had a bearing on the spiritual nature of man, the motion as amended was overwhelmingly adopted.

Another motion of Percy Wilson's was also passed by the delegates, this time unanimously.

It was to the effect that the meeting should endorse the policy of the National Council in refusing to interfere with the autonomy of affiliated churches in selecting platform workers, providing that they refrained from serving meeting-places which were conducted for private gain or churches which had been expelled by the union.

With the amendment to the last sentence "and had not been readmitted" this motion was swiftly accepted.

There were two resolutions this year which touched upon the question of increased fees.

One of these proposed that the annual subscription from the churches should be increased from 2s. to 3s. in respect of each member and this was carried after an amendment from Laurence Wilson, of Wimbledon, had been accepted.

The point of the amendment was to provide that it did not prejudice the general powers of the Council and that a smaller sum per full member be allowed during the first three years after affiliation.

INCREASED FEES

The subscription for Class B members who were not members of S.N.U. churches was raised to 10s. from next year.

A long resolution by Ernest Thompson calling for a clarification of the terms of Spiritualism and suggesting that from time to time an examination be made of the forms of religious worship practised in the S.N.U. churches was accepted by Conference after it had been re-drafted by the proposer in conformity with certain suggestions made by Percy Wilson.

The delegates numbering nearly 300 were formally welcomed to the Town Hall by the Mayor of Gateshead, Alderman S. G. B. Tyrell who was presented by the president with a copy of the Spiritualist book "The Unfolding Universe," by Arthur Findlay.

During the meeting tribute was paid to G. Taylor Gwinn, a past-president of the Union who died a few weeks ago. The delegates stood for a moment in silent memory of him.

Next year the Conference will assemble at Brighton, when it is hoped that visitors will have the opportunity of attending the festival of Britain. The following year it will travel north again to Glasgow.

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Editor's Note:

Pioneer has previously covered some of this ongoing debate, which had continued for some decades before and after the above 1950 AGM. At the 1890 Conference, "The National Conference of British Spiritualists", sometimes referred to as the "National Conference of Spiritualists", held on July 6th, which brought about National Spiritualism, Emma Harding Britten offered the Conference her six creeds/principles. On July 4th, 1891, a second Conference was held at Bradford, named the "Spiritualists' National Federation"; the Federation did not accept these, or, in fact, any other form of creeds.

Later, in 1901, the Federation was reconstituted into the Union for various reasons: primarily, it was not legally able to hold property and was losing financial donations and property left to it. Further, the way in which the Federation had been set up it was unable to elect a President, albeit it sometimes used the name President at the movable yearly Conferences; however, in reality, they were an elected Chairman for the two-day AGM.[3]

But the reconstitution from Federation to Union was greatly hampered and delayed with the problem of creeds/principles, as many did not want this, though it was legally required—hence in July 1902 the Union had its Seven Principles.[4]

Further related articles in Pioneer:

Vol. 2, No. 6:

In 1927-1928 Arthur Conan Doyle tried to introduce an extra *Christian* principle into the S.N.U.'s Seven Principles:

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

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Vol. 3, No. 1:

Charles Quastel, who is mentioned in the Gateshead AGM, four months earlier made his views clear in the Two Worlds. Quastel, who was then the Yorkshire S.N.U. Publicity Officer, stated:

[3] Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 2: "President or Chairmen?"

[4] Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 1: "National Federation to National Union".

"Today, I am afraid!

"My fear is born of the knowledge that through the psychic press and elsewhere, a bold attempt is being made to broaden the platform of National Spiritualism by creating a 'coalition' organisation of Churches by uniting our National Churches with Christian Greater World Churches and by tolerating and, indeed, encouraging S.N.U. diploma and certificate holding mediums to work on Greater World platforms and vice-versa."

He further noted:

"Fundamental Difference

"What is this fundamental principle in which we do and must always differ from our 'Greater World' friends ?

"Simply this—*they* say that God is 'Supreme Cause and Power of Life' and that Jesus 'Christ' is their sole supreme leader, by whom and through whom they can win their way to a happy eternal life."

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Vol. 3, No. 2: "Behind the scenes in Harry Edwards storm at SNU Conference".

Later, when Quastel was SNU President (1958-1965 and 1968-1970), further problems arose at the 1960 Portsmouth AGM:

"SNU Minister Harry Edwards, although not present, caused another storm, as he considered himself to be "a Christian in the fullest sense of the word." Edwards had never made a secret of his religious beliefs but to some Union Spiritualists the question was naturally raised as to why a 'Christian Spiritualist' was an SNU Minister !"

"THE controversial issue as whether you can be a Spiritualist and a Christian flared up again, as we reported last week, at the SNU annual conference. Harry Edwards became the centre of a storm. One delegate quoted a statement made by the world-famous healer six years ago that he considered himself to be "a Christian in the fullest sense of the word."

"In this delegate's view, such a belief was inconsistent with the Seven Principles which every individual must accept before becoming a member of an SNU church.

"The delegate queried whether Edwards should be allowed to remain an SNU minister. A resolution that the SNU council should reconsider his SNU ministry was defeated in a ballot in which 45 voted for it and 68 against it."

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Vol. 7, No. 5: "Spiritualists' National Union AGM - Weston-super-Mare, 2nd and 3rd July, 1955".

H.F. Bendall was President of the "Greater World Christian Spiritualist League"; this article noted:

"The remarkable news that the Greater World Christian Spiritualist League has disaffiliated 800 of its churches was a bomb-shell dropped soon after the start of the Spiritualists' National Union's Annual Conference last week-end."

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

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Finally:

Vol. 2, No. 2: "Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?"

> **"The wide interpretation of the Union's Principles would in time cause it problems**
>
> "The differences and confusion that existed in the wording and numbering of the Union's Seven Principles continued to around 1950. But "Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?" No!"

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Subtle changes appeared, albeit the general context remained. For example, it is noted in the article that the fourth Principle reads "Survival of man beyond Physical death"; in addition, in one part the third Principle is given as "The Continuity of Life" and these changes were within the SNU! Hence the above title.

Ernest Thompson remarked:

> "... our principles are too brief, too general, and allow for certain interpretations, which are very far removed from the teachings of traditional S.N.U. Spiritualism."

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It is further noted:

> "December 10th 1949 issue of the 'Two Worlds' by J. T. Williams: 'Individual Liberty of Interpretation Primary Cause of S.N.U. Decline – The Seven Principles'. Williams noted:
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> " "It has been clear for some time that the S.N.U., is losing ground, and I believe the primary cause is the policy of "Full individual liberty of interpretation" of the Seven Principles, which is causing confusion in the minds of enquirers, and no little confusion in the minds of the speakers too.
>
> " "Without adopting the creeds and dogmas of orthodoxy we must have some degree of uniformity in our teachings." "

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I conclude here with the full quote given in the article's conclusion:

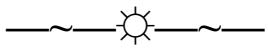
> This is exactly what happened. The Union started to lose churches to breakaway independent Spiritualist groups and to Christian Spiritualists, especially the Greater World Christian Spiritualists League (GWCSL), founded on May 30th, 1931, later known as the Greater World Christian Spiritualist Association (GWCSA). By the mid-1930s it was having an impact on Union churches. Some Union churches were starting to run on Christian lines, the Seven Principles being taken over with Christian trappings. Attempts were made to retain the traditional teachings of Union Spiritualism within their churches, including discussions with the Greater World and other groups, but with little success. In 1988 the Union withdrew 'liberty of interpretation'.[5] In '100 Years of National Spiritualism', by Jean Bassett, published 1990, Jean stated that liberty of interpretation was not part of the Memorandum or the Articles of Association; below is quoted from pages 86-87:

[5] 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."

"… At least ten churches were being run by declared Christians on Christian lines. A small minority, but too many for a religion which was open, because of its declared freedom of philosophy, to people of all other religions. The signing of the Seven Principles should have protected the possibility of this eventuality, but many of the people concerned used our traditional tolerance against us. They stated that their 'liberty of interpretation' gave them the freedom to include a belief in Christianity while following Spiritualism. Gordon Higginson put the feeling of the majority of members into a few words at Conference:

> "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!"

"The subject of Liberty of Interpretation caused even more dissent. This phrase had been part of our tradition from around 1902. It was not part of the Memorandum or the Articles of Association, but had been viewed with pride by generations. No one had considered that it would be used in such a way as to distort the essence of our Principles. Because of this, a member of Council queried the legal validity of the phrase. Legal advice was sought and the Union was advised that the phrase had no meaning or validity in the context of a legal framework. It was with some regret that it was withdrawn from general usage. But the Union pointed out that 'Personal Responsibility' covered each individual's right to think for his or herself, whereas the Churches did have to stay within the cover of the Memorandum and Articles without personal interpretation."



SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION

Honours James Johnson Morse

(1848 - 1919)



J.J. Morse became Hon. President of the Spiritualists' National Union for his immense contribution to national organisation. This welcomed honour was given at the 121st SNU AGM by its President, Jackie Wright, at Norwich on July 15th, 2023.

Minister Jackie Wright in her Presidential speech stated of Morse

"… that he was called by W.T. Stead the Bishop of Spiritualism. Morse was well known for his exceptional trance mediumship, inspired orations and his work in forming our Union, and it is for his work in the formation and administration of the Union that we are appointing Morse to the position of Honorary President.

"Morse's legacy deserves to be recognised, so today I am unveiling an annual award presented on the birthday of the Union, the 18th October, which will be awarded to the District Council which has been the most active in helping the churches and promoting the religion of Spiritualism in their individual area." [1]

James Morse's final phase of his contributions to the Spiritualist movement included the following. In 1915 Morse was elected SNU Vice-President to Ernest Oaten, an office he held until his death in 1919. Further, during the war years, he was Secretary of the Exponents Committee (education) and was President of the Manchester and District Union. Morse became the editor of the Union's flagship journal, the *Two Worlds*, in 1907 (until his death), for which he secured *free* space in the columns for SNU business, etc., and in 1916 for the Parliamentary Fund to aid those workers who fell foul of Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act 1824.

Preparations were in place to celebrate his 50 years' anniversary within the Spiritualist movement but, sadly, on February 18th, 1919 he suffered an attack of influenza. Its effect on his heart was fatal and the following day he became unconscious and sank rapidly; at about 6:30pm he passed quietly away from this life. [2]

His great work was also done

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[1] As a point of reference Morse stated: "After many months of anxious consideration and conscientious labour by all concerned the Spiritualists National Federation has achieved a Legal status. The body was duly Registered as 'The Spiritualists' National Union,' on October 22nd, and the invaluable services of the Solicitor, Mr. J. T. Tallent-Bateman, greatly assisted the result recorded above.: Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 1: "National Federation to National Union".

[2] A search through the Pioneer pdf booklet, "SNU History", will bring home some of Morse's contributions to National Spiritualism. For details please see the last page of this issue.

The early years to establish a national organisation

The first attempt at a national organisation began in 1865 at Darlington. At this period in our history Spiritualism was represented by the "Spiritual Magazine", a Christian publication which dealt mainly with the facts but did not take any noticeable interest in the subject as a public movement. The early attempts at a national organisation were generally referred to as "Progressive Spiritualists", mostly a non-Christian group of Spiritualists. Some references look upon these as failed attempts but nevertheless the various attempts at different locations leads us to the annual Conference of Spiritualists which was opened at Liverpool on Tuesday, August 5th, 1873, covering three days, in the rooms of the Psychological Society, Islington. It was here that a new and upcoming physical/trance medium, James J. Morse, made his feelings known on the future of a National Spiritualist movement: [3]



"Mr. Morse expressed himself strongly in favour of national organisation, by means of a union of all the existing associations; and he believed the thing to be feasible. Their work was to show that the cardinal fact of Spiritualism—communication between the two worlds—was absolutely true. There was a sufficient staff of mediums and speakers to do this work if they were organised, well used, and sufficiently paid. He was for avoiding theological and philosophical disputations, and would simply invite the people to come and judge for themselves. The function of the executive would be one of business rather than preaching or teaching. This would ensure a certain amount of harmony. There were reasons both for and against the use of the word "Progressive;" these reasons Mr. Morse placed fairly and forcibly before the Conference. He approved of locating the executive power in London, but the conferences should be movable. He moved:—

"That this Conference, being a representative one, do constitute itself into a permanent national association, and elect, either from itself or from representatives of other societies not present, or by both methods if desirable, an executive head, for the purpose of carrying out the objects decided upon by that body."

Support for organisation was successful in persuading the Conference of the need for a national body, and it adopted the proposal of J. J. Morse that the conference should form itself into a National Association. An executive council was elected and given the task of drawing up the rules and constitution of the new association. [4]

There was naturally some opposition towards a central organisation which came from some prominent Spiritualists like James Burns. [5] William Howitt suggested that there was no need for a national organisation, since Spiritualism had grown extensively and was still growing without the aid of any such body. Howitt and Enmore Jones, writing in "The Medium" and

[3] Taken from the *Medium and Daybreak*, August 15th, 1873.

[4] The sketch of James Johnson Morse is taken from the front page of the *Medium and Daybreak*, January 8, 1875.

[5] A search through the Pioneer pdf booklet, "SNU History", will bring information on James Burns (Medium & Daybreak). For details please see the last page of this issue.

"The Christian Spiritualist", also interpreted it as an attack on the Christian elements in Spiritualism. The editor of the "Spiritual Magazine" [6] was also opposed to attempts at central organisation; he pointed out that

> "… all attempts at national organization whether in America or England have met little or no success, generally leading to a more complete disorganization, by bringing out more conspicuously the wide and fundamental differences on important subjects which divide spiritualists and which vitally affect their conceptions of the spirit and objects that should be aimed at in any movement for its more general diffusion"
>
> "The new association hopes to escape the difficulty by avoiding theological discussion, disallowing collective responsibility for religious opinion or belief, but leaving its members and speakers free to express and advocate any views on the subject they may individually entertain".

At a meeting of the National Association on October 20th, 1873 under the presidency of Thomas Everitt, held at 145, Gower Street, London WC, it was agreed to adopt the title "National Association of Spiritualists"; however, upon being constituted, the word "British" was substituted for "National". The following month the weekly journal, the "Spiritualist", November 21st edition, published the Rules and Constitution of the Association for the recommendation and adoption of the Council. Number one on the list was the proposed name of the Association: "The British National Association of Spiritualists" (BNAS); rather than substitute "British" for "National" they had decided to add the word "British" to the title. It appears that at some point in 1874 the new name was adopted; however, throughout its life it was still referred to in many reports as "The National Association of Spiritualists".

In reality, it never became a representative national organisation; its focus was London, with comparatively few affiliated societies. However, in its publication, "Spiritual Notes", [7] which ran from July 1878 to December 1880, the reader was well informed of the progress of the Spiritualist movement, mainly in the Northern provinces. A series of "Notes by the Way—Spiritualism in the Provinces" was contributed specially for BNAS by James J. Morse.

In May 1882 "The British National Association of Spiritualists" decided to reconstitute the Association under a new constitution with the name "Central Association of Spiritualists", taking over the membership and premises of BNAS. [8]

Later, at a meeting on October 25th, 1883, the Central Association of Spiritualists was dissolved. Stainton Moses moved for the foundation of a new society, subsequently to be called The London Spiritualist Alliance, (LSA). The name was changed to The College of Psychic Science on 31 January, 1955 and then to The College of Psychic Studies (CPS) in 1970, and remains so today.

The years 1865-1875 represent the first phase of attempts to build the foundations of a national movement of Spiritualists. James J. Morse's paper, "The Nationalisation of

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[6] The "Spiritual Magazine" (1860-1877) was started in January 1860 under the editorship of Mr William Wilkinson, its originator and proprietor, with Mr Thomas Shorter, best known at the time by his *nom-de-plume* of Thomas Brevior (a Latinized version of his name), as sub-editor. William Howitt and Benjamin Coleman were well-known contributors. Later editors in the last years were Dr George Sexton, followed by J. Enmore Jones.

[7] Prior to this, "The Spiritualist", a weekly journal founded by William Harrison, which ran between 1869 and 1882, acted as the mouthpiece of the National Association.

[8] The Society for Psychical Research (SPR) was founded on BNAS premises on January 5th and 6th, 1882. The conferences were held at the invitation of Professor Barrett (Dublin), resulting in the formation of the SPR, which was constituted on February 20th, 1882. Its appointed Council and committees were partly made up by BNA officers and Council members. Please see Psypioneer, Vol. 4, No. 10: "The grave of William Stainton Moses", "The Society for Psychical Research, officers and council for 1882".

Spiritualism", read before the Spiritualists' Debating Society at Corbridge's Café, Manchester, on Tuesday, March 20th, 1894, stated: [9]

> "There have been some four distinct efforts that merit attention. These were national Conferences at Newcastle-on-Tyne, Darlington, Liverpool, and Manchester, all before 1878. The memories of these are all that remain, and even the memory of them is almost confined to the pamphlets and reports that published their proceedings. Of actual work, or effect upon either the country, or the cause, there are but few and faint traces to-day."

The stimulus of organisation within the movement was always the North of England, as Morse reiterates in his abovementioned paper:

> "The next, and as a working body, by far the most successful ever made, though distinctly local, instead of national, was the Lancashire District Committee, whose labours still bear fruit, while following, and upon similar, but not identical lines, is the Yorkshire Committee, now known as the Yorkshire Spiritual Union …"

It was within the various District Committees that such immense work would be undertaken and upon the structures of good working relationships, the pooling of their best speakers and mediums, the setting up of "Guarantee Funds", district representatives, and unrivalled dedication to the cause that foundations could be built for a future national organisation. The detailed history of these District Committees can only be found in interviews with those who were connected, reports of their progress and conference meetings in the various journals of the day. The original foundation of these District Committees was generated by the Lancashire Spiritualists:

> "Organisation is the basis of all efficient movements, whether social or political. The Lancashire Spiritualists have determined that a more vigorous organising policy shall be commenced at once, for the purpose of enabling every town where there are a few Spiritualists only, to hold regular Sunday services and week-night classes for research and discussion in connection with the subject. There is scarcely a town or village in the district which the Lancashire Committee has not already visited, and sown the first seeds. Organisation would aid the progress of Spiritualism in these places." [10]



The "Lancashire District Committee" was the first district association to be formed, at a Conference at Bury in August, 1875. Its aim was to promote Spiritualism in new Districts, places of weak or non-existent Spiritualist activity, supply experienced speakers and distribute literature. As well as Morse's editorial support he lectured widely; it can be noted that in June, 1879 Morse entered a second six months' contract with the Lancashire District Committee to give ten lectures per month.

District Committees were being formed in other areas; for example, the "Midland District Committee" was started off by the trance medium Edward Wallis [11] giving a series of successful mission meetings in the district. Later that year the Wallis family moved to Nottingham. Conferences were

[9] Please see Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 8: "The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union", which is serialised, starting in this issue of 2012, which includes the article by James Morse, "The Nationalisation of Spiritualism". A pdf is available of all five parts of the series on request.

[10] The "Spiritualist Newspaper", February 2nd, 1877.

[11] Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 5: "Edward Walter Wallis (1855 - 1914)", "A National Memorial Tribute to the Life and Work of Edward Walter Wallis".

organised but not all would be successful; please see for further information "The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union", a five-part series published in Psypioneer during 2012. A pdf is available of all five parts of the series upon request.

On October 24th and 25th, 1880 the Lancashire District Committee held a "General Conference of British Spiritualists" at Manchester; all Spiritualists in the United Kingdom were invited to attend

> "… with a view to take into consideration the state of the movement, and how its interests may be promoted, its adherents more closely united, and its working forces more efficiently utilised".

The Executive Committee were Mr J. Lamont [12] and Mr J. Chapman, Liverpool; Mr W. Johnson, Hyde; [13] Messrs Blundell and Fitton, Manchester; Mr C. Parsons and Mr J. Sutcliff, Rochdale, with Mr J.J. Morse, 22, Palatine Road, Stoke Newington, London, as Honorary Secretary. The subjects for discussion were interesting; on the agenda were: The Principles of Spiritualism, Is Spiritualism a Public Movement?, Are Paid Workers requisite for the promotion of Spiritualism?, Is a National Federation desirable?, The Future Work of Spiritualism, Mediums and how to use them, Trance Speaking: its Value, Evidences of Healing Mediumship, to name a few.

A paper was read before the General Conference of Spiritualists on October 25th from M.A. (Oxon) – Stainton Moses: "Proposed National Federation Amongst Spiritualists", which urged the necessity of a national federation amongst Spiritualists.

> "No society in this National Federation, should arrogate to itself any supremacy. There must be a head, and that head is naturally formed in London where the chief business would be transacted, but the governing body would be the Board of Delegates from the societies throughout Great Britain, and they would elect their president and officers. Such a Board would be national in its representation, and would have a right to act in the name of British Spiritualism, which, in my judgment, no existing society has."

Emma Hardinge Britten announced in "Spiritual Notes", March, 1879 "... her determination to return to England, and end her days in her native land." "Spiritual Notes" commented: "Let us hope she will not become a recluse all at once on her return amongst us."

Emma, at this time, would be on her Australian tour with her husband William and would soon be moving on to New Zealand, San Francisco, overland to New York and finally arriving in England in early 1881.[14] On Emma's arrival home in Manchester it may have looked as if she had retired from public service, as little was heard from her until September of this year. Then a passionate plea was made in the journal, "The Herald of Progress", on September 16th, 1881: "Plea for The Revival of Spiritualism" to the English Spiritual Journals.

The full article is published in "The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union", as noted elsewhere in this article; owing to space below is given a short quote:

> "Some eight months ago I returned from a long tour round the world, and many years of incessant labour, intending to devote one twelvemonth to rest and urgent family duties. With this view I refused to fulfil any of the numerous engagements to lecture tendered to me, and I now beg to state why I rescind this decision, and desire to give such service as my health and strength will permit, to the cause of spiritual propaganda

[12] Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: "John Lamont", "The Passing of John Lamont".

[13] Psypioneer Vol. 6, No. 5, May, 2010: "William Johnson", "Another pioneer promoted - William Johnson".

[14] Emma and William arrived in London in January of 1881; by June of 1881 she was resident in Manchester, where she would be based for the rest of her life. A search through the Pioneer pdf booklets, primarily the "SNU History", will bring up information on Emma Hardinge Britten. For details please see the last page of this issue.

for a brief period. From every side I heard of the many "disgraces" that "evil doers had put upon the cause," and how many of the "*best people*" who had formerly graced its ranks had withdrawn from all public connexion with it.



"During my residence here, I have been a silent, but not uninterested, observer of this policy and its results."

Emma concludes her article:

"Let the friends of the cause in the North of England, or within a combatable distance from my residence, understand, therefore, that I am ready, for a short time, to give lectures, as heretofore, on Spiritualism. Let them help me, as I will help them, to put our faith fairly before those who will come to listen, and it is quite possible that we may effect as much for the cause of truth as if the very "best people" were with us. Perhaps they will be; certainly we may rest assured the best spirits will be there, and in that faith I am now ready to receive applications as early as possible, addressed to "Emma Hardinge Britten, The Limes, Humphrey Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

"Sept. 7th, 1881." [15]

Shortly after this announcement Emma was back on the platform in the North of England. [16] I have been unable to locate the actual date of the Second Annual Conference of the Yorkshire District Committee of Spiritualists [17] but if the common sequence of dates applies it would have been in July, 1881. The "Herald of Progress" later published the paper given by its President, Mr B. Lees (Sowerby Bridge); it is quite a long report but gives a good overview of the then present state and problems within the District Committees. Again, the reader is directed to "The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union", where a pdf is available of all five parts of the series upon request.

The Lancashire Committee had done much of the missionary groundwork of spreading Spiritualism but uniting the societies in their districts with the supply of good speakers, literature, etc. appears to have taken a back seat since its calling of the 1880 General Conference in an attempt to form a national organisation. This had not yielded the wider influence hoped for when urging societies to form themselves into district committees, etc. The most prominent to continue in its strength was the Yorkshire District Spiritualists' Committee, later renamed as the Yorkshire Spiritual Union.

Further, in January, 1882 the "Herald of Progress," a provincial journal that started in and around July 1880, made this announcement:

To the Spiritualists of Great Britain, And All Who May Be Interested in the Spiritual Cause:

"A Convention is intended to be held in Newcastle-on-Tyne, commencing on Saturday, February 11th, and continued on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday

[15] The image shows Emma on her return home in 1881 with her beloved parrot, "Joey", a present from her husband William.

[16] In September 1881, Emma (at age 58) was on a gruelling lecture schedule.

[17] Later known as the "Yorkshire Spiritual Union".

following, at which Mrs E Hardinge Britten will be present and take a prominent part in the proceedings."

I have brought this Convention to notice mainly because it seems not to appear in any modern literature; it was held in the Newcastle-on-Tyne Spiritual Evidence Society at Weir's Court. Its original purpose was to consider the best methods of spreading Spiritualism throughout Great Britain. However, disharmony soon arose in a letter from the Christian Spiritualist, John Enmore Jones, former and final editor of the Spiritual Magazine in 1877. Conflict was quick to ensue between Mr Jones and Emma Hardinge Britten; the reader is again referred to "The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union" for more detailed information; for the context of the arguments a short quote is given below. Emma Hardinge Britten responded to Jones' letter in "The Herald of Progress" (Feb 24, 1882, page 92) and it is printed below:

THE NEWCASTLE CONVENTION

As the plan of holding a Convention of Spiritualists at Newcastle for the sole and express purpose of endeavouring to unite in bonds of amity, charity, and union, the dissevered ranks of English Spiritualists originated with me, and I offered to give time and service to this work, to the utmost extent of my power. I have just read, with equal amazement and indignation, the following passage signed "Enmore Jones," and printed in your last issue of Feb. 17th:

> "When, however, I found that the Convention was to be used for the purpose of sanctioning a line of action principally, if not wholly, to fight the Churches on Church belief questions, which were only slightly connected with subjects touching the spiritual body; it was obvious to me, that my journey from London to Newcastle would be worse than useless, for such Convention could not be in any way suitable for the mighty task of uniting all sections of Spiritualists so to work as to be a power in the nation."

My object in addressing you now, Mr Editor, is to require, through the columns of the paper that printed that libel on the "Convention" and its first promoters, the writer's authority for the statement he has made.—I am, Gentlemen, faithfully yours,

EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN.

The disagreement resulted in J. Enmore Jones organising a Conference at Newcastle on March 30th and 31st 1882, to coincide with the anniversary of the advent of Modern Spiritualism. A National Plan of action was introduced for the "Spirit Evidence Institute for Great Britain" and a set of Seven Principles was adopted, being referred to as "Our Principles":

Belief: 1st—God is a Spirit..... Infinite

Knowledge: 2nd—Man is a Spirit.....Finite

3rd—Man has a Spiritual Body.....

4th—Man at Physical Death passes out of the physical a living intelligent substance—Perfect in form and individuality.

5th—That, under conditions, the spiritual body can be discerned, and its limited power over physical substances witnessed.

6th—Man under laws can and does, as an ethereal ministering spirit, assist in various ways, those he is connected with by ties of affection.

7th—Man is a spiritual being, responsible for his actions, be they good or bad; whether in the physical body or out of it.

It should be noted, to avoid confusion, that the meeting was held at the Newcastle-on-Tyne Spiritual Evidence Society's hall (Weir's Court), then under the presidency of John Mould. From this meeting the "Spirit Evidence Institute for Great Britten" was constituted. Jones had been well connected early in the movement through his friendship with Daniel D. Home; he was active in his defence of Dr Slade (1876) and well known to the Fox sisters.

However, the seven principles or basis of the new association did not appear to hold a Christian tone to them; the first principle received three dissentients, the others carried just one when Enmore Jones put them separately to the meeting. However, Enmore Jones gives the meaning: [18]

> Orthodox Christianity has in times past declared, and still declares boldly—fearlessly:—
>
> lst, God is a Spirit. – 2nd, Ministering Spirits. – 3rd, Life after death. – 4th, Responsibility.
>
> Orthodox Spiritualism, by the declaration of "Our Principles" at the 1882 Anniversary of the Advent of Modern Spiritualism, boldly and fearlessly affirm the same; thus:
>
> 1st, God is a Spirit. – 2nd, Ministering Spirits. – 3rd, Life after physical death. – 4th, Responsibility.[19]

The President of the Yorkshire District Committee, Mr B. Lees, took Enmore Jones to task on different points; one of these points was the new "Our Principles." A short quote from Lees' letter to the "The Herald of Progress", published on May 12th, 1882, is published below:

> "Of course the report says that this great meeting of "officials," after much discussion, came to the conclusion that they should mutually agree about "Our Principles." Agree—1st, That there is a God; 2nd, That there is a future life; 3rd, That man is responsible for his actions. These are very important things to be agreed upon no doubt. But why urge this point so persistently, and print it in the report four or five times over, since every Spiritualist was agreed upon all the points long before Mr J. E. Jones discovered "Our Principles."
>
> "Again, the President of Congress remarks in your last issue that " 'Our Principles' that now guide the North of England and are spreading Southward are so simple, so plain, so concise, that they *can* energise all people and nations." But it is not enough to say *can*, we want to know *how* this is to be done. Will you or Mr Jones kindly tell us the *how* in addition to the *can*."

However, creeds/principles would come and go – Emma Hardinge Britten would use variants of her principles/creeds and these would be seen throughout her life in her lectures, public debates, published works, and the laying of the cornerstone of the Oldham Spiritual Temple (April 9th, 1887). [20]

During the 1880s Emma would offer her principles to various Conferences, for example to the Conference of Spiritualists of Northumberland and Durham, held on Tuesday, July 31st,1888 at 20, Nelson Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Again, she offered her principles to the meeting of a Provisional Spiritual Conference to consider the Future Formation of a Lancashire District Confederation of Spiritualists; this was on Sunday, August 19th, 1888 at a very large

[18] "The Herald of Progress", May 12th ,1882, page 219.

[19] Again, the reader is directed to "The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union", where a pdf is available of all five parts of the series upon request.

[20] The Pioneer pdf booklet, "SNU Seven Principles", is recommended reading. For details please see the last page of this issue.

gathering of Lancashire Spiritualists in the Assembly Room of the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester. It would be the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union (BSLU) which would use Emma's principles/creeds as given at Oldham in 1887. [21]

It has been noted that the Lancashire Committee had done much of the missionary groundwork of spreading Spiritualism in these early years; however, uniting the societies in their districts with the supply of good speakers, literature, etc., appears to have taken a back seat since their calling of the 1880 General Conference in an attempt to form a national organisation. This had not yielded the wider influence hoped for when urging societies to form themselves into district committees, etc. The most prominent to continue in its strength was the Yorkshire District Spiritualists' Committee.[22]

With the start of a weekly journal, "The Two Worlds," on November 18th, 1887, the final momentum towards an organised national body of Spiritualists started to unfold. [23]



In the pages of this new journal, on January 6th, 1888, James B. Tetlow (image) [24] began a series of discussions under the general title, "A Modern School of Prophets". This related to the development of mediumship – without mediumship Spiritualism cannot exist. This would of course raise questions of the need for a training college, education and organisation. Later in March the Two Worlds Directors started a "Prize Essay", with a prize of one guinea to be paid for the best essay on the subject, "The Best Means of Advancing the Cause of Spiritualism in England". [25]

A committee from the Board of Directors was formed to decide on a winner. On April 19th, 1888 the committee unanimously chose out of twenty-six other submissions an essay by Phillip William Seymour of Nottingham, with his winning essay being published in the journal. [26] It is not surprising that the paper's directors and editor supported Seymour's outline of a national organisation: it was very similar to the ideas of James J. Morse and as propagated by the Lancashire and the Yorkshire district committees. A large percentage of the directors were directly and actively involved within these groups, as was the paper's editor, Emma Hardinge Britten.

Although Seymour's essay gave little more than a roundup of previous events, it, however, brought to public attention once again the need to have a central national body. Shortly after, in the Two Worlds, May 4th 1888, in Emma Hardinge Britten's editorial appeared the following:

---

[21] In Manchester 1889 a committee was appointed to draw up a constitution for a proposed Lyceum Union, which included John Pemberton, Samuel Chiswell, W.H. Wheeler and Edward Wallis, with Alfred Kitson as Secretary. With forty delegates in attendance at the Oldham Conference on May 11th, 1890, under the presidency of Harry A. Kersey, the constitution for the Federation of Lyceums was formed.

[22] In 1887 their committee meetings were being held at Scott's Dining Rooms, East Parade, Leeds Rd, Bradford; the corresponding Secretary was Mr J. Whitehead (Bradford).

[23] Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 5: After Forty Years – An Outline of the History of "The Two Worlds".

[24] Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 3: "2015 marks the Centenary Anniversary of the passing of two of the founding officers of the S.N.U.", "James Bronterre Tetlow Secretary: July 1890 - July 1893".

[25] This proved popular and the submission of essays on different subjects with the one guinea prize continued for some time.

[26] The Two Worlds, Vol. 1, No. 25, May 4th ,1888, pages 339-340.

Spiritualists, Awake!

In all and each of these points, it is perfectly evident that a great demand is felt, and that a general feeling of unity prevails. Perhaps it may not be amiss if the Editor at this point steps beyond the sphere of the impersonal, and attempts to answer, on her own account, the great and momentous query, as to *how* these many and valuable suggestions can be carried out?

It must be remembered that all reformatory as well as revolutionary movements are the result of growth; they may appear on the surface of life with sudden and startling rapidity, but they will invariably be found to have been germinating and growing out of the realm of causes, long before they become manifest in perfected form. Can we not follow out this hint from nature and history, and commence the grand desideratum of general reform, by taking one step at a time? Might not the preliminary step be *organization of a national conference*, to be held in the metropolis itself—to be a general gathering of delegates or representatives from all parts of the country—Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands, and different counties of England, and thus, by coming together in earnest and solemn conclave in a two, three, or four days' Pentecostal gathering, be prepared by mutual helpfulness, unity of feeling, and recognition of the worth of what we are labouring for, to determine that what we need, we are going to have—what we ought to do, we intend to accomplish; and whatever the obstacles in our way may be, we resolve to tread them down until our path is clear to the accomplishment of the best results we can devise.

We say the metropolis should be the central place of gathering, because we desire to start by sinking all local preferences or interests. We say commence with such a national conference, because we plead for the rights of the many, rather than appeal locally to the few. Let the voice of the majority be heard. Let us come together now, as of old, WITH "ONE ACCORD," and if we do not feel the walls of bigotry, prejudice, and mental slavery shake, and hear the rushing sound of the mighty winds of spiritual inspiration on such an occasion, this writer will be ready to give up her belief in spirit power, presence, and guidance.

Friends in London, will you aid this work? In fact, according to the great and crying demands of the time, will you commence its inauguration? Words, writings, essays, are *nothing*, if they do not bear fruit in deeds. Spiritualism has been with us now for forty years, and still we are only scattered fragments, isolated individuals, or, at most, mere local groups. Nothing in the universe stands still, and that which does not move onward sinks downward. Death is as constant as life, and the death of great movements and great nations has only ensued because the people that composed them were not worthy of them. The hour has now come when spiritualists must arise, and do the work that spirits have hitherto wrought out for the world almost unaided. We can see with the eye of human experience, no less than of prophecy, the mighty cause trembling in the balance of progression or retrogression. Which shall it be? It is for the spiritualists of the PRESENT HOUR to determine.

We now await farther suggestions and plans of action from capable heads and willing hands, and these must decide whether the spiritualists of Great Britain mean to become a power in the world, or a memorial of golden opportunities lost to an effete and apathetic generation.

Emma noted:

> The Editor and writer of the above article, being unwilling to incur the inevitable charge of seeking to be "a pope," "bishop," "Priest," "dictator," "leader," or "self-seeker," now leaves her suggestions in the hands of others, praying that some efficient and wholehearted men and women may be inspired to arise, face the foes of bigotry and selfishness both without and *within* our ranks, and dare to lead on the broken ranks of our noble cause to triumph over all opposition.—ED. T. W.

From this period onwards activity increased but it would continue primarily in the North of England, since the first impetus of the idea of a national organisation began in Darlington in 1865. As a result of the Two Worlds publication of articles, competition, etc., a 'National Conference of Spiritualists' was organised to be held at the same venue as Lancashire Spiritualists in August 1888 in the Assembly Room of the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester. The agenda for the Conference, prepared by its *pro tem* committee, which was significantly made up of the Officers, Directors and the paper's Editor of The Two Worlds Publishing Company Ltd, Manchester, was published in their weekly journal on June 20th, 1890, as given below:

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SPIRITUALISTS.

AT the last meeting of the Committee *pro tem*, on the general order of exercises deemed most desirable to be observed at the National Conference, SUNDAY, JULY 6TH, it was determined to add to the "*Agenda*" already published in this journal a copy of the principal resolutions which will be submitted to the Conference for consideration, together with such other matters as may be of interest to the friends who propose to attend or the societies sending delegates.

We shall again call attention to the *Agenda* to be carried out in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester, Sunday, July 6th.

Order of Proceedings—

1. Chairman, Mr. Lamont. Call to order at 10-15 for 10-30.
2. Opening hymn and invocation.
3. Reading of letters received by the sub-committee.
4. Call for short written reports or suggestions from delegates, concerning the status of their societies
5. Collection.
6. Resolutions then in order, in speeches of not more than ten minutes' duration. No speaker, except the mover of the resolution, to speak twice.
7. Adjourn at 12-30 for refreshments.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

1. Re-open at 2 o'clock.
2. Call to order by the Chairman.
3. Resolutions and ten minutes' speeches.
4. Collection at 4 p.m.
5. Election of place, time, officers, and committee of management for next year's conference.
6. Adjourn at 4-30.

EVENING SESSION.

1. Commencement at 6-30.
2. Hymn and invocation.
3. Chairman's remarks.
4. Short speeches from appointed speakers—among others, Mrs. Britten, Messrs. Morse, Wallis, Johnson, &c., &c.
5. Collection.
6. Hymn and benediction.

Sub-Committee to receive the delegates—Mrs. Wallis, Messrs. Morse and Boardman.

Arrangements will be inside for refreshments to be provided for visitors close by the hall, at moderate charges.

Societies who are in sympathy with this movement are kindly invited to send one or two delegates to the Conference, as representative of their views on the best means of advancing the cause of spiritualism.

The Committee have secured the able services of Mr. Smith, organist, of Collyhurst, for the musical portion of the services.

Those Societies intending to send delegates can receive written instructions concerning the location of the place of meeting, and means of reaching it from the various railways, &c., by addressing the secretary, Mr. J. B. Tallow, 46, Harrison Street, Pendleton, Manchester.

At the last meeting of the Committee of Management it was decided to draft and print, for the benefit of those who may attend the Conference, the following important and suggestive resolutions:—

(1) "That this assembly of representative spiritualists consider that an annual movable Conference of the spiritualists of Great Britain and Ireland is a necessity of the present position and importance of our movement."—Moved by Mr. J. J. Morse.

(2) "That whilst we deem the phenomenal and religious aspects of our movement as of equal importance and essentially necessary each to the other, yet we strongly deprecate the habit of holding circles on Sunday evenings—a practice tending to draw off the interest of enquirers and spiritualists from the Sunday evening public services, thereby limiting the usefulness of Spiritual Societies' efforts to present the religious and philosophical aspects of the cause."—Moved by Mr. A. H. Kersey, of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

(3) "That the time has come for a greater unanimity of opinion concerning the fundamental basis of our philosophy, so that the terms spiritualism and spiritualists may be associated with an accepted and definite significance."—Moved by Ms. Britten.

(4) "That the position of spiritual Societies and spiritual mediums before the law is unsatisfactory, and demands amendment."—Moved by Mr. Johnson.

(5) "That considering the number and importance of Spiritualist societies now existing, their federal unity is desirable and expedient, but that such unity shall in *no case* involve a Sacrifice of *local self-government or freedom of action*."—Moved by Mr. E. W. Wallis.

(6) "That the next year's Conference Committee be requested to gather the opinions of societies, representative workers, and Spiritualists upon such subjects as are suggested in the foregoing resolutions, and report thereon at the next annual meeting."—Moved by Mr. H. Boardman.

We beg to add, on behalf of the Committee *pro tem*, that though the expenses attending the origination and conduct of this meeting are quite considerable, especially when falling on the few, all contributions in aid of the work will be purely VOLUNTARY.

The Committee also take this opportunity of returning grateful thanks to a few kind and generous contributors who have already assisted them, but desire their names to be withheld.

Societies will send delegates at their own expense, and collections in aid of the undertaking will be in order at each meeting. This notice will be continued up to the date of the Conference.

Signed on behalf of the full Committee—

EMMA H. BRITTEN,
Humphrey Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

MR. E. W. WALLIS,
10, Petworth Street, Cheetham, Manchester.

J. J. MORSE,
16, Stanley Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

SUB-COMMITTEE on printing, announcements, agenda, &c.

The Two Worlds would play a significant part in the eventual success; the *pro tem* committee which was formed to arrange the inaugural Conference consisted of sixteen Spiritualists: [27] Dr and Mrs Britten, Mr and Mrs Edward W. Wallis, Mrs Margaret Wilkinson, (Emma's sister); James J. Morse, William Johnson, J.B. Tetlow (secretary), H. Boardman, Peter Lee, Mr Rayner, Mr J. Gibson, Richard Fitton, Mr Thomas Brown, Mr [J]. Simkin (The original report has the incorrect initial and should read [T] (Thomas) Simkin, and Mr F. Tomlinson (treasurer). [28]

The following year, at a second Conference held at Bradford, this committee would serve as the first Executive Committee of the Spiritualists' National Federation, which was formally constituted at this Conference on 4th July, 1891. The Spiritualists' National Federation would continue until its thirteenth Conference, which met in Bootle on 5th and 6th July, 1902.

At this Conference the new legally constituted "Spiritualists' National Union Ltd" took over the property, rights and obligations of the Spiritualists' National Federation. It was decided at the meeting that the Officers of the Federation would be the first Officers of the Union (except James J. Morse, who had been engaged by the Victorian Association of Spiritualists of Melbourne). In July 1903 we see the first elected President and Council of the Spiritualists' National Union Ltd.

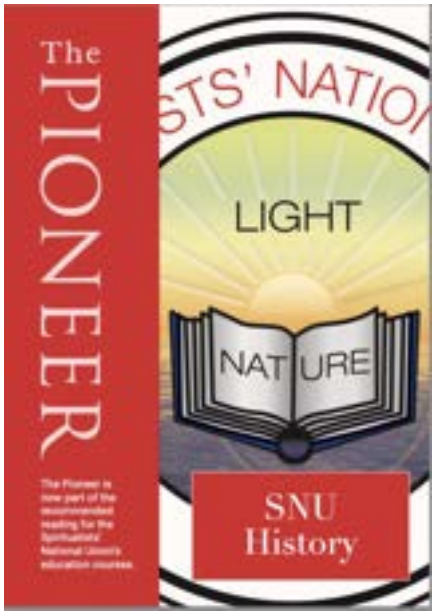
The legal problems which arose within the Spiritualists' National Federation, e.g. the election of a President, [29] the inability to hold property gifted to the Federation, etc., led to a necessity for reconstitution which would in itself bring further stumbling-blocks; one potent

[27] It should be noted that in "100 Years of National Spiritualism', by Jean Bassett, 1990, Jean publishes the sixteen members of the *pro tem* committee but the name 'Williamson' should read 'Wilkinson'; in addition, the name 'Raynor' is incorrect: it should read 'Rayner'.

[28] Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 3: "2015 marks the Centenary Anniversary of the passing of two of the founding officers of the S.N.U.", "Frederick Tomlinson Treasurer: July 1890 - July 1893".

[29] James J. Morse: "But the Federation founded upon what it is common to describe as 'democratic' lines has no President, and, one of the difficulties your speaker has had to contend against has been the frequent incorrect description of him as the 'President of the Federation,' though at all times he has endeavoured to avoid the appearance, even, of, using a designation to which he is not entitled." See Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 2: "President or Chairman?"

point was that some members did not want to be governed by a set of Principles which would be required in becoming the Spiritualists' National Union Ltd. This move is well covered in Pioneer, Vol. 3, No.1: "National Federation to National Union".



THE HISTORY OF THE FEDERATION AND THE UNION IS WELL COVERED IN THE SNU "PIONEER"

Please see the last page of this issue for detail

At the time of this film the reconstitution of the Spiritualists' National Federation into the Spiritualists' National Union was nearing its final legal stages.[30]

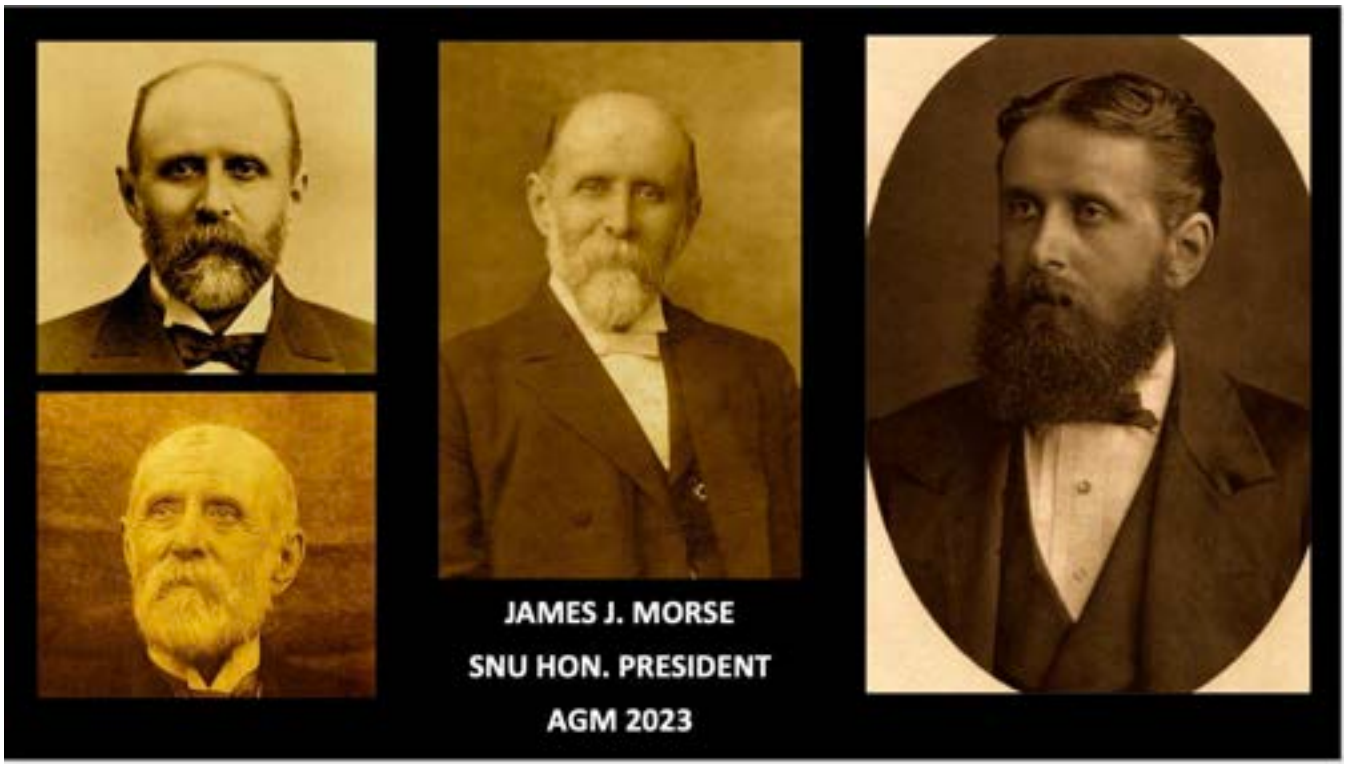


At the front on the left (facing) of the parade is James J. Morse, who had been fighting for a *National* Spiritualist movement, along with William Johnson (next to Morse), for over two decades.

[30] Pioneer, Vol. 8, No. 6: "1901 Manchester Lyceum Parade".

James Johnson Morse

SNU Honorary President







To Mr J. J. Morse

The Council and Members of the Manchester Spiritualist Alliance

Testimonial to J.J Morse July 7th, 1902 from the Council and Members of the Manchester Spiritualist Alliance

JAMES JOHNSON MORSE

(1848 - 1919)

—~—☼—~—

J.J. Morse became Hon. President of the Spiritualists' National Union for his immense contribution to national organisation. This welcomed honour was given at the 121st SNU AGM by its President, Jackie Wright, at Norwich on July 15th, 2023. Minister Jackie Wright in her Presidential speech stated of Morse

> "… that he was called by W.T. Stead the Bishop of Spiritualism. Morse was well known for his exceptional trance mediumship, inspired orations and his work in forming our Union, and it is for his work in the formation and administration of the Union that we are appointing Morse to the position of Honorary President.
>
> "Morse's legacy deserves to be recognised, so today I am unveiling an annual award presented on the birthday of the Union, the 18th October, which will be awarded to the District Council which has been the most active in helping the churches and promoting the religion of Spiritualism in their individual area."

Minister Jackie Wright, Chair of the Arthur Findlay College, commissioned a portrait of James J. Morse, together with his chief control "Tien Sien Tie," [24] by the psychic artist Richard Stuttle, who is the son of Alan Stuttle, a senior tutor at the College. Just prior to the birthday of the Union, on the 18th October, Richard is seen here presenting the SNU President with this wonderful oil painting of our Hon. President, which is now displayed in the corridor next to the Lecture Room at the Arthur Findlay College with an appropriate plaque.



[24] For the development of James Morse and when his lecturing control, Tien Sien Tie, first announced his presence, please see Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 1: "First Public Developing Circles Robert Cogman Mrs. Mary Main".

THE FIRST J.J. MORSE AWARD was awarded to the South Yorkshire District Council; this was announced on the birthday of the Union, 18th October 2023, in the Britten Museum & Library housed at the Arthur Findlay College via a video recording by President Jackie Wright. [25] The Museum was indeed a perfect setting given that Emma Hardinge Britten was a long-time friend of Morse, who undertook part of Emma's funeral service with the veteran medium John Lamont. [26] Morse was also instrumental in the first stages of setting up a memorial fund for Emma Hardinge Britten, resulting in the "Britten Memorial Trust" after her death in 1899 and in part resulting in the Union's Britten Museum & Library, where in the video referred to Richard's striking oil painting of Morse was revealed.



In the same issue of the Pioneer of our President's announcement of the J.J. Morse award (Vol. 10, No. 3) an article followed, "The early years to establish a national organisation", where it notes the early districts where organisation was most prominent:

"The stimulus of organisation within the movement was always the North of England, as Morse reiterates in his abovementioned paper:

"The next, and as a working body, by far the most successful ever made, though distinctly local, instead of national, was the Lancashire District Committee, whose labours still bear fruit, while following, and upon similar, but not identical lines, is the Yorkshire Committee, now known as the Yorkshire Spiritual Union …"

Further noted by the editor in the article:

> "The Lancashire Committee had done much of the missionary groundwork of spreading Spiritualism but uniting the societies in their districts with the supply of good speakers, literature, etc. appears to have taken a back seat since its calling of the 1880 General Conference in an attempt to form a national organisation. This had not yielded the wider influence hoped for when urging societies to form themselves into district committees, etc. The most prominent to continue in its strength was the Yorkshire District Spiritualists' Committee, later renamed as the Yorkshire Spiritual Union."

The forming of a National Spiritualist Organisation was indeed an arduously long task by our pioneers, but we can note that, along with the Lancashire District Committee, Yorkshire was very prominent and active long before the formation of the Spiritualists' National Federation, later reconstituted as the Union.



The photograph shows SNU President Jackie Wright presenting the new annual J.J. Morse Award to the first ever recipient, the President of the South Yorkshire District Council, Minister June English, which was received at Barnsley National Spiritualist Church.

—~—☼—~—

[25] Available on the SNU Facebook page.

[26] See Pioneer, Vol. 8, No. 6: "Emma Hardinge Britten: Last public appearance", "Funeral", and "Editor's Note".

Below is a quote from a lecture by Tien Sien Tie through his medium, James J. Morse, which is taken from the Two Worlds, December 28th, 1934:

THE CITY OF RELIGION



Much is said in these days about the remarkable trance oratory which was a feature of the Spiritualist platform in the 'Eighties. But many of our readers are familiar with the claim only. Below we reproduce part of a hitherto unpublished address by a famous—perhaps the greatest—trance medium. About a quarter only of the whole address is published here.

IT would sound, perhaps, somewhat singular to assert that the study of superstition is the surest way to a knowledge of religion. Yet, startling as such a presumption might appear at first sight, it contains certain elements of essential truth, for out of the superstitions of the past the religions of to-day have been evolved.

But the study of superstition is usually pursued—for it is a real study in these times—for the purpose of exploding the superstition, based *a priori* upon the supposition that all superstitions are necessarily false.

If the study were directed to explain the superstition, to seek for its origin, and trace out its relation to different phenomena in nature correlated to it, we venture to assert the world's knowledge would be greatly enriched, and many of the perplexing questions that afflict the mind of modern thought would obtain an easier and earlier solution than appears to be probable to-day.

Value of Psychology

We have no desire to make this youngest—and yet, at the same time, as we have said on previous occasions, the oldest—of all the sciences—Psychology—a sort of universal medium for interpreting the experiences of the race at large on every question that affects mankind. Yet it is so far-reaching and so comprehensive in its character that we must needs run somewhat serious risks of apparently endeavouring to place the latter in the position we have just cautioned you against.

The study of psychology in its application to the progress of religious practice and to the evolution of religious belief, is so tempting a field of inquiry and research that one is almost inclined to say in that direction, at least, it has a far wider application and a far closer relationship to all that makes up religion, than any other science or form of thought with which the world is familiar.

Psychology, dealing as it does with the practical manifestations of the occult powers of man's soul, must necessarily be concerned in every question which involves the apparent operation of those powers. But we wish again to caution you that, when we speak of the occult powers of man's soul, we are not using that term "occult" in any superstitious sense, or in any magic sense; we simply and only mean occult because but little understood, becaused veiled through lack of knowledge; occult no longer when careful investigation has revealed the facts and brought to light the methods and operations whereby these psychical facts become realities. That is all.

Psychic Science and Religion

Observe, then, that with the occult facts of man's spiritual nature in the bringing to light of those facts which are rising to the surface as a result of the methods of modern inquiry, Psychical Science is indeed the hand-maid of real religious culture, is an aid and adjunct to the study of all doctrines concerning the nature of man's soul, and must inevitably be welcomed by the world of religion as one of the happy means whereby its own qualities may be resolved, and much of the rubbish which cumbers the path of religious life be swept away forever.

In tracing out the religious history of the world, as is frequently asserted, the farther you go back, the lower do you descend in reason, in spirituality—in all that adds grace and dignity to religious truth, in a word. There are those, too, who assert that even on an ordinary examination of the current religion in your midst, there are so many dark spots, so many remnants of superstitious beliefs, unproved assertions, unprovable assertions, and opinions that are more than questionable, that the sceptic is inclined to say, "The foundation is bad; the evil still remains. Culture is impossible in such matters. Let us rather trust to Nature and her laws than turn our thoughts to the examination of religion, which has so much of superstition and so little of verifiable fact."

We venture to assert that this argument is, to a large extent, fallacious; that it is a waste of time to put the question in such a form. That there are black spots, that there are remnants of superstitious ideas, that there are even evils connected with theology and its practices, we are willing enough to admit. But that there are other things besides, is what we are also bound to assert.

Let us put the matter before you in the form of an illustration that perhaps will to a large extent make our meaning even more clear. The development of the world's religious thought may be likened somewhat to the founding and building of a city. At first two or three men congregate in some spot that will apparently offer them the advantages they are in search of. Literally, they pitch their tents. For a time in simple life, without the complex regulations of civilisation, they pursue the even tenor of their way. They dig, they hunt, they perform such labour as their simple requirements call for.

Presently, however, the tent gives place to a better structure. The timber of the adjacent forests has been under contribution, and many a lordly giant of the ages lies prone upon the forest floor. The branches are cut off and the logs are gathered to where these few pioneers have pitched their tents. With laborious effort, their first rude home is built: the log hut supplants the tent. In time others join them. As their numbers increase, their social condition grows somewhat more complex. Their requirements increase, and their efforts to minister to those requirements have also to be increased. In time a log is split asunder, sawn into rough boards, and the first dim promise of the city stands disclosed. A rough board shanty usurps the old log cabin, and something of a street begins to show itself. Planks are laid for walks, and some attempt is made to create a road.

The fame of this Athens spreads abroad! Others are attracted, and as the years roll by the rough board shanty is supplanted by the frame building. The streets are run, roads are better made, and something of civil life and government begins to manifest itself. Trade increases, industries are established, and the hardy descendants of the first pioneers still labour on in the full trust that by and by they will build a city second to none. Presently brick and stone displace the frame buildings, as in turn they displaced the shanty, which in its turn displaced the humble log cabin of the pioneer, and helped to lay aside the memories, even, of the tents of those first settlers. Stable government, social life, civil procedure, trade, commerce, all begin to show themselves.

The Urge of Necessity

Here in the wilderness, where once was solitude, is now the hive of busy industry, singing aloud with the hum of active work. There comes a fire, which always comes when it is least required, it seems, and the best part of this rising city is devastated, and blackened ruins stare the astonished citizens in the face. But energy, resource, activity combine, and the charred remains are swept away and better buildings take their place. The city grows. The rush and whirl and worry of commercial life brings to this place a class who can afford better dwellings, not exactly a class of leisure, but a class who can command means enough to enjoy better facilities than they can find right within the area of their daily avocations. So, in answer to the demands of that class, there comes the suburban home, outside the rush and whirl of daily life and toil, in the quiet country circling about. And as the years roll by, the city grows on. Its residential suburbs increase in beauty and in area, and the fame of this city spreads still further abroad.

A certain traveller, shall we say, makes up his mind that he will visit this city. He comes from far, far away, to visit this wonderful city that has grown so fair and beautiful within so short a time. He comes prepared to see a city, wonderful indeed, of palaces. Undoubtedly, the very best is shown to him, this public building, that bank, this other noble edifice, this wide plaza, that magnificent fountain—all are pointed out, and he is in raptures with all he sees.

Poverty and Misery

Presently he takes a stroll by himself. Suddenly he comes to a poorer quarter of the city. Old houses, bad streets, poorly lighted, indifferent pavements, sanitation dreadful, hardly decent; poverty, tags, misery—vice, even. He begins to think that this is not very much of a city after all. He wonders if there are more spots like this. He travels afield, and finds other districts somewhat similar. He begins to entertain a very poor opinion of this city, and thinks that it is all outward show; that if the citizens had any real enterprise or public spirit in them they would never tolerate these spots and blots. He returns to his friends, and tells them of his discoveries. They do not appear to be particularly abashed. There are even city fathers who know these things, and simply say, in a sort of superior way, “Wait and we will show you the rest of our beautiful city life, and then leave you to judge.”

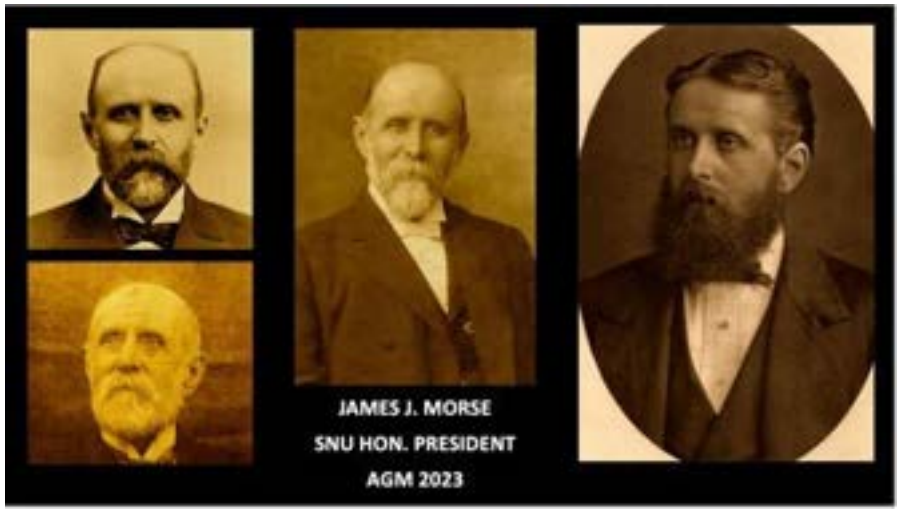
So the next day they drive him out into the suburbs. There he finds handsome homes, trim lawns, trees, flowers, fruits; every evidence of comfort, affluence, art, and beauty. He begins again to think it is a very beautiful city after all. But, those spots and blots! He asks an explanation for them, and the answer that we can give him is the keynote of the situation that we have sketched in parable as representing the growth of religion.

The Experience of Religion

When men in primeval times sought for settled convictions, barren was the ground of experience. Little or nothing had they to house themselves with. But as intellect expanded, and the spiritual part of man asserted itself, the first dim outlines of spiritual truth, religion, began to shape themselves. And in the dim religions of bygone ages, men built the first log cabins of their faith, and were glad to live therein, knowing nothing better at that time. But as the religious life expanded, as the higher nature of man asserted itself, nay, even as these psychic possibilities—something of which we have spoken of, but much more of which still remains to be placed before you—these psychic faculties began to assert themselves, the philosophy of life and death was formulated. The board shanty of primeval thought was builded.

But ever and anon, there are those who still prefer to dwell in the foggy land of the past, who are incapable of keeping up with the march of progress, who are content because unfitted to rise beyond that which they have. Hence, in that fair city of religious

growth, you find these dwellers in the by-streets and alleys, these districts of superstitious thought and feeling, and old experiences, to which newer thoughts have given proper interpretations, are reverenced in these lower quarters, and still hold for their ancient value. And the traveller who wishes to explore the rise and progress of the world's religion must deal with these matters of ignorance and superstition, and relics of bygone barbarous thoughts, as part and parcel of the wholesome truths and wider knowledge that the world is blessed with to-day.



‘Raising the standard’

This has long been the battle-cry of the Spiritualists’ National Union for much of its existence: to raise the standards of its church platforms in all avenues from church management, philosophy and demonstration of mediumship, strongly underpinned with accredited speakers, demonstrators and the acceptance of the Seven Principles, to keeping and retaining the platform for SNU Spiritualism forged by our pioneers over many decades. It was never intended to be an open platform for other avenues of spiritualistic teachings.

The articles which follow are a valuable part of our history regarding the challenges faced by the Union, its focus on education and the future of its management as a national body. At the 1924 AGM the idea of a ‘restricted platform’ was mooted within all the Union’s affiliated churches whereby they were to be served by SNU-qualified platform workers, which naturally caused discussion for and against. This was somewhat supported with a new proposed scheme of a Joint Education Committee of the Spiritualists’ National Union and the British Spiritualists’ Lyceum Union which offered a practical working proposal, to be considered by both National Unions.



Pioneer was launched at the 2013 SNU AGM and its first article was on the first official journal of the Spiritualists’ National Union, “The National Spiritualist”, which came into being under the presidency of the first female President, Jessy Greenwood, in July 1924 and continued until December 1932. Throughout the journal’s existence it struggled owing to financial pressures but kept the price at twopence for the monthly issues until its final issue, albeit the flagship journal of the Spiritualists’ National Federation (later the Union) was the Two Worlds, which offered free “space in their journal for Union matter and views” amounting to one page per week. “The National Spiritualist” was a valuable recourse for Union membership and was edited by the SNU General Secretary (1922-1933) and former President (1920 -1922), George Berry.

From “The National Spiritualist”, No. 11, Vol. I, May 1st, 1925:

The Problem of the Restricted Platform

The 1924 Annual General Meeting passed the following resolution:—“That the question of confining the platforms of affiliated Churches to workers within the Union be considered and, if necessary, that legislative measures be promulgated for confirmation.”

In the ensuing discussion the term “worker” was defined to mean “all who accept the Diploma of the S.N.U. and come under the control of the Churches, and who serve Churches who accept the Seven Principles.”

The definition seems either awkwardly framed or it accepts a situation very strenuously opposed in some quarters. The qualification “and serve Churches who accept the Seven Principles” seems to suggest the legitimacy of serving unaffiliated Churches providing they conform to the required qualification, because no Church would be accepted into affiliation who refused to accept these principles. As a matter of fact the logic of facts which cannot be set aside compels the most inveterate exponent of the restricted platform to regard certain outside Churches during some portion of their existence as fit and proper subjects for service by the credentialed platform workers.

With these preliminary observations it is interesting to follow the efforts which the above resolution appear to have given birth, and some inevitable reactions thereto. Efforts have been put forward to accomplish a dual effect; first to prevent the platform of any affiliated Church from being served by workers not pledged to work only for such Churches, and secondly to exclude from the platforms all workers not members of some affiliated Church, even to the surrender by both Churches and platform workers in such area, to a Committee of a D.C. the right to cancel dates at the discretion of such Committee. Other efforts confined themselves to curtailing the services of workers to outside Churches, and in particular the so-called One Man Church; or aimed at preventing the exposition of semi-Christian Theology under the guise of Spiritualism. Better still, other efforts were directed towards preparing local workers for the platform, and producing lists of such available workers for the use of Churches in the area.

The inevitable reactions have shown themselves in the secession from the S.N.U. of at least one Church as a protest against the policy of the restricted platform. Another Church has appealed to the Council of the S.N.U. on the ground that the policy of its D.C. is an infringement on the rights of the Church to manage its own internal affairs as secured to the Church in the Articles of Association. The Spiritualist Press bears witness to the protest of the individual workers whose ground of complaint is generally that "The Spirit goeth whither-so-ever it listeth," and asserts that the attempt to dictate where and to whom the worker shall serve is a betrayal of the Spirit World.

The problem has many aspects, and a little reflection shows that something can be said for and against each position outlined above. The difficulties arise mainly from the really extraordinary growth in the number of Churches and members during, say, the last ten years. This rapid growth has given us three outstanding difficulties: (a) an acute scarcity of fully qualified platform workers, (both of exponents and demonstrators), (b) the gradual inflow of a membership desirous of hearing a more intellectual and cultured type of exponent, and (c) the inflow of exponents recruited from the surrounding religious bodies who cannot completely shed their old orthodoxy, and who find some welcome from class (b) in consequence of their own spiritual affinities in the same direction.

In addition to these problems there is one other not so clearly recognised, but upon which much depends. The spread of Psychic knowledge and the investigations and declarations of faith in the facts of Spirit Return by prominent persons of Scientific, Literary, and other Professional attainments creates an interest in our Movement among classes whom ordinarily our speakers and demonstrators would not touch. This results in an influx of membership, intellectually and often socially, higher than has been the case in former periods in our history. The demands and criticism of this new membership produces an undercurrent of opposition between the older and newer elements. The position is not unlike that created in the Labour Party when it opened its ranks to the professional and middle classes. For them and for us the question confronting us is, whether to put obstacles in the way and so prevent the entrance of this newer type of member, with the almost inevitable result that the Movement would decline in power through the inefficiency of its workers, while its place and prestige would pass to some more progressive body built up from the units driven out of our ranks, or whether it is wiser to absorb this new potential membership, and accept the necessary alterations required by such adhesions; and profiting by the infusion of new energy see the Movement go on to greater heights of accomplishment, and to a greater destiny.

If it be decided that the larger membership and the increasing numbers of Churches must be maintained then it must be fairly obvious that this moment is not the right one to adopt a rigorous policy of restricting the platforms of affiliated Churches to the present inadequate numbers of efficient workers. To do so would necessarily starve the Churches. The disastrous results of such a policy will be best understood by those Churches who

have provided good Halls in creditable situations, and have incurred heavy financial obligations in order to realise their ideals. Their demand is for more and better exponents.

Again, the demand for pure Spiritualist philosophy on our platforms cannot be assured at this present juncture by the policy of a restricted platform, for it is admitted that some of those now serving, and who in many cases are keen advocates of the policy of restriction, are guilty of the faults due to prior orthodox training. Mere restriction to workers within the Movement is therefore no remedy against this particular difficulty at this stage of our evolution.

Something more is needed. We shall never be free of this problem until the Movement is prepared to support something in the nature of a Training College where the Exponents and Demonstrators can receive adequate training in all branches of knowledge pertaining to the art of exposition, etc. Then it will be possible to put on our platforms thoroughly equipped workers, and the rule would be to find the few holding no Diploma, and the many proud of their distinctive badge of proficiency. The foundation of a College may be a big thing, and may be long in realising itself. But there is no obstacle to beginning on a more modest scale. With this end in view the attention of the reader is directed to another page of this issue wherein is outlined a scheme of Education for Spiritualism. The scheme is the work of a Joint Education Committee of the S.N.U. and B.S.L.U. It is offered as a practical working proposal, and is to be considered by both National Unions, and in all probability it will come before both Annual Conferences. Study therefore the proposals in all their details in this final thought, the responsibility of fastening upon the Movement a policy of a Restricted Platform carries with it the onus of providing adequately and without stint for all the service and needs of the Churches.

GEO, F. Berry. Dipl. S.N.U.

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As the SNU Secretary notes:

Spiritualists' National Union and British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union.

JOINT EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL NATIONAL COURSES.

A Three Years' Course, with an Annual Examination, to consist of three three-hour sessions, held on Saturday afternoon and evening, and Sunday morning or afternoon (but special arrangements may be made for special cases). Entrance Fee (to include supply of prescribed books) as fixed from time to time by the S.N.U. Exponents' Committee.

A Board of Examiners to be set up; the Examiner who sets the Paper of Questions in any one subject to mark all the answers in that subject—always provided that the Exponents' Committee has power to make any necessary arrangements for marking.

Papers. One each on (1) The READING Course; (2): the PHILOSOPHY Course; and (3) the EVOLUTION Course.

Certificates to be issued for:—

PASS ……. 60 to 74 per cent. of the total marks.
HONOURS ... 75 to 89 per cent. of the total marks.
DISTINCTION 90 to 100 per cent. of the total marks.

Diploma to be issued subject to the conditions laid down in the regulations of the Exponents' Committee.

Yearly Sections to be named Intermediate, Subsidiary and final.

INTERMEDIATE.

READING.

Introduction to Spiritualism and Lyceumist. (Handbook No.1).
Hints to Students of Spiritualism (Berry).
The Seven Pointed Star (Berry).
Modern Spiritualism (Evans).
The Doctrine of Immortality (Morse).

To show an intimate knowledge; to be able to discuss and appraise the value of any given incident or teaching; to write a short essay on any subject dealt with in the Course.

PHILOSOPHY.

Primer of Logic (Jevons).
Essays on Reasoning (Connor).

To be able to answer questions or "work" exercises; to be able to apply formal logic to the study of Spiritualism.

EVOLUTION.

The Story of Creation (Clodd).

To have a general idea of the Theory of Evolution and how it is supported by present day forms of life.

SUBSIDIARY.

READING.

Students' Handbook (No. 2).
Practical Occultism (Morse).
Rise and Progress of Modern Spiritualism in Great Britain (Robertson).
Advent: *The Beginnings of Modern Spiritualism* (Connor).
The Superphysical Universe (Morse).

Study as for Intermediate.

PHILOSOPHY.

Know your own Mind (Glover).

To be able to apply psychology to the consideration of Spiritualism and its phenomena (all phases).

Evolution.

The Ascent of Man (Drummond).

To be able to trace man's climb from Animal to Human Being.

READING.

Spiritualism for the Student and Investigator (Handbook No. 3.)
Psychical Research (Barrett.)
Psychic Philosophy (De Brath).
Psychical Phenomena (De Brath). (Prospective Pamphlet).
The Superphysical Man (Morse).

Possible Pamphlet by Lodge on "The Ether."

Study as for Intermediate and Subsidiary.

PHILOSOPHY.

Problems of Philosophy (Russell).

To be able to apply Philosophy to the teachings of Spiritualism—in criticism or confirmation.

EVOLUTION.

The Evolution of the Idea of God (Allen).

To be able to answer questions or to discuss passages or claims.

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This was followed up on August 1st, 1925:

Education and the restricted platform as viewed by the Conference.

The 23rd Annual Conference has passed into a memory of "Something attempted, something done". [16] An atmosphere of goodwill was abroad and a spirit of accommodation, which helped to put several important problems into clearer light, and so indicated some of the steps to be taken if we are to realise most of our aims and objects.

Two of the most keenly debated topics, the Joint Education Scheme and the Restricted Platform problem, will be found on examination to have quite intimate relations one with the other. In a very real way the success of the first objective will go a long way to solve the difficulties inherent in the second item.

The proposals to found a Spiritualist College with its essential training on definite lines and the study of specific subjects, has been resisted on two grounds. First, that if inspiration and speaking under trance control are facts of experience, it is a betrayal of the Spirit World to set aside a method which gave such brilliant examples as A. J. Davis, Hudson Tuttle, J. J. Morse, to mention no others. Second, a well defined fear that the coming of these college-trained speakers may prove to be the beginnings of what is aptly called "A new Priesthood."

The objections will bear examination more than once, and is our apology for treating the matter again in this place. The long press correspondence on the Restricted Platform and the debate in Conference proves sufficiently that an acute problem faces the Movement, and a solution must be found or matters will drift from bad to worse. That being the case it is perhaps well to remind ourselves that in searching for satisfying solutions, it is well to begin by making the largest concessions to the good inherent in the system that has come under criticism, and to acknowledge the weaknesses or dangers which lie hidden within the proposed remedies. Having visualised these contrasted aspects, we must then frankly face the obvious defects in the system which has created the demand for improvement, and strive to see in what way the proposed remedies will remove the admitted defects. We need perhaps to take one further step as a preliminary to a serious effort to find solutions for our difficulties, viz., the recognition that we live in a world where the relative values of Institutions and Phenomena are continually changing, and that under these changing conditions the Movement that hopes to survive must be capable of adaptation to new needs.

[16] The 23rd AGM and Conference at the First National Church, Cave Street, St. Paul's, Bristol on July 4th, 5th and 6th 1925 under the presidency of Jessy Greenwood.

It is therefore unreservedly admitted that in the early days of Spiritualism its growth almost entirely depended on the work of its trance mediums and inspirational speakers. It is as unreservedly admitted that much splendid work of the same nature is being accomplished to-day: nor is there any reason to suppose that the future will be less richly endowed in this respect than any past times. But as soon as the admission is made comes the very pertinent question: Can we vouch that the same quality of mediumship and trance utterance is manifesting through all our present day platform workers as we associate with the names of the honoured pioneers ? Two quotations from not unfriendly critics will enable us to answer the question with the frankness it deserves.

In the *Brighton and Hove Society and Hove Gazette*, for April 16th last, we find the following:—"After hearing Mr.—I have no hesitation in stating that his performance . . . . was self-illusion and self-hypnotism. He was announced to speak on Spiritualism: Past, Present and Future, but in incoherent wanderings he did not touch upon these subjects with either definition or clarity. Such nonsense is not Spiritualism, neither is it Religion." The friendly critic tells us he had taken a bereaved friend to the meeting, hoping that some consolation would be given. Instead, the poor investigator went away shocked.

The issue of *Light* for July 4th contains on its front page a reference to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's new story in the *Strand Magazine*, entitled "The Land of Mist," which is described as a Spiritualist story. The note goes on to say, "The description of the Spiritualist Society's Sunday meeting is true to life . . . the trance address of Mr. James Jones, of North Shields, under the control of 'Alasha the Atlantean,' a portentious bore droning platitudes."

Imagine the sting of that Sunday Meeting "true to life." When our friends thus see and describe our public services, it is surely time to realise the need for drastic changes in our presentation of Spiritualism to those whom we can hardly expect to view our efforts with the tolerance of friends.

The fear of the rise of a Priesthood is a real one, and is a danger that all Religious Bodies have to encounter in the course of their history. The great Non-conformist Denominations have been able to surmount the difficulty, and that without sacrificing their pulpits to uninstructed Teachers and Pastors. If danger is to be apprehended of this kind, the development and maintenance of a system of permanent resident ministers would be far more likely to lead to the emergence of the dreaded Priesthood than the education and training of platform workers for itinerant service. The safeguard in any case against these known dangers lies in the Churches maintaining their control of the Movement through its District Councils and the Annual Conferences. And also through the attainment of a high level of spiritual unfoldment with the experience of conscious communion with the inhabitants of the larger life, enjoyed by the individual members of our Churches.

It therefore promises much for the better service of our Churches that the principle of the Joint Education and Diploma Scheme was accepted by the Conference. Some difficulty has cropped up over the obviously onerous task of finding exactly the right type of books to use as text books. The Exponents' Committee are well aware that the only satisfactory solution of this problem is the publication of our own text books. It is their great desire to accomplish this at no distant date. Given goodwill and a continuance of that spirit of mutual accommodation shown at the Bristol Conference, a very workable scheme will be speedily in operation. Afterwards, like all human endeavours, improvements will be adopted as occasion offers.

On the problem of the Restricted Platform, the mover of the Amendment stressed the vital need for an adequately staffed platform. He rightly voiced the opinion that in the absence of a sufficiency of properly qualified persons to fill Church platforms, a policy

which compelled the Churches to accept an unsatisfactory service, or go without (which in too many instances would be the result of forbidding the engagement of outside speakers) would prove so disastrous as to break up the Union.

In the judgment of the writer, it was this obvious possibility rather than the intrinsic right of Churches to put upon their platform whomsoever they liked, that carried the amendment to such complete victory. Apart from holding by the right as a right of a Church to self-government, it may very easily be understood that with a thoroughly adequate internal service, and properly organised to serve the affiliated Churches efficiently, there would be little temptation on the part of Churches to flirt with outside speakers for their supposed value in drawing paying crowds. It was a natural sequence of such a view that Conference proceeded to elect a Committee charged with the duty of preparing a scheme to put before next Conference to provide efficient workers to serve the affiliated Churches.

Efficient workers, whether Demonstrators or Exponents, cannot be produced from the proverbial Conjurer's Hat. Willing workers must first be found, then trained on satisfactory lines to fulfil the requirements of the scheme the Committee has to present to next Conference. Whether we like it or no, the duty of determining who is an efficient and satisfactory worker must devolve on persons elected for that purpose, and in whom the Movement has confidence. It is quite evident, therefore, that all roads are leading to the establishment of a Spiritualist College or some similar Institution. The existence and dignity of the Union demands it. Shall we not also add that the worker has at last realised that in loyalty to the Angel World and its Message for Humanity, he too must give all his heart and soul and every capacity within him in its highest development to this noble cause.

GEO. F, Berry, Dipl. S.N.U.

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The following year the SNU's AGM was held at the Memorial Hall, Albert Square, Manchester, July 3rd and 4th, and in the Manchester Society of Spiritualists, Maskell Street, Ardwick July 5th, 1926. The AGM minutes were published in "The National Spiritualist" over issues September and October, Section 39: RESTRICTED PLATFORM REPORT. H. Boddington presented the Report and the findings of the Committee as follows:—

After long and careful consideration we have come to the conclusion that owing to the very different conditions prevailing in District Council Areas, that the time is inopportune for the enforcement of any National Scheme of Platform Restriction, and as each District Council has power to frame Bye-Laws to meet local conditions, we recommend:—

(1) That in regard to Platform Restrictions, each District Council, if they so desire, should frame Bye-Laws to meet the requirements of the Churches within their area.

(2) That before becoming operative such Bye-Laws must be sanctioned by the Council of the S.N.U.

(3) That when such Bye-Laws have received the sanction of the S.N.U., the Council of that body shall support the D.C. in the administration of the Bye-Laws within the area of the D.C. concerned.

(4) That the regulations governing Diploma Holders shall remain as at present, viz. :—That Diplomees shall not serve any Church conducted by one or more persons for private gain, or any Church that has been expelled from the Union.

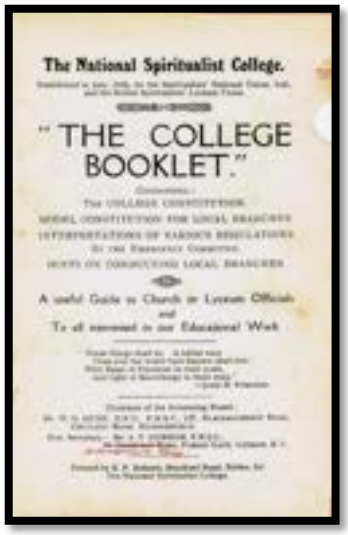
(5) That the National Union, in conjunction with its District Councils, shall prepare a list of accredited Lecturers and Mediums and forward copies to all affiliated Churches and Societies, requesting their loyal support of those named therein.

(6) That the above recommendations, if accepted by this 1926 Conference, shall become operative as and from January 1st, 1928.

R. Boddington moved the adoption of the Report, Mrs. Benson, Fleetwood, seconded, and carried.

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To my knowledge this was the end of the matter regarding the Restricted Platform as per the 1924 Resolution. However, in the 1925 AGM report as published in this article it is noted: "The proposals to found a Spiritualist College with its essential training on definite lines and the study of specific subjects, has been resisted on two grounds."


The National Spiritualist College.

"THE COLLEGE BOOKLET."

A useful Guide to Church or Lyceum Officials and To all interested in our Educational Work

The following year, "The National Spiritualist College" was established, albeit this has been mostly overlooked in our education history. However, over the years it has caused some confusion as to its role and was considered by some as an actual college; however, it was purely correspondence-based under the auspices of the SNU's and the Lyceum Union's joint education scheme. Another confusion for those studying for an SNU education course award arose with the award titles; for example, a Diploma-holder would be a DSNU, but with some of our earlier exponents in our literature we come across the title 'DNSC', leaving the reader wondering what this means, not knowing that it was an SNU award under the auspices of "The National Spiritualist College".

Below is a quote from "The College Booklet" Foreword:

"The National Spiritualist College was founded in July, 1926, and is recognised by The Spiritualists' National Union, Ltd., and The British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union, as "an Educational Institution legally established as a Body within the Orbit of the Union and an Integral part of its Activities."

"The College is being conducted in close co-operation with the National Education Scheme; the College Governing Board being also the Joint Education Committee. But there is no confusion of duty or function. The function of the Joint Committee is to carry on the Advanced Education Scheme and conduct the Grade Examinations (through the S.N.U. Education Committee—which forms a section of the College Board); and the function of the Governing Board is to organise and supervise and encourage the Educational and Class work carried on by the Churches and Lyceums, operating as Local Branches of the College.

"The COLLEGE Constitution was adopted by both Unions in 1926; the Local Branch Constitution has since been drawn up as a Guide to all legitimate activities under Article 11 (b) of the College Constitution, and also to enable Churches and Lyceums to organise themselves as Units of the College. …"

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The College survived at least into 1933; however, at the present time I have not established when it was disbanded. Historian Marc Demarest, who runs the excellent research website, "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" (IAPSOP),

as referenced on our contents page, has much of the material available for free download on his Chasing Down Emma [*Hardinge Britten*] site. [17] Marc kindly sent me the hard copies, which are in the Britten Museum & Library, housed at the Arthur Findlay College.

In 1941 Percy Wilson served as a member of the SNU National Council and Chairman of its Education Committee; later, in 1943, a New Scheme was initiated by the Exponents' Committee for a National Register which would provide education for all workers within the ordinary membership of the Union. Wilson put this to the Conference at the following AGM at Leicester (July 1944), with a printed copy of the Exponent's Certificate, which had been approved by the Exponents' Committee. During this year "Applications from platform workers for inclusion in the National Register had been coming in steadily. During 1944, 365 Certificates were granted, bringing the total on the Register, including Diploma-holders, up to 514. There were no educational examinations held during 1944," as the whole Educational Course was in the process of being revised.

In October 1946 Ernest Thompson (c.1905-1968), Education Secretary, instigated a National Education scheme for the Spiritualists' National Union. By July 1949 Thompson had written and completed 150 Lecturettes (approx 200,000 words) and had also prepared a comprehensive syllabus which provided the framework of the SNU education courses. [18]


Ernest Thompson

Eight basic textbooks were approved by the National Council as the foundation for the national education scheme. The books included ones by Andrew Jackson Davis, Hudson Tuttle, Stainton Moses, Arthur Findlay, W.H. Evans, and the Lyceum manual. By November 1950 there were twenty-two textbooks chosen and approved by the SNU, offering a wide range of courses from beginner to officer, with a complete syllabus, drafted and printed, which was to be circulated amongst members and churches.

Education *again* was the main theme for the SNU Conference on July 2nd, 1949, in Edinburgh, under the presidency of Mr W. Lorraine Haig. The focus was on larger, but fewer, churches, as it was perceived that the churches were splitting into small bits, creating a greater demand on speakers and demonstrators and hence lowering the standards. The SNU could not cope with these extra demands, thus the need to emphase the bonuses of an all-round education scheme.

The President emphasised:

> **A Spiritualist's College:** If we wish to achieve fully our plans in the future, we must have a training centre 'a place of our own' so to speak, where every phase of our work will be taught by qualified teachers. A place where men and women – for the outlay of an amount of money within their reach or of the Society who may sponsor them – can attend for special courses.
>
> In this – for lack of a special name – "College for the Advancement of Psychic Science," there will be courses for speakers, development classes for mediums, classes

[17] Chasing Down Emma: https://ehbritten.blogspot.com/2013/07/imported-from-cornwall-national.html

[18] Ernest Thompson, who had succeeded former SNU President Ernest Oaten in 1945 as editor of "The Two Worlds". Thompson had founded the Newcastle Psychical Research Institute in 1945; at this time he was President of Heaton National Spiritualist Church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He was also the founder of the Manchester Psychical Research Institute and founder President of the Spirit Electronic Communication Society.

for Spiritualists who want to specialise in any suitable subject. Short Summer courses for those who require further tuition, i.e., Presidents and Executives alike. Indeed, all the subjects coming under the heading of "Psychic Science" will be part of the curriculum. Great is the need for such a college.

Haig continued:

> I am certain that within the next twenty-five years a "College for Psychic Science" will be established in this country, and with that faith I am trying today to prepare the mind of the membership to be ready, when the time comes, to grasp the great opportunity with both hands. Yes ! grasp it with both hands, so that we may make this 'Place of our Own' a model for all the countries in the world to imitate, and at the same time, make it a living memorial to the souls whose work and goodwill will be responsible for bringing it about.[19]


William Lorraine Haig

I think here it would not be too speculative to suggest that William Haig is talking about the *possibility* of the Union acquiring Stansted Hall, given that in early 1945 James Arthur Findlay first approached the Union regarding Stansted Hall; this was when it was occupied by the Red Cross as a Convalescent Home. This was followed up in 1950 by personal contact with W. Lorraine Haig, who appointed a President's Committee to investigate and report on a College for Spiritualism. But it would not be until January 1954 that Findlay wrote to Harry Dawson, who had been elected President six months previously, followed by a meeting at Stansted, that a direct and close liaison between the Hall and the Union was established.

This boost of comprehensive studies in all areas of the Spiritualist movement was a worthy move by the Union, creating a more informed knowledge of their religion and a deeper understanding of its philosophy, phenomena and history. The churches (there were around 500 National churches in Britain in 1950) were encouraged to arrange discussion groups, using Thompson's lecturettes, in an effort to persuade enquirers to join their local SNU church and in turn become members of the Union.

Membership was then, as it is today, based on the acceptance of the Seven Principles. It was deemed fair that new members should be persuaded to take a course of at least eight lecturettes, so that new members would understand the principles they were accepting and acquire a rudimentary knowledge of Spiritualism. The recommended lecturettes consisted of the Phenomena and Mediumship, the Seven Principles and the Spirit World; these, I believe, formed the "Beginner's Course".

Ernest Thompson had succeeded Ernest Oaten in 1945 as editor of the Two Worlds, then based in Manchester; the lecturettes were published in the Two Worlds, creating a firm public awareness that "Education is the Greatest Need of Our Movement". Thompson marked November 18th as "Education Day" in 1950.[20]

The basis of his education system still runs today, naturally with numerous changes, upgrading and, over the years, further courses added, etc., but with all the good work done by Ernest Thompson in his 150 lecturettes, giving a comprehensive syllabus which provided the framework of the SNU education courses. He put into the education system some serious errors

[19] The SNU Conference in Edinburgh (Forty-seventh AGM of the SNU). Haig's address was printed verbatim over several issues of the Two Worlds; this quote was taken from page 229, July 22nd, 1949.

[20] The Two Worlds, November 11th, 1950.

which would remain for over five decades before these errors were noted, addressed and corrected. The two most serious were the formation of the Seven Principles and what *factually* took place at Hydesville; both are major foundation-stones in National Spiritualism. Today the SNU course papers regarding its history are updated and reflect a true narrative of our history; the SNU Pioneer is part of its recommended reading.[21]

"Only by first destroying error can you clear the foundations on which to build the edifice of truth."

Arthur Findlay



[21] See also Pioneer: Vol. 2, No. 4: July 2015: 115 – Early S.N.U Education History, The Exponents Committee – George Berry, The first proposed for S.N.U. Certification – "Exponents and Demonstrators". Or download the full SNU History booklet as detailed on the last page of this issue.

SNU Churches and their Platform

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As time moved forward, there was naturally criticism and efforts made to improve the Union's affiliated churches and their platform presentation. Like most things, much is trial and error, trying to reach a positive outcome for the demand of both their churches and enquirers into Spiritualism. In the last couple of Pioneer issues it has noted a few of these avenues or suggestions on the best move forward in the presentation of National Spiritualism.

Pioneer noted in Vol. 11, No. 1: "Keep It Dark! Is Policy of the S.N.U.":

> "During its formative years the SNU was sometimes heavily criticised for not using or at least taking advantage of the likes of Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding and some of the leading speakers and mediums prior to and post WWII. In a *general* sense at this period the Union did not support large propaganda meetings. Maurice Barbanell had long argued over the importance of propaganda meetings, [16] often at loggerheads with the Union, which regarded its churches as the best way to secure a more long-term avenue for new people coming into Spiritualism to become members of a national organisation. For much of 1942 the Psychic News editor had kept the Union under pressure …"

> "WE are amazed that the S.N.U. disparages wartime propaganda. Surely it realises that its churches are very largely preaching to the converted."

In the last issue of Pioneer we moved back to 1924 in an article entitled 'Raising the Standard'; this looked at the SNU AGM, which passed the following resolution:

> "That the question of confining the platforms of affiliated Churches to workers within the Union be considered and, if necessary, that legislative measures be promulgated for confirmation."

The first official journal of the Spiritualists' National Union was "The National Spiritualist", which came into being under the presidency of its first female President, Jessy Greenwood, in July 1924 and continued until December 1932. It was edited by the SNU General Secretary (1922-1933) and former President (1920 -1922), George Berry. An article by former SNU President Ernest Oaten (1915-1920) is published below from its May 1926 issue.

Would we today, almost a hundred years later, agree with our former President, Ernest Oaten's, point of view or has too much changed in the progress of time in the Spiritualist movement? Some would no doubt say certainly, not with the importance of the Home Circles; I think there would be little disagreement as to its value in our history. Another article follows with an example published in the April 1928 issue of a psychical researcher giving positive, absolute proof to his mind of the survival of the human spirit. How many psychical researchers today give such convincing testimony? This was the former President of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), Oliver Lodge. Pioneer has featured Lodge in numerous issues and has pointed out that he was quite clear on occasions that he was *not* a Spiritualist, he was a scientist, a psychical researcher and a Christian. In the closing comments of Oaten's article it would not run true with the likes of Sir Oliver Lodge and some of his numerous colleagues in the SPR in support of survival evidence they have recorded.

[16] See the Pioneer pdf booklet,"Maurice Barbanell", as shown on the last page of this issue.

What Provision Should S.N.U, Churches Make to Meet the Needs of the Genuine Investigator into Spiritualism

By E. W. Oaten, Editor of *Two Worlds*



Spiritualism claims to prove life beyond the grave: first, by the demonstration of psychic faculties within man, which were superior to time, space and matter; and secondly, by communion with those who were already discarnate. The demonstration of the psychic faculties within man was the evidence of man's spiritual and psychic nature, but mediumship was something more than that, it was the use of the psychic faculties of men by discarnate entities. A large portion of Spiritualistic phenomena were good evidence of the psychic powers of man, but were no evidence of spirit communion. The whole world was awake to-day to the claims of Spiritualism, and everyone was asking to be put in touch with the spirit world.

The common idea was that this was only possible through what was called a developed medium. He believed, however, that much better evidence was obtainable in the home circle by people who were not Spiritualists, sitting in their own homes, without any known medium, and developing such psychic powers as made themselves apparent in members of the family. Occasionally, though only occasionally, home circles are without results, and people run after mediums. There was a growing body of mediums who were prepared to put themselves at the disposal of the public for sittings for evidential purposes, but they were faced with the fact that there were hundreds of people who were trading on this claim, and who had little or no pretensions to mediumship at all.

If the Spiritualist Churches had a full sense of responsibility, and were providing for the needs of the public, they ought to have so established themselves that anyone desirous of investigating Spiritualism would go direct to the Spiritualist Church as the best avenue for investigation. He regretted to say that in nine cases out of ten the last place people went to for such investigation was the Spiritualist Church. One had but to read such personal experiences as those of Mr. Blatchford, Mr. Bradley, the Rev. Drayton Thomas and Mr. J. Arthur Hill to realise that a higher standard of evidence was obtained in a private circle than was usual in our churches. There was a reason for this. The seclusion and selectness of the private circle for personal investigation gave much better psychic conditions than existed in the church, especially where our churches meet in hired halls. They were asking for the amendment of the law in order to make mediumship legally permissible, but they could be quite sure that no such amendment would be granted until they were prepared to give some guarantee that those who called themselves mediums possessed the powers they claimed, and were honest in the use of them.

One of the difficulties of platform clairvoyance was that mediums were expected to get through twenty or thirty descriptions in the course of an hour. The result was that none of them were sufficiently detailed to be evidential, yet he had been told by more than one medium that unless they gave twenty descriptions they were told that they would not be engaged again. In his opinion three descriptions which placed the evidence for identity beyond doubt were better than fifty which were nebulous and uncertain.

Next to the home circle, he believed that the best way of securing evidence was by means of private circles and private consultations with a well-developed and reliable medium, and he believed that it was the business of our churches to be responsible for the quality of mediumship used. The time would come when the individual who wanted evidence on Spiritualism would go to the Spiritualist Church of the town, as the best centre

to obtain it, and he believed that the scheme which would work best would be one in which every church had its own resident medium, paid a good living wage, who should exercise his or her mediumship upon the church premises. Such medium should be properly tested and certified, and his duty should be to assist investigators in obtaining evidence, to supervise the psychic development of other members of the church, and to be responsible for the phenomena given in the church.

Such mediums should be paid out of the funds of the church, and their salaries should not be dependent on monies derived from sittings. Those who used the time and services of the medium would be expected to support the church, and payments should be adjusted, as far as possible, according to the needs and circumstances of the investigator. One church might have a clairvoyant, another a healer, another a voice medium, another a materialising medium, and by the interchange of mediums or sitters amongst the churches we ought to be able to supply to a genuine investigator any phase of phenomena essential to his conviction. In many cases there could be little objection to the publication of such records, and he believed the churches could provide a mass of evidential information in twelve months, which would be many times more convincing than 40 years of psychical research proceedings have produced.

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April 1928 issue:

Sir Oliver Lodge's experience with Mrs. Piper, the American Medium.



Speaking at a meeting in aid of the Hospital Fund for London, on February 29th, Sir Oliver Lodge gave an interesting account of his experiments with the famous American medium, Mrs. Piper, who was discovered in Boston by Professor William James. Mrs. Piper was invited to England, and went to Myers at Cambridge, who at once reported to him that she was genuine. Mrs. Piper was the first medium with whom Sir Oliver had a sitting. He described how Mrs. Piper's communications while in the trance were suddenly interrupted, and ''my aunt forcibly took control.''

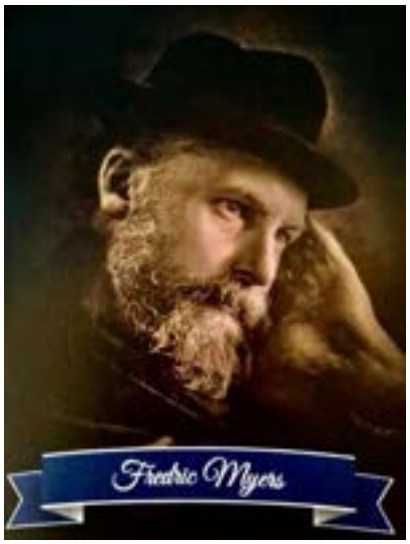
This aunt, he explained, who was then dead, had been distressed by his Agnosticism and had promised him that she would communicate if she was ever able.

He said that Mrs. Piper spoke in a voice that was unmistakably that of his aunt, saying, "My boy, I promised I would come to you," and many other things which only he could know. "Both Myers and I were in tears. We were much upset by the messages." Things were said which were absolutely outside the knowledge of the medium. In the same year, 1889, Mrs. Piper came to Liverpool, and he tested her in every possible way. He brought professors into the room whom she did not know, and messages came through from their dead relatives.

"My scepticism was broken down. I perceived that the dead are not extinct, but can still communicate under certain difficult conditions." He got into touch with an uncle who died long before and got him to relate incidents in his youth—things he (Sir Oliver Lodge) had never heard of—and was able to check the accuracy of the messages from the memories of the uncle's living brother.

Sir Oliver Lodge went on to describe the later researches which he said had convinced him that what were supposed to be communications from dead persons are not due to

telepathy, or thought transference from the minds of living people. This was effected chiefly by the messages that came through from Myers after his death in 1901, when "things began to hum." Myers knew the difficulties and took pains to overcome them. He devised ingenious tests and proofs to show that it was not all due to telepathy. Through illiterate mediums he spoke Latin and Greek. "I have talks with Myers still," said Sir Oliver Lodge. The occurrences since the death of Myers and others had, he considered, proved the survival of personal identity—at least, evidence had been now accumulated which would in time, he thought, constitute proof such as would be accepted by science.



Born 6th February 1843 Keswick, Cumberland, England. Myers was a professor of classics at Cambridge University. He was a founder member of the Society for Psychical Research and was its President in 1900. Myers had a strong interest in mediumship and would often sit with numerous mediums.

He investigated Eusapia Palladino with others like Oliver Lodge (Myers found her to be a clever fraud). Myers was the co-author of the two-volume 'Phantasms of the Living', 1886. Possibly his main work, 'Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death', was posthumously published in two volumes in February 1903.

After his death Myers started to communicate through various writing mediums in different parts of the world; the messages made no sense individually but when they were put together they formed messages - these became known as 'cross-correspondences' and proved excellent proof of spirit communication.

Myers passed to died on 17th January 1901.

Recent SNU AGMs
of Historic Significance

Pioneer generally does not report on the more recent SNU AGMs unless any historic points of interest are featured. The first article it reported on was the Presidential Badge, received by SNU President Robert A. Owen at the 1927 Annual General Meeting, which is noted elsewhere in the issue in Lionel Owen's book review, *"My First Ninety Years"*. Traditionally this badge would be pinned to the lapel of the new incoming President by the retiring President but for some years the badge was lost and forgotten. At the Spiritualists' National Union AGM held at the Holiday Inn, Runcorn on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th July 2017 President David Bruton wore the President's badge of Gordon Higginson. After his death on January 18th, 1993, his President's badge at some unknown date came into the possession of Eric Hatton. After Eric's death on November 6th, 2015 the badge was later returned to the Union. David passed the badge on to myself to be safely held and displayed in the Britten Museum & Library at Stansted Hall, which he would use from time to time on special official occasions.

I asked David if he knew the origin of the badge. He was aware only that it was worn by Gordon, adding that it was generally thought that the badge was made for Gordon's term of office (1970-1993). I then realised by the badge description and the engraved inscription on the back of the badge:

> "The Badge is in blue enamel on gold, with the name of the Union round the edge, the centre design showing the Setting Sun over the Book of Nature, with the words Light and Truth standing in relief. The back is suitably inscribed to commemorate the gift. It has a bar above on which is inscribed the word President".

This is the actual President's Badge presented to President Robert A. Owen at the 1927 Annual General Meeting as outlined in Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 2014: "Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists' National Union". So, *unknown to all* at the 2017 AGM, President Bruton was *in fact* wearing the official SNU Presidential Badge:

It can be noted in some of the old AGM reports that the retiring President passes on the Presidential Badge, which would have served:

Robert Owen

Ernest Keeling

John McIndoe

Frank Blake

John Stewart

Harold Vigurs

Lorraine Haig

Percy Wilson

Harry Dawson

Charles Quastel

John Winning

Charles Quastel

Gordon Higginson

Presumed Lost [17]

David Bruton

Jackie Wright

When President Bruton became the retiring SNU President at the 2022 SNU AGM, the AGMs were at this time held online owing to the pandemic, so Minister Bruton returned it to the Britten Museum & Library, and it was in turn was passed on to the incoming President, Jackie Wright. [18]

Hopefully, when the time comes,
the long AGM tradition of publicly passing on the
President's Badge will continue…



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[17] It appears that with the sudden death of Gordon Higginson the badge was not passed down in the traditional way and possibly later passed on to Eric by the Higginson family. Given Higginson's long term in office, the historic significance and origin of the badge was lost. David Bruton informed me, "I know Eric wore it when he became Honorary President of the Union."

[18] The various articles on the President's Badge can be searched for in the Pioneer 'SNU History' pdf booklet, details on the last page of this issue.

The second significant AGM article was in Pioneer, Vol. 10, No. 3: "Spiritualists' National Union – Honours James Johnson Morse".

J.J. Morse became Hon. President of the Spiritualists' National Union for his immense contribution to national organisation. This welcomed honour was given at the 121st SNU AGM by its President, Jackie Wright, at Norwich on July 15th, 2023.

Minister Jackie Wright in her Presidential speech stated of Morse:

> "… that he was called by W.T. Stead the Bishop of Spiritualism. Morse was well known for his exceptional trance mediumship, inspired orations and his work in forming our Union, and it is for his work in the formation and administration of the Union that we are appointing Morse to the position of Honorary President.
>
> "Morse's legacy deserves to be recognised, so today I am unveiling an annual award presented on the birthday of the Union, the 18th October, which will be awarded to the District Council which has been the most active in helping the churches and promoting the religion of Spiritualism in their individual area."

Further, in Pioneer, Vol. 11, No. 1: "James J. Morse – Portrait & Award".

Minister Jackie Wright, Chair of the Arthur Findlay College, commissioned a portrait of James J. Morse, together with his chief control, "Tien Sien Tie," [19] by the psychic artist Richard Stuttle, who is the son of Alan Stuttle, a senior tutor at the College. Just prior to the birthday of the Union, on the 18th October, the first J.J. Morse Award was given to the South Yorkshire District Council; this was announced on the birthday of the Union, 18th October, 2023, in the Britten Museum & Library housed at the Arthur Findlay College via a video recording by President Jackie Wright.

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Which brings us to this year's SNU AGM:

Traditionally from 1891, when the Spiritualists' National Federation was founded, the AGMs, sometimes referred to as Annual Conferences, were always held on the first weekend of July, the reason being so that every 'National Spiritualist' knew the date each year! This continued (apart from one year during the war, I believe) until recent years, where the July date was changed. This year for the first time it was moved forward to September 28th-29th and was held at the Holiday Inn, Newcastle.

Minister David Bruton drew positive attention and importance to the Fund of Benevolence (FOB), which prompted a collection at the end of its first day's business. Many readers will not know that this fund predates the Union to the days of the Federation. The Fund was originally called "The Order of Progressive Spiritualists' Sick Benefit and Pension Fund", or, in short, O.P.S. I quote below from the Pioneer article published in Vol. 1, No. 3: "Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists' National Union". The full article should ideally be read to put the opening quote below in context. In short, in 1892 a proposal for a suitable means of recognition in the National Federation was put forward at the Annual Conference held in Burnley on July 2nd, 1892 but was rejected. In 1893 Mrs H.M. Wallis founded 'The Order of Progressive Spiritualists' (O.P.S.), and in 1893 introduced the first 'Spiritualist Recognition Symbol' in this country. At around the same time, the Sunflower Badge was introduced into the Association of Spiritualists in America.

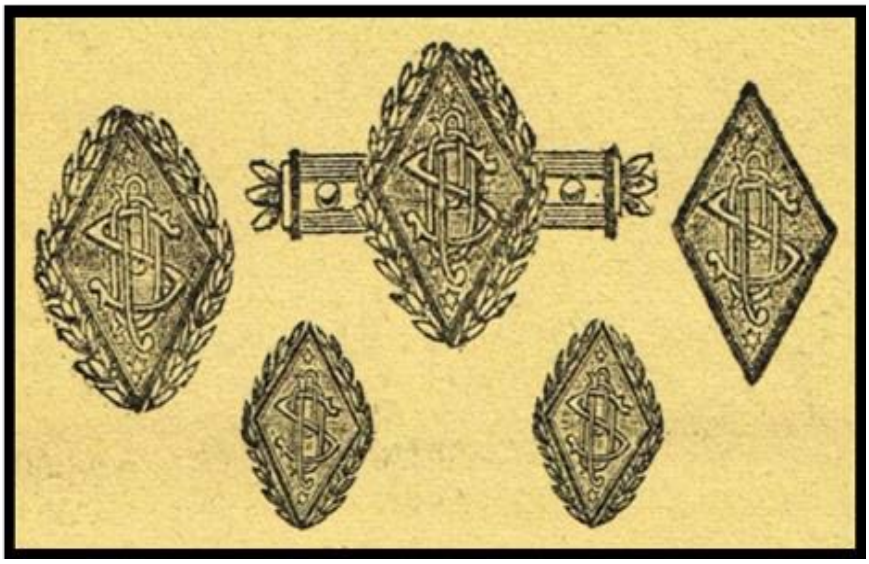
[19] For the development of James Morse and when his lecturing control, Tien Sien Tie, first announced his presence, please see Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 1: "First Public Developing Circles Robert Cogman Mrs. Mary Main".

"When the resolution was first proposed for a "recognition badge" at the 1892 Conference, Mrs M. H. Wallis was present; [20] she was also a member of the Propaganda Committee. If we look at the penultimate paragraph of the first issue of Pioneer, at the reprinted statement by James J. Morse originally written September 22nd 1896, we note:

A SPIRITUALISTS' BENEFIT SOCIETY.

> "The last special feature pertaining to our cause in Great Britain that I will call your attention to is "The Order of Progressive Spiritualists' Sick Benefit and Pension Fund," an association originated by Mrs. M. H. Wallis, and to which she is the honorary secretary. This effort has its headquarters in Manchester. For the past year it has disbursed over 200 dollars in sick relief and pensions. [21] It is the first and only Society of the kind ever established for our people in Great Britain, and is in every way well deserving of support, and its promoter deserves every praise for her endeavours."

The Order of Progressive Spiritualists would work alongside the National Federation and be supported by the Two Worlds journal. [22] The O.P.S. would introduce the first 'Spiritualist Recognition Symbol' in this country:



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

[21] This was intended for the American readers, so the prices quoted are in US dollars.

[22] In 1892 Emma Hardinge Britten resigned her editorship of the Two Worlds; her Sub-Editor and the paper's co-founder and General Manager, Edward Wallis, took up her position. *The Two Worlds* was closely involved with the National Federation and acted as its mouthpiece and published its meetings, etc.

Published below is a brief history, its principles and objects, taken from the Two Worlds of November 10th, 1893 and December 15th, 1893 respectively:

RE THE PROPOSED SYMBOL.
BY E. W. WALLIS.



THE latest design for the purposes of recognition and union among Spiritualists seems to be one that meets with more favour than any proposal yet made. We give the design, actual size.

We have obtained an estimate of the cost of production, and find that pins, or pendants, or a badge to fasten upon the coat or dress can be made in silver, the monogram raised and polished bright, the background to be of dead silver, for 1s. 9d. each, post free 2s. If we can get orders for more than 50 we can sell them at 1s. 6d. each, post free 1s. 9d. Bar-brooches, two bars, with this design as a centre ornament, could cost 2s. 6d. or 3s. each.

The design is distinctive and sufficiently striking to be easily noticed, and is, as far as we know, unlike anything else in the market. The letters O.P.S. signify Order of Progressive Spiritualists.

It has been suggested that every person who purchases and wears one should agree to have their name and address entered on the roll of the "Order," whose principles might be expressed thus:—

Name: Order of Progressive Spiritualists.

Principles: We the members of the Order of Progressive Spiritualists affirm that we know there is no death. That intercourse between the two worlds has been established. That spirit-return has demonstrated continuity of individual conscious existence. That consequences, good or, evil, of motives and deeds of mortal life affect the status of each spirit after death and constitute the heaven or hell into which they enter. That evolution is not only the law of *this* life but characterises the realm of the hereafter; hence eternal progress is open to every one who endeavours to advance. That we are responsible by Divine Love and Wisdom *to ourselves* for the use we make of our powers and the opportunities of life, and *to others* for the influence we exert by our own conduct; and by the psychic emanations we cast off which affect others for good or ill. We therefore RESOLVE to endeavour to improve our minds, to cultivate our moral powers, to exercise our spiritual gifts, to sympathise with sorrow and suffering, to encourage and assist the weak and ignorant, to co-operate in all endeavours of a reformatory character whose aim is for humanity and the truth. Believing that *character* is more important than *creed*; that deeds, not words, are needed, we will, with charity to all and malice towards none, strive to exert a salutary influence for liberty, right, justice and love in every possible direction.

Objects: To unite spiritually minded and progressive men and women in a fraternal order for mutual encouragement and support. To inaugurate a sick and benefit fund, to assist the suffering, the needy and the aged, such fund to be raised by voluntary effort, in which every member is expected to join. To afford a means of recognition and a link of fellowship between Spiritualists, the outward and visible sign being the diamond shaped symbol bearing the monogram O.P.S.

We are of opinion that the above suggestions are practical and calculated to be of benefit to all members, and will, if adopted, tend to foster good-will and fraternity among Spiritualists. We are prepared to book orders at once which will be executed in

turn as received. Friends will oblige, when writing, by stating, if the above suggestions meet with their approval, their willingness to have their name and address enrolled. All communications should be addressed to Miss Grace, 73A, Corporation Street, Manchester.

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VOICES FROM THE PEOPLE.
RE THE PROPOSED SYMBOL.



IT is now more than six months since this matter was first broached, and at last we have been able to definitely decide what to do.

The sketch here given represents the brooch, and if you simply cover up two bars at each side you will have the pendant, the scarf pin, and badge; the pendant will, of course, have a ring at the top, and the badges will be really small brooches to pin on to a dress or coat.

As will be seen, we have adopted part of Mr. Chadwick's design, the laurel wreath around the diamond, which is certainly an improvement, and renders the symbol one which will be recognised at a glance by any person familiar with it. This alteration will modify the prices somewhat, and therefore the following scale of charges is now finally decided upon: Scarf pins, in silver, solid back, 2s.; badges for dress or coat (really small brooches), 2s.; strong pendants for watch chains, 3s.; two-barred brooches with symbol as a centre ornament, 3s. 6d. Postage, 3d. extra (registered letter). Where a number can be sent together per parcel post, postage will be but a small item, hence friends should combine their orders where possible. We will offer special terms to societies or agents who sell *The Two Worlds* for quantities.

In response to a number of friends, special articles can be made with enamelled letters, or with more metal, or pendants can be engraved at the back. We have ascertained, as suggested by Mr. J. J. Morse and other friends, that the cost for bar brooches in nine-carat gold would be about 21s., pendants 17s. 6d., scarf pins and badges, 14s. Gold pendants with Mr. Chadwick's design of the globe and Latin inscription *on the back* would probably cost a sovereign.

These symbols are now ready for customers, so that they may be useful for Christmas presents and prizes. Samples can be seen at 73A, Corporation Street, Manchester.[23] Friends, send your orders at once and enclose portals.

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[23] The address was the registered office of The Two Worlds.

"To inaugurate a sick and benefit fund, to assist the suffering, the needy and the aged, such fund to be raised by voluntary effort…"



Minnie Harriet Wallis

Report of Tenth Annual Conference of the National Federation, held in Blackpool on July 1st and 2nd 1899, as published in the Two Worlds July 7th, 1899:

"The work of benevolence is, in the nature of things, a matter we shall sooner or later be compelled to recognise as a duty to our workers who may be sick, incapacitated through illness or accident, or otherwise in temporary or permanent distress, is to come before you in a resolution to be submitted by Mrs. M. H. Wallis, the founder and organiser of a fund known as the Order of Progressive Spiritualists' Sick, Benefit, and Pension fund, and it seems that the time has arrived for putting the question on a National basis, with consequent advantage to all concerned."

As the proceedings continued:

> "Mrs. Wallis then introduced her motion that the O.P.S. Sick and Benefit Fund should be taken over by the Federation. She thought the time had come when the movement should take the responsibility of providing for its sick and aged workers, and so, although she should always retain interest in the work, she asked them to take the fund into their hands as the National body of Spiritualists.
>
> "Mr. H. Lucas seconded, and Mr. Chiswell asked whether the name should be taken over also. Mrs. Wallis explained that it was quite optional, but suggested it would be wise. Messrs. Howes, Chiswell, Nuttall, and Johnson joined the discussion, and Mr. Hanson Hey said they as a movement should face their responsibilities.
>
> "After Mr. Bibbings, Mrs. Wallis, and Mr. Chiswell had spoken, the motion was carried."

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During the year the transfer of the O.P.S. Sick, Benefit and Pension Funds to the control of the Federation was carried out, the funds to be administered under the title of 'The Spiritualists' National Federation Fund of Benevolence.' The fund has grown and continued to the present day, and over the past hundred and twenty years it has collected thousands of pounds. [24] It appears that the 'Recognition Symbol' ended with the transfer of the Sick, Benefit, and Pension Funds to the control of the Federation in 1899. This would continue within the SNU, as it does today.

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[24] From the modest beginnings, I note published in the Two Worlds for May 18th, 1894: "That the Committee were pleased to report an income of £7 19s. 6d. and an expenditure of £2 14s. in relieving sickness and need."

HOW OUR FIRST SNU MINISTERS WERE APPOINTED

"Who were the first Ministers of the Union?" This was published in Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 2, January 2014. This article came about as a result of several questions asked by SNU Education but the answer is not straightforward, as there is some conflicting information on this question. Ernest Oaten is described in various publications as being a Spiritualist Minister as early as the First World War. It can also be noted that Frank Blake was the Resident Minister of the Spiritualists' National Church, Bournemouth prior to 1939. Although these two gentlemen both served on the SNU National Council they *were not* Ministers of the SNU.

The first SNU Ministers appear to have been officially appointed in 1939 and were listed in the Diary for this year. However, the Diary for 1939 was sent to the printers around July/August and was available to members from mid-September 1938, so the newly-appointed Ministers were known at this time. The short list of these *first* ministers included Ernest Oaten and Frank Blake; please see the referenced Pioneer issue for the full article.

The article below is taken from the SNU News Letter, January 1970, issue No. 23:

APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS

The APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS by the National Council of the S.N.U. is often a matter of discussion amongst the members of our Churches. They want to know, first WHY we have Ministers, and then HOW they are selected. Officers of Churches or Lyceums, used to conduct the ceremonies connected with the naming of babies, marriages, and funerals, long before we had any Ministers, so why do we appoint them now?

In England, marriages may only be solemnised in a building which is registered for that purpose, a Church, or Chapel or the Registry Office, and within Churches and Chapels any responsible person may conduct the service.

Except in the Church of England, most Methodist Chapels and some Roman Catholic Churches, the presence of the local Registrar is essential, and this official listens to the service and arranges for the signing of the marriage register.

It is possible for Churches to have a special registration which makes the presence of a Registrar unnecessary, but this is more expensive than the other form, and the Church must have a fixed safe for the keeping of the register.

The first form of registration costs about 25/- and is made through the Local Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths—the other form with the fire-proof safe means an application to Somerset House by an individual to become an AUTHORISED PERSON to act as the Church Registrar—he (she) would make a quarterly return to Somerset House.

From this it is evident that in England it was possible to be married in a Spiritualist Church before Ministers were made but in Scotland a different position occurs. There the marriage service can only be conducted by a REGISTERED PERSON—a Minister. Therefore until the S.N.U. inaugurated its own Ministry, there could be no Spiritualist weddings that were legally recognised in Scotland.

Our first Ministers were selected by the National Council of that time from the people known to be active and capable members of S.N.U. Churches. As the need developed, District Councils were asked to recommend people within their area who

were considered capable and would MINISTER with dignity and understanding, not only at ceremonies, and services, but would give help and comfort where required. Requests from individuals for appointment are never considered. People must be recommended. **No Church has its own Minister**. Ministers are appointed to serve the needs of a district. Nor are appointments made in appreciation of services rendered—for that we have the Long Service Award. Even where people have been recommended, and are capable of fulfilling the required conditions, the final appointment rests with the National Council to whom all Ministers are responsible, for in the name of the S.N.U., Ministers are registered at Somerset House, in England, and with the corresponding authority in Scotland. [12]

The appointment of Ministers is only one section of our organisation for establishing Spiritualism as a religion. All our efforts to help in the educational work of the Union are also directed to that end. If you are interested in the many aspects of this work, write for details to:—

The Education Secretary,
Mrs M., E. Grieve,
134 Ainslie Street,
Barrow-in-Furness.

The need for SNU Ministers became strongly apparent during wartime with our workers unable to travel to the churches with the many travelling restrictions. The new Ministers (and approved platform workers), were issued with a "Spiritualist Minister's Identity Certificate" from July 7th,1940 in the form of a folded card with a photograph. In the Two Worlds, August 2nd, 1940 is noted a statement by the SNU General Secretary (1938-1944), Ernest A. Keeling:

Churches in Restricted Areas

IMPORTANT NOTICE

THE Government have found it necessary to restrict the entry of persons into a considerable section of Great Britain, extending from Berwick-on-Tweed to Weymouth. As this made it almost impossible for churches in this area to maintain their platform supply, the matter was taken up by the Union with the Ministry of Home Security, who have agreed to our suggestion that Platform Workers shall be provided with an identity certificate bearing their photograph and the seal of the Union.

Speakers and Demonstrators, Please Note.

The Spiritualists' National Union is prepared to grant a "Spiritualists' Minister's Identity Certificate" to Platform Workers who have to fulfil engagements with churches in areas where entry is restricted.

Applications, accompanied by a "Passport" photograph and a postal order for 1s., should be sent to the Local District Council Secretary of the area in which applicant resides.

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[12] Spiritualists Marriages in Scotland: "It was reported that as the result of efforts by Messrs. J. B. McIndoe and J. G. Findlay arrangements had been made by which marriages in Scotland performed by Spiritualist Ministers, will be registered as regular marriages." J.B. McIndoe is John Brown McIndoe, former SNU President (1930-1938). J.G. Findlay is John Galloway Findlay, who was Area Representative for Scotland and the brother of James Arthur Findlay. John Findlay was also an appointed Minister of the Union.

Further noted in the Two Worlds, August 16th:

Identity Certificates

From information which has reached us it would appear that the purpose of the Identity Certificates, as well as the conditions governing their issue, are not fully understood.

The sole purpose of the certificate is to enable workers to travel, without hindrance, to conduct church services, particularly in restricted areas. They are intended to meet the present emergency, and do not confer upon the holder either membership of the Union or any implied acknowledgment of the holder's qualification as a platform worker.

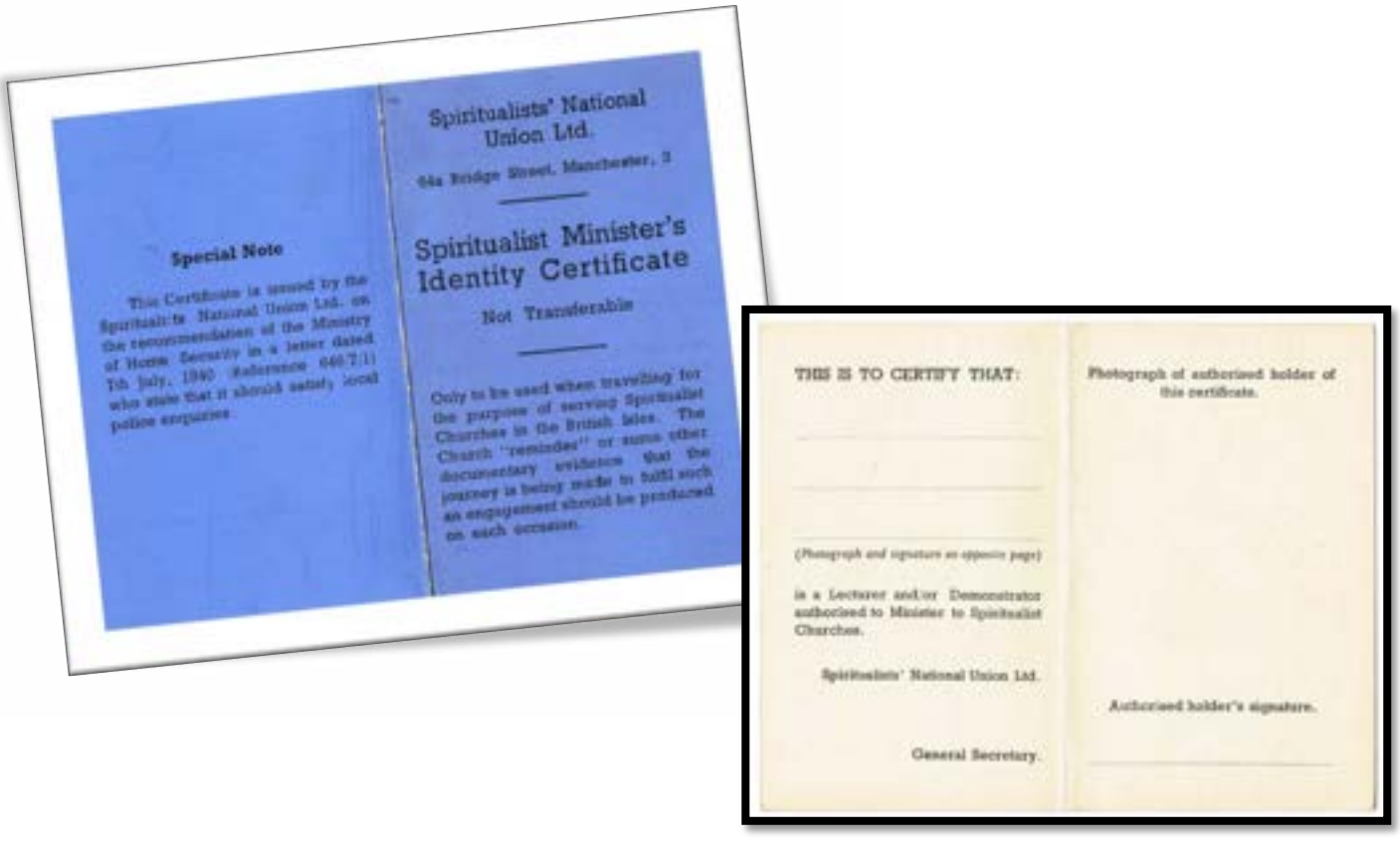
We would therefore restate the position as follows:—

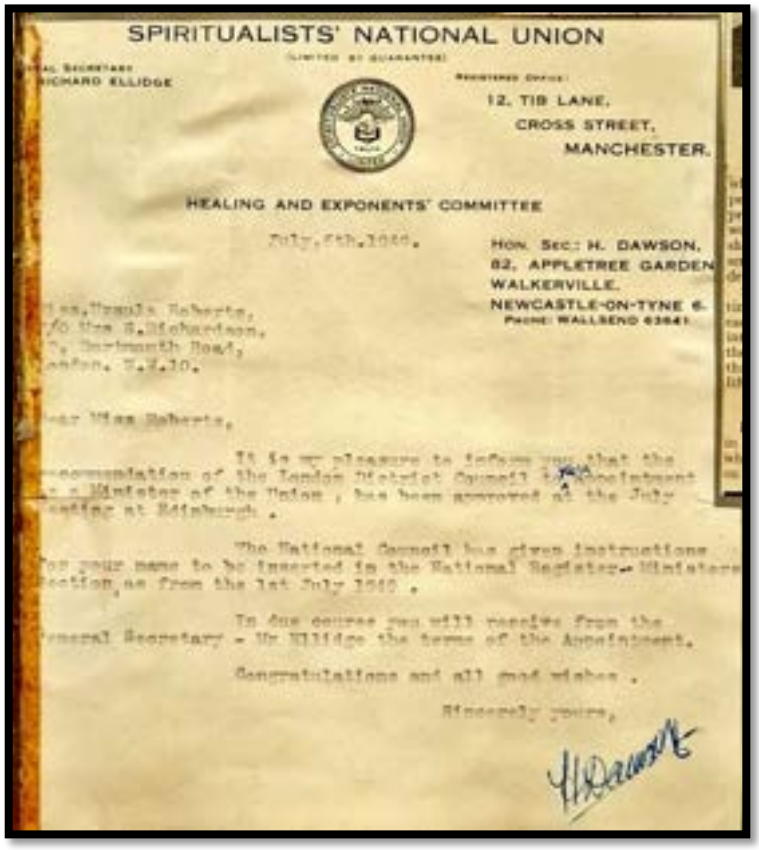
"The Spiritualist National Union is prepared to grant a Union's Identity Certificate to known platform workers serving churches distant from their home town and its immediate vicinity to facilitate their travelling in areas where entry is restricted under the Home Defence regulations."

Applications must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from a member of the National Council or from the secretary of their local District Council, together with a "passport" photograph vouched for by the writer of the letter of recommendation and a postal order for one shilling to defray cost.

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Here shown is the "Spiritualist Minister's Identity Certificate," part of the Britten Museum & Library archives:





SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION

(LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

RICHARD ELLIDGE

12, TIB LANE,
CROSS STREET,
MANCHESTER.

HEALING AND EXPONENTS' COMMITTEE

July 6th, 1949.

HON. SEC.: H. DAWSON,
82, APPLETREE GARDEN
WALKERVILLE.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE 6.
PHONE: WALLSEND 63841.

Miss Ursula Roberts,
c/o Mrs S. Richardson,
7, Portsmouth Road,
London, S.W.10.

Dear Miss Roberts,

It is my pleasure to inform you that the recommendation of the London District Council for appointment as a Minister of the Union, has been approved at the July meeting at Edinburgh.

The National Council has given instructions for your name to be inserted in the National Register - Ministers Section, as from the 1st July 1949.

In due course you will receive from the General Secretary - Mr Ellidge the terms of the Appointment.

Congratulations and all good wishes.

Sincerely yours,

H. Dawson

Shown is a letter dated July 6th, 1949 from Harry Dawson to inform Miss S. Richardson, better known as Ursula Roberts, that as from July 1st, 1949 she will be added to the National Register - Ministers Section. [13]

In more recent years, becoming a Minister of the SNU is now in part an award based on undergoing the required education courses to gain the appointment of Officiant, which is granted to those who are considered capable of conducting services such as marriages, funerals and Spiritualist namings and which is by invitation only from the National Executive Committee to a candidate who has satisfactorily completed the prescribed training and assessment. The final appointment from Officiant to Minister still requires an invitation from the National Executive Committee to a candidate who has satisfactorily completed and passed the prescribed training and Assessment Board.

The term 'National Council' of the SNU was a term used after the National Federation was re-constituted into a National Union. The thirteenth and last Conference of the Spiritualists' National Federation was held in Bootle on 5th and 6th of July 1902. At the close of the Conference the new legally constituted "Spiritualists' National Union Ltd" took over the property, rights and obligations of the Spiritualists' National Federation. The Union's *first* Conference and AGM and its *first* elected 'National Council' took place on July 4th and 5th, 1903.

In 1976, under the Presidency of Gordon Higginson, the structure of the National Council was changed; a report was published in the SNU July issue of the Communicator, detailed elsewhere in this issue:

An Historic Event

THE UNION RE-STRUCTURED

THE 'three tier system', coming into effect immediately after the close of the 1976 Annual General Meeting, marks a new phase in the history of Spiritualism.

For many years, those of us concerned with administration in churches, at district council and national level, have recognised the need for a more effective structure. In this connection I brought into consultation officers from all sections of the Union and I have listened to their recommendations. At the outset it was unanimously agreed that

[13] Taken from Ursula Roberts' scrapbook at the Britten Museum & Library, Stansted.

changes must be made. All proposals were thoroughly discussed and a structure formulated.

Many of the problems of the past resulted from too few people carrying too heavy a burden of work. The new system obviates a multiplicity of duties for anyone. District Councils have asked for more responsibility and now they must be ready to carry out more in their role as representatives of The Union in each area of the country.

The Branches of the Union, concerning Lyceum and Healers, have specific tasks and their work should go forward confidently within the new structure.

The National Council will bring together ideas from all parts of the country and it is here that new policies will be made. The National Executive Committee will put these policies into effect.

This is the structure which you have accepted on paper. Its success in reality is the responsibility of each one of us.

Today the 'three-tier system' is still in operation. The term 'National Council' is in the past and was replaced by the National Executive Committee (NEC).

First Tier:

National Executive Committee

Second Tier

Council

Third Tier

SNUi (Branches & District Councils) Lyceum Union

