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/
or via: www.pauljgaunt.com

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HELEN DUNCAN – TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP

Helen Duncan was well-known for her physical mediumship, especially producing full-form materialisations. She also on occasion demonstrated psychometry and took church services. Below is a rare report on a trance address at Fleetwood Spiritualist Church,[20] given through Helen by her main control, Albert Stewart. This was published in the *Two Worlds* weekly of March 13th 1942:

BUILDERS OF BRIDGES

A trance address given by "Albert" through the mediumship of Mrs. Helen Duncan.



DURING a recent visit to Fleetwood, at which several successful seances for materialization were held, "Albert Stewart" (Mrs. Duncan's guide) volunteered to address the Sunday evening service at Fleetwood Spiritualist Church. Mrs. Duncan gladly co-operated without fee or reward. Despite the Medium's Scottish upbringing, it was particularly noticeable that never once was there a trace of a Scottish accent. The clear liquid colonial speech of "Albert" was maintained throughout the address. The following is a short summary of his remarks, which lasted about half an hour.

I can assure you that it gives me pleasure to come and talk to you for a short while. I want to assure you that I am no radiant angel but

[20] A quote from the Two Worlds, February 1st 1924: "THE Fleetwood Spiritualist Society was founded, with the assistance and co-operation of the Blackpool Spiritualist Society, in October, 1911, and rented the Old Bethel Hall in Kemp-street, for their services. The Society decided to become affiliated with the Spiritualists' National Union, and were taken into affiliation in October, 1916, and was then called the Fleetwood National Spiritualist Church, becoming registered as a place of worship and for the solemnising of marriages. The Lyceum was founded in July, 1912, becoming affiliated with the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union in October, 1913."

Further information: In October 1922 it was decided to work for a church of our own, this was achieved in 1924. The stone-laying ceremony was on February 2nd when stones were laid by E. W. Oaten, S.N.U., George H. Mack, B.S.L.U., and Mrs. J. Butterworth, S.N.U. An impressive grand opening of the church took place on September 13th and 14th 1924. The president was Mr. C. T Batley who we can note chaired the meeting for Helen Duncan. For further information on the history of Fleetwood please contact the editor. Fleetwood Spiritualist Church: http://www.snu.org.uk/community/churches/fleetwood.html

just a humble human being like yourselves, endeavouring to be a servant of the greatest Spirit of all. Let us for a while shut out the everyday troubles of your world and spend a short time in the effort to bring your world and mine together.

If all men the world over could be sure that there is another phase of existence when earthly death takes place, what a different world yours would be! I have not —like some—spent hundreds of years on this side of life. I have lived in the same age as you, and know its difficulties. There are many in this church, myself included, who have been indifferent to the existence of a spiritual world. When life flowed on like a stream, with few rocks and cross currents, few of us ever troubled to find out whether there was anything beyond the Bridge of Death. The question never entered into our consideration. But when the current has swept away someone who was part of you, whom you loved and cared for, you were struck dumb. Sorrow roused you, and caused you to say: "I must find out whither they have gone!" There are many such in my audience. You refused to accept the idea that death was the end of all and so you have set out to find out if there is anything substantial in Spiritualism.

My Chairman (Mr. Batley) will have had far more experience in Spiritualism than I had before I came to this side of life, and I am sure he will agree with me that few people realise when they start their investigations that they must start Bridge Building. You yourself must lay foundations for the bridge which will unite your world with ours. First seek out the firmest footing you can find—it may be a small Spiritualist Church or a select circle, but you must build regularly week by week. Kind words and actions, sweet smiles and sincerity, are the stones which will help you to build your bridge. We build from our side in our desire to meet you, and then you find a medium who can form the central pillar, or keystone, and this is the first indication you have that building has been going on from this side as well as yours.

Now success depends on the strength of your Bridge, and whether it is erected on solid pillars and constructed of good material. Do not be surprised if you do not always get the results you expect—or that you do not get evidence every time you attend your church. The strongest pillar sometimes breaks, but once the bridge is completed and you have proved that your loved ones live, then, with the knowledge you have obtained, try to improve your environment. Lay out plantations on the banks of the stream, plant the seeds of knowledge you have gained, and cultivate the flowers of kindness and service. Tell out to others the knowledge you have obtained, that death is not an end but a new beginning. As I wander amongst you, I often hear people say: "Why did God punish me by taking away my loved one?" I venture to say that most of you have had such thoughts. Some day, when you come to this side of life, you will see from another point of view; you will wonder why you ever sorrowed and know that death is just freedom from a physical burden.

There are many differences in our outlook from this side, and the chief of them is that we are only attracted to those we care for. Love is the key to everything!

The more experienced of you will agree with me that many who come to investigate this question of survival have no knowledge of the fact that behind all this phenomenal evidence there are deeper teachings, deeper truths. Many of them are looking for sensation, for something which will flood them with limelight. They must learn that substantial Bridges are not sudden thrills—they are not built in a night. Bridges often take years to build on solid foundations. The true developing circle can be a valuable aid in approaching the spirit world. I know the thoughts that are going through many people's minds here: "Oh! such and such a person does not live a good life, how can *they* get in touch with anybody?" I listened to the words which were read from the Bible just now. It is a fact that the Nazarene did not take His disciples because they were good men; He took them because they could become Bridge Builders for Him. Just analyze yourself and find if you are a capable person, and just feel that those around you are there for the purpose of Bridge Building. Never mind what Mrs. So-and-So does. Get down and say to yourself, "Well, I know what I am."

You know, you people have queer ideas about what you call sin. I know what those ideas are, for I only left your world in I913. It is not the taking of a glass of beer, provided a man knows when to leave it, or an explosion which produces vulgar words (although such things are unwise and unnecessary), that constitute sin. Probably the greatest sin of all is to talk lightly of others who are not there to defend themselves. The people who cannot mind their own business, and defame others in order to distract attention from their own weaknesses, are probably the biggest sinners of all. Such conduct means bad thoughts, and thoughts are real and living things. When you think, let clean thoughts go out from you, and they will return like doves—not as vultures. If you do that you will find that the bricks with which you build will last for all time. Even after you come to our side of life your bridge will still stand and enable you to return to those you love, with comfort and encouragement.

I remember as a young man I had my opinions on religion. Many Sundays I walked the streets of Sydney and watched congregations leaving the churches. I saw their faces: some of them looked as though they had lost their all. They looked miserable, and it was no advertisement for their faith. Some were engaged pulling others to pieces. I want you to go from this church into your everyday life with smiles on your faces and kindness in your hearts: joyous because the bridge between earth and heaven is a reality.

I can stay no longer. I have just explained in a few words the message I would leave with you. Sometime we shall all have an opportunity to meet over here. It will be nice to walk the higher bank

of the stream and find joy in surveying the bridges we have built: to find them easy to cross so that we shall not have to struggle through the mud and slime of ignorance to greet the dear ones we have left. Thank you for your spirit of friendship and your attention. “God be with you till we meet again.”



Helen Duncan & John McIndoe


John (Mac) McIndoe

Psypioneer holds a considerable amount of information on Duncan's mediumship and it is strongly recommended that these pages be consulted while looking into her mediumship, as there is a lot of incorrect information and speculation given about her on the internet and in some published reports. The SNU web page, "SNU Presidents", is still not completed at present; we have profiles and information on John Venables (1901), John Adams (1905-1907), George Berry (1920-1922), Frank Blake (1938-1941) and John (Mac) Brown McIndoe (1930-1938). It can be noted in his obituary (May 31st 1958), "It was Mac who launched Helen Duncan on her career as a materialisation medium."[13]

In Psypioneer's issue for February 2015 we looked into Duncan's "Early reports of her mediumship" and found the available accounts of her controls/guides somewhat sketchy and contradictory. The early development of Helen took place in the Duncan's home circle, which consisted of just a handful of sitters, including Helen's husband, Henry, who appears to have started the circle and encouraged the development of his wife's physical mediumship. Hence the early reports of her development and her various controls/guides have surfaced through the Duncan family, for example from one of Duncan's daughters, Gena, who would marry George Brealey and in 1985 published *The Two Worlds of Helen Duncan* with Kay Hunter, originally published by Regency Press.[14]

I believe Gena was born in 1926, so she was only a small child during her mother's development of her physical mediumship in the 1920s. Gena would rely in part on her father Henry's records of his wife's development but after Henry's death circa 1967 much of the documented material was lost in a house fire. Included in the Psypioneer article is what is considered the *first* independent published report on Helen Duncan's physical mediumship, by James Souter, who came into contact with Helen in June 1929. Souter's short article states: "Guides, three in number, are good hard-headed, canny Scotsmen…" John McIndoe was present at the séance reported by Souter and this was published in *Light*, October 19th 1929.

Another independent account can now be added on the early development of Helen's physical mediumship, written by John McIndoe and published in the first Spiritualists' National Union journal, "The National Spiritualist", which was edited by SNU Secretary George Berry.[15] The valuable McIndoe account does not give the medium's name but he is without doubt talking about Helen Duncan.

[13] SNU Presidents' Page: http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/presidents

[14] This was republished in paperback in 2008 by Saturday Night Press Publications and is normally available at the Arthur Findlay College shop and via Amazon.

[15] For details see the first issue of "Pioneer": http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/pioneer

Below is the full account published in "The National Spiritualist", October issue, 1929:

A Scots Materialising Medium


Helen Duncan in 1942

Scotland has produced not a few notable mediums. Recently I was privileged to sit twice with one who gives promise of being worthy to rank with the best of them.

Mr. J. J. Darby also sat at the first seance, and his opinion as to the outstanding quality of the phenomena is similar to my own, and it is gratifying to be able to make the first published report of a sitting with this medium, in the columns of the NATIONAL SPIRITUALIST, where such matter should figure more prominently than it does.

The name of the medium is meantime withheld, she resides—somewhere North of the Tweed.

We ascended an attic stair, to an "upper room" with the ceiling so low that the writer could not stand erect. It was a hot sultry night, ventilation was *nonest* and the noise of passing traffic frequently drowned the voices from the Beyond. The medium suffered bad health for a number of years, but it has considerably improved since this phase of her phenomena began. With the cares of a house and seven children on her shoulders, there seems little opportunity for psychic development. Certainly these conditions do not seem at all conducive to psychic manifestations, especially that particularly delicate, complex, and rare type,—full form materialisation, with the materialised forms moving about in the circle talking to the sitters, in red light.

My first sitting—the 22nd at which this phase has been in evidence lasted just three—quarters of hour. It opened with prayer, a hymn, and a brief period for silent prayer, at the end of which the medium was seen to be in trance, limp in her chair, and breathing heavily. The curtains of the cabinet were then closed, the candle extinguished, and only a red lamp left burning.

It gave sufficient light for the sitters to see one another and observe what occurred, though the features of the forms would scarcely have been distinguishable when they came had they not been self luminous, with a peculiar soft radiance.

There were ten sitters, six ladies and four gentlemen, two of each of these groups were entirely new sitters at the circle, while other two of each group, including the medium's husband were regular sitters. The small sector of a circle in which we sat in two rows, nearly filled the room. Those of us in the front row were not more than four feet from the curtains. We could easily have touched most of the forms when they came out.

There were no test conditions asked for, though the medium has been stringently tested by others. Why should we want test conditions more or less humiliating to the medium, and implying doubts as to her honesty, and inevitably reacting on her, engendering feelings of resentment.

In any case no test conditions could have increased our conviction as to the genuineness of the phenomena we witnessed. They bore the hall mark indelibly stamped on them. They simply could not be counterfeited by any means I can imagine.

The forms were distinctive, varied, lifelike and noiseless in their movements, not one of them remotely resembled the medium in build. Their voices were also distinctive and quite different from the medium's. Nothing in any way suggesting trickery of any kind was observed.

During the singing of a hymn, and very shortly after closing the curtains, a voice was heard in prayer in the cabinet, and a man's face pushed the curtains apart, remained a few moments and disappeared.

The ladies in the circle commenced singing in low tones whenever the various forms returned to the cabinet.

Soon another voice is heard calling "Mother" and a young girl emerged from the curtains, came over and spoke to one of the new lady sitters, who recognised her as her daughter. She conversed with her in a low tone, apparently giving a comforting message, and handed her mother a rose, taken from a bunch placed in the cabinet.

Then another girl form of different build took her place, coming from the other side of the cabinet, and was claimed as her sister by one of the ladies. She also brought a rose with her.

A short interval, and a child's head peeps round the edge of the curtain timorously, disappears, but returns quickly, and finally the full form comes right out, apparently somewhat frightened, at first. It looked about 21 inches in height, moved gracefully and quickly, and came close up to the lady next to me. It appeared to me to be more solid, and "finished" than most of the other forms.

I need not describe all the forms who appeared. There were eight of them, one child, two young girls and an older woman, and four men. Six of them came right out in front of the curtains, and seven of the eight spoke to us. One of the controls "Donald" had quite a conversation with us. He was a well built man. By request he brought a mandoline from the cabinet, and twanged the strings. We could easily see the hand which held it, but not the one which touched the strings. Finally he handed it to a sitter. He was asked to touch my outstretched hand. This has not previously been done. He appeared to make several attempts to do so. On the last his hand was plainly visible above mine, but he failed to touch it, and disappeared very suddenly, while the medium gave vent to a groan as if in pain. At the conclusion of the sitting there was blood on her mouth and chin, and some had trickled down on her dress. This had

occurred on previous occasions when a form suddenly vanished for some reason or other.

At the second sitting "Donald" was asked about it and explained that he had come out too far. On that occasion something did touch my hand, held close up to the curtain. It had the appearance of a stump with two fingers, and was rather hard, but the contact was too brief to allow any definite opinion to be formed.

The notable features of the second seance were that there were two children right out moving in the circle at the same time. They came one from each side of the curtains. Later on by request of a sitter two apports were brought. One was a small ornament from the room below.

The other was a small brass washer, with three scratches on it for identification. It had been placed in a drawer in a roll top desk in his own house some distance away, about six weeks earlier, by one of the regular sitters, who had frequently asked, as he did on this occasion, that it should be brought. This was the first time that it was done. The owner is absolutely certain of the identity of the washer.

An unusual feature is the signal that the phenomena is being brought to a close—an arm appears stretched out, with the hand closed. The seances close with a brief prayer by one of the materialised controls, but at my second sitting while the doxology was being sung, and the medium had become at least partially conscious, we observed that the curtains were being distended in a peculiar way. It gave the impression of an attempt to help the medium who was in a state of profuse perspiration, by producing a current of air.

Lest the sceptic suggest that I and the other sitters were all simultaneously and similarly hallucinated, I may say that this account is compiled from notes written continuously by myself during the seances.

The medium is naturally psychic, of Highland blood. Her physical phenomena commenced with table movements, then voice phenomena, and finally the materialisation phase which has reached its present development in about six months. She also occasionally has had slate writing, and possesses remarkable psychometric gifts.

With a little more development the phenomena should be stabilised sufficiently to stand the strain of more public presentation, but it is most earnestly to be hoped that it will not be checked by too early public sittings.

J. B. McINDOE.

McIndoe's account of his two séances is the first *detailed* independent account of Duncan's early development in physical mediumship. Both Souter and McIndoe refer to multiple controls/guides and Duncan's most famous control, Albert Stewart, is not mentioned by name, so it appears that in 1929 he was not yet present or not in full control.

"I would sum up by quoting the immortal words of Emma Hardinge Britten, '*Spiritualism is divine, Spiritualists are human*.' "

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Looking at the Independent Direct Voice

In direct voice, spirits can objectively talk with a suitably developed medium independently of the medium, rather than through a medium in a trance state. An ectoplasmic larynx is created and mostly used in conjunction with a trumpet. However, in most cases the spirit voice is not readily recognised by friends and family. As the voice box is manufactured, synthetic, the ectoplasm will retain some of the characteristics of the medium. However, the communicators will generally hold their old mannerisms, style of language, etc. as when they were living in the physical world to prove their identity. This form of phenomenon can be traced back to the very early days of Spiritualism in America.

Without doubt this phenomenon is as compelling as it is rare today. It started Arthur Findlay on his journey into psychical research in around 1918 with the direct-voice medium, John Sloan.[6] In more recent years Leslie Flint was the most well-known independent direct-voice medium, with many of his communications recorded.

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

Estelle Roberts is generally remembered as an outstanding mental medium, filling large halls, including the Albert Hall, on numerous occasions. Her main control/guide was Red Cloud, who would entrance Estelle and also produce the independent direct voice. In the article below, which was published in "Psychic News", July 22nd 1944, the paper's founding editor, Maurice Barbanell, questioned Red Cloud as to how the direct voice was produced. We can note from the brief description I have given of Leslie Flint's mediumship that Estelle Roberts/Red Cloud's production of the independent direct voice takes a different avenue of production.

Barbanell started the article with these words:

> *Psychic News* has published several stories of the remarkable evidence for Survival obtained at Estelle Roberts's voice seances. Red Cloud, assisted by four war victims [see footnote 7], has succeeded in giving proofs that are far more remarkable than anything previously recorded at direct-voice sittings. I thought, therefore, a statement by this guide on what happens behind the scenes at voice seances would prove of great interest. When I approached Red Cloud he said it would be difficult to convey to us happenings in a spirit world of different dimensions, but he would do his best.

[6] See Psypioneer, Volume 8, No. 12, December 2012: John Campbell Sloan (1869-1951), "A Scotch Materializing and Voice Medium".

Behind The Scenes At Estelle Roberts's Voice Seances


Estelle Roberts

"THERE are some things I can tell you," he said, " but some are impossible. Let me put it like this. When a scientist is in his laboratory, and he is testing the various elements, he is very secluded and does not let others into his laboratory.

"Well, in this new group we have formed we are experimenting still. We are experimenting along lines of electricity and ether, that we may be able to accomplish the direct voice later on without a material body, because it causes a certain amount of interference and waste. Under those conditions, in the first instance, we must be careful in our experiments.

"I have my group. In it I have a scientist who was very well known in your world in his day. He has come in since I started this new series of voice circles, which you must admit are better than the old ones. Then there are some doctors and the four boys.

ECTOPLASM

"The scientist and I gather a certain amount of ectoplasm from the medium and a little——very little—from the sitters. Some of this we have managed to keep. That is difficult for you to understand because you have the idea that ectoplasm always must return to its source. This small quantity, such a fraction, we have solidified and retained. We draw on it when we are ready and put it into the trumpet when we are using the trumpet."

"Would it be correct to say," Red Cloud was asked, "that in addition to the ectoplasm, which has gone back to the medium after every seance, there is a small proportion which has been retained by you? "

"That is right," was his reply. "It is so fractional that it is not missed. We have moulded it into a larynx, able to expostulate, so that sound can be transmuted in an understandable form to your ears."

"So you have actually constructed a model larynx," I said to the guide, "and kept it in stock, as it were, one that is not connected with the medium? "



ELECTRIC RODS

"That is what I want you to remember," Red Cloud answered. "Now, then, we use electricity from the ether. We take rods from the magnetic belt and connect them with the larynx."

"What exactly are the rods?" he was asked. "Are they made of ectoplasm, too? "

The guide said: "They are electrical. They are something like electrical waves with insulating tapes of ectoplasm over them, which we draw from the medium and which have to return to the medium."

"Is the purpose of the rods to enable the trumpet to move?" he was asked.

"No. Sometimes there is one rod, sometimes there are two rods. It depends on the conditions in operation, the condition of the body, atmospherics, etc. These affect the life-ray of electricity, as they do in your world, because we have to strike the vibration of your world."

"Is it the same kind of electricity that we have in this world?" was the next question.

"It is," said Red Cloud, "but the revolution of it is quicker until it strikes your vibration of electricity. When we have attached those rods to the larynx in the trumpet, the voices are struck on the electrical vibrations at the other end of the rods—not the trumpet end—and vibrate through the larynx, which converts them into audible sound in your world."

"At what stage does the projection of the voice take place?" the guide was asked.

"It takes place twice," said Red Cloud. "First, from the astral—we do not have to have a conductor for that, we use our own—then it strikes down to a lower vibration, and then it strikes through the electrical rod into the mouthpiece of the larynx. Hence you get the boys' voices."

HOW IT WORKS

"So two distinct operations are required to bring the vibration down to earth's level and then to make it audible? "

"Yes, for the larynx is inside the trumpet."

"And where does the spirit speaker stand, at the trumpet or the other end?"

"The other end, sometimes right at the side of the medium."

"Where the rod is connected to the medium?"

"Yes."

"Then that electrical impulse travels up the rod into the larynx and so we hear the voice?"

"Quite right."

"What does the spirit speaker have to do in order to make himself heard? Does he think, or actually speak?"

THE " BOX "

"In the voice circles, we have formed, just outside the ether, a box, or case, large enough for a man to stand in. Sometimes you have heard them say they have been asked to stand in the box, haven't you? Well, they stand there and we fix over their ears and their mouths an electric rod, and they strike on the rod through which they strike to the earth.

"But they often stand near the medium. It depends on how calm they are and on the kind of voice we want to put through. Some are more capable than others. You know that in your world you have speakers and speakers.

"But they do speak. You have to be a long time in our world before you conduct conversation only by thought. You have to use your lips to voice your thoughts—well, it is the same here. We certainly talk."

"Why are a trumpet and rods necessary? Why can't you have a larynx at the side of the medium, or build it up over the medium's larynx, and let them speak direct into that?"

EXPERIMENTING

"Now, listen. That is just what I was coming to. I told you we were experimenting. In your world there is a man I know."

Here Red Cloud was referring to Sir Ernest Fisk, one of the world's, experts on radio communication. Sir Ernest, who was associated with Marconi in his pioneering experiments, has stated that he considers one day wireless communication with the "dead" will be achieved. Sir Ernest has spoken to Red Cloud and the guide said;

"We are experimenting along his lines. Eventually, instead of using the box, the electrical machine will be built in your world by which voices will be heard directly from the ether space. We shall then be able to manifest the vibration sufficiently to strike the heavier forms of ether of your world through wireless telegraphy."

"And that will dispense with the medium?" was the next inquiry.

"Yes, later on, but not yet. You are aware that always there are voices in space. You have proved that earthly voices and music can be picked up on certain wavelengths. Well, it will come about. Tell him he is right. The time will come, just as your wireless came, but it is still in the experimental stage."

"But why can't you have a larynx over the medium's and dispense with the rods?"

USE OF TRUMPET

"We cannot at present. We would have to form certain electrical rods which might interfere with the grey matter of the medium."

"What purpose does the trumpet serve from your point of view?

"For one thing, you must have elements of conduction. We must have conduction to help hold the electricity together, something like a little cabinet to hold the ectoplasm, otherwise it would disintegrate. That is why I ask for water to be poured through the trumpet—it is a conductor."

"So it is in cabinet form to condense and break down everything to make it audible to us?"

"Quite right. You appreciate also that we are dealing with the electrical vibrations of all the people in the room."

"What exactly, as far as you can describe it, is it that you put over the ears and mouth of the people who speak, and why is it done?

INSULATION

"It is done, first of all, to distract their attention from what is going on round them, and also to cause them to lower their vibration just a little to touch the rods sufficiently to express themselves clearly."

"It is really the means of enabling them to concentrate on talking to the exclusion of anything else?"

"Yes, we do not want them to be put off by the others, or by any outside noise. You have external distractions; well, we have the noise of the universe around us."

"It is a means of isolating them?"

"Yes, exactly. It is a substance used from our sphere and not from yours at all. It is a means of insulation by a substance which you cannot understand, a form of solidified ether."

"It seems to me similar to the kind of apparatus that airmen use to communicate with one another."

ALL DIFFERENT

"Yes, it is similar. It is also a means of preventing the communicator from being interfered with by the conventional things of our world. You know the interference and atmospherics you get when the rays are crossed by some vehicles."

"So the communicators talk just as naturally as they would here when they get into the box? "

"Yes, except when they break down."

"Does it require an effort on the part of the speaker?"

"Yes, and no. It is all according to the nature of the person and his ability to overcome self-consciousness. Every personality is different."

"Is it largely emotional stress that makes them break down sometimes?"

"Not always, sometimes they become self-conscious without any emotional stress. Some are successful, like Henry Segrave; he has grown quite accustomed to it, like I have. But to

some, when they hear your voices, it strikes such a chord in their memory that the emotion rises and they give it up."

"Would you describe it as a difficult task for the average communicator to speak in the direct voice?"

"Yes, it is, but remember it is only in its infancy. Men like Oliver Lodge are endeavouring with their earthly knowledge to do what they can to help this subject forward."

"How far are the speakers rehearsed beforehand?"

"We have to put them through their paces."

"Do you cross-examine them beforehand?"

"Yes, but it is not done out of any disrespect or lack of love, but merely to make them practised. We put them on once or twice to see if they are capable of holding it. If they break down, we put them back a bit, but we always promise to let them come back and try again."

REHEARSALS

"Do you rehearse the evidence?"

"Yes, but sometimes if the earth person becomes emotional that immediately has the effect of causing the voice to withdraw."

"When a question is asked which the spirit does not answer, is that because that question has been unrehearsed?"

"That is true. They can sometimes answer spontaneously; it is all according to their personality. They are all keyed-up to get over what they want to say, that sometimes your questions make them feel they want to run back and find out the answers, and then it all breaks down."

"Obviously they are not completely normal while communicating, keyed up with the excitement of what they are going to say."

DOCTORS TELL

"Yes, but it is all according to the personality of the communicator."

"Is the duration of the seance determined by the amount of strain it causes to the medium?"

"Exactly. I have often said to you 'I must go away now.' That is when the doctors come and beckon to me that it is time the medium returned to her body."

"Why does the trumpet go down with a bang?"

"When we disconnect and withdraw the rods from the trumpet it has nothing to hold it up. The voice and the box are often at the medium's side. You will notice the trumpet often ends there in the box. Then the rods and larynx are removed and it comes down. It is just the law of gravitation."

"How is the trumpet manipulated?"

"It is held up by an electrical ray."

"Not by rods?"

"It is the same thing really."

"Who actually manipulates trumpet?"

"I do."

"When Bill Castello is talking to his father and mother and the trumpet goes right over to them, is that you or Bill moving it?"[7]

"I move it for Bill."

"But Bill is not at the small end of the trumpet; his voice is still striking the rod near your medium."

"Yes, quite right, that is the position. When the boys sometimes say: 'Let us get it up a bit higher,' they are all just giving a bit of power."

"So the 'transmitting station' is by the side of the medium, and the loud-speaker is the trumpet?"

"Yes, that is a good way of putting it."

"Your methods are a great improvement on the old ones."

IT MUST IMPROVE

"Yes, all things must improve. Credit must be given to the pioneers of 50 years ago, but there has never been work like that you have had in the past 20 years. Everything must go on, if it is for the good of mankind. You do not think good men are going to sit down here and forget all about their life efforts, do you?"

"Do you get any interference at the voice seances?"

"Yes. You may wonder why I do not allow my medium to have them too often. I believe she has told you the condition of the astral world is chaotic. The result is that we find, very often, there are so many wandering round our world. That is something we have to watch out for. Many men, lying unconscious in hospitals, are wandering in the astral world. If they can get to know of a circle being held, they are just like normal beings over here and they endeavour to join in. And they could do so and talk just as easily as one who is really over

[7] "As the war got into its stride my psychic career continued undiminished. In 1941, I married Charles Tilson Chowne. Shortly afterwards, our home was bombed and we moved to Oxford where I held a number of public meetings and gave many private sittings. We returned to London after twelve months. My work became intensified as the casualty lists grew bigger and more and more war victims wanted to communicate with those they had left behind.
"Among these were four young men who had died in action. They were David White and Arthur Heath of Royal Navy, and Bill Castello and Clive Wilson of the Royal Air Force. These four youngsters, having proved their own survival, were determined to help others to achieve similar success. Because of their dedication to this task, we started a private circle for the direct-voice communication. It comprised the parents of the four boys and friends and relatives of other spirit communicators who had been able to prove their identities. The sittings were free of payment to all who attended." Taken from 'Estelle Roberts - Forty Years a Medium', 1959, pages 164-165.

here for good. That is one thing we have to be careful about. It is not deliberate interference, but due to their natural desire."

"How are they attracted to a circle?"

"They just hear somehow. News travels here, too, and they all rush to see what is going on, just like any man would."

"How do you keep them out?"

"We have watchers. That is why your mediums should not work half so hard as they do."

"And yet the demand at present is greater than ever."

"Yes, but they should wait until the conditions settle down more."

"Does the one communicating hear all that is said? Do you hear what is said?"

ALL VIBRATIONS

"I can, but not the others, only the one inside the box. They cannot strike through so clearly into your world and they only get a distorted view of what is going on, if at all. You get a word here and there, but not a great deal, if you are not in the box actually speaking. But I hear it all."

"It all really comes down to a question of vibrations."

"Yes, and the greatest difficulty of all is to strike the vibration between our rate and your rate, so that the link operates between the two at the right moment. That is tricky."

"That is done by impulses?"

"Yes, 'it is purely a scientific question. You may have noticed that sometimes the boys' voices become slurred, that is, when they try to speak their words become slurred as they strike the lower rate of vibration, and it becomes sound without articulation."

"Is that why we do not always get the distinct, characteristic tones of the speaker, but there seems to be the sound of Estelle's voice in the background?"

"That is due to the striking between the two rates. If you could listen from our world you would hear their own characteristic voices, but the medium's characteristics are in the ectoplasm. It is impossible to cut that completely out."

"Yes, I suppose it is inherent in the ectoplasm, in the larynx you build."

"Yes, you cannot have it otherwise, except when I talk. I am in complete charge. After all, the boys cannot understand it as well as I do."

"Is it right to call it a larynx, is that the most suitable description?"

"We call it the articulation box."

"What happens to the larynx that is retained, the piece of ectoplasm that does not go back into the medium?"

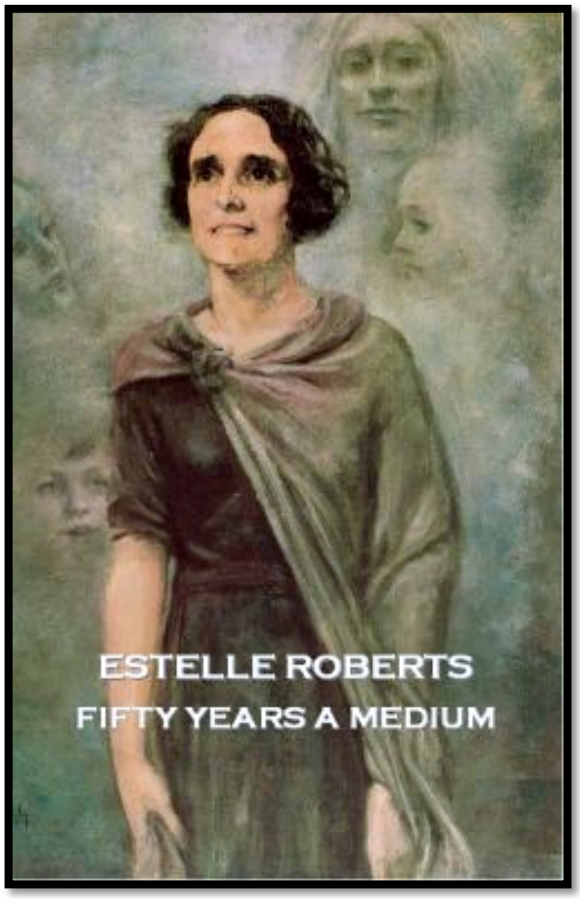
"We take it away in a little case we have, because it is solidified, not in your sense, but in the etheric sense; that is, once again, a transmutation of matter."

“With the direct voice, when the spirits speak, is that not astral projection?”

“No, the person has to be there in order to speak; nobody else can do it for them. It is not actually his voice, he is there behind it, but I suppose it is a form of projection.”

“We can understand that. It is no more the actual voice than a gramophone record of my voice would be actually me.”

“Yes, that is right.”



Estelle Roberts - Fifty Years a Medium

Originally published in 1959 under the title ‘Forty Years a Medium’. In 1969 Estelle Roberts’ autobiography was brought up to date by the addition of a chapter covering her life during the following ten years.

Also available in German and Italian

Available via SNUi
http://www.snui.org/

HELEN DUNCAN SÉANCE DURING HER 1944 TRIAL

New séance evidence!

In 1958 a conference was organised by the College of Psychic Science in Brighton on November 28th-30th on "The Problem of Survival"; the principal speakers were Brigadier R.C. Firebrace, Percy Wilson and Professor H.H. Price. A report of part of the discussion can be read in Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 2009.



Helen Duncan circa 1941

Percy Wilson and his family were friends with Helen Duncan and during his 1958 lecture he wanted to put on record the circumstances relating to the Duncan prosecution. Below is a short quote relating to a séance during the trial at Wilson's house; as a result of this séance he considered "…that evidence was sufficient for us to conclude that it was safe, even in the hard circumstances of the court at the Old Bailey, for Mr. Loseby to offer the judge and jury a personal demonstration when he opened his evidence for the defence. That offer, as you will remember, was refused."

Further information of the Duncan trial can be found in the "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 4, July 2015: "The Effect of the Vagrancy Act (Part III) – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union" – Helen Duncan in Court – Was Helen Removed by the British Intelligence Services? – Eighth Day – Monday 3rd April 1944 – Sentences

The quote below is taken from *Light*, vol. LXXIX, No. 3438 – Spring 1959:

EVIDENCE FOR SURVIVAL

The Historical Significance of Physical Mediumship

By Percy Wilson, M.A.

Séance During Trial

During the trial one of my sons, Geoffrey, acted in the court as a messenger for the defence, and when it was half-way through, after prosecution evidence had been given, we arranged (it was a Friday afternoon) that he should collect Mrs. Duncan straight from the court at four o'clock, take her to Holborn Viaduct station, bring her through to Wimbledon and then by taxi on to my house. This he duly did. She had had no opportunity of going anywhere else from the court on the way. And I had my usual home circle gathered there. So, we gave Mrs. Duncan a good tea, I don't advocate this before a physical circle, but there was a reason for it on this occasion because we included some really good red jam in it, thanks to the regurgitation theory of Harry Price. Shortly afterwards, we went upstairs to my own seance room and held a seance. I was seated next to the curtains of the cabinet, and there was a red light behind me on the ceiling. (I could not see it but it was shining behind me, so that my eyes were not inhibited by it.) In the course of the seance Mrs. Duncan stood up and ectoplasm poured in streams, in ribbons, from her nose and her mouth, on to her massive bosom, curled up in a ribbon on her bosom, and dropped to the ground; and then, as she was standing with her arms akimbo, I suddenly saw it leap up two ways to her hands. I was within a yard of her with a light above my head and I saw everything that happened. Shortly afterwards the whole mass of ectoplasm disappeared in an instant. I could not tell you when: it was there and then it was not. It just disappeared.

The prosecution (John Maude, KC, and Henry Elam) concluded on the second day of the trial, Friday March 24th 1944, the day the above séance was held at the Wilsons' home at 3 Sheridan Road, S.W.19. It can be noted below that in fact there was a second séance at the Wilsons' house on Monday March 27th 1944, the third day of the trial, the day Charles Loseby and J. Simpson Pedler began their defence. The sitters named are Mr and Mrs John McIndoe (former SNU President), Joseph Newton, Mrs Lyon, Percy Wilson's sons, Laurie and Geoffrey, and a nurse. It may appear the nurse was the daughter of one of Duncan's co-defendants, Christine Homer, whom McIndoe refers to below as a court witness on March 28th.

This new valuable document was given to the Britten Memorial Museum & Library by Linda Smith, President of Norwich Spiritualist Church;[6] Linda is the mother of Tanya Smith, the General Manager of the Arthur Findlay College. The typed séance report was found in David Dutton's old papers; David was born circa 1917 and first took to the Spiritualist platform in 1941 at Croydon Church (where he lived for some years), becoming a well-known and respected orator. He became well acquainted with the Wilson family with his involvement in "Psychic Press Ltd"; Percy Wilson was the Chairman from 1956 to his passing in 1977. "Psychic Press Ltd" published "Psychic News", ran a bookshop and published books, including Arthur Findlay books. "Psychic Press Ltd" was formed to finance the newly-formed "Psychic News" in 1932 by Maurice Barbanell and Jack M. Rubens, who received shares for the part they played; Findlay put up the necessary money

[6] Norwich Spiritualist Church, affiliated to the Spiritualists' National Union: http://www.norwichspiritualistchurch.org.uk/html/pictures.html

and so controlled the company. 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.

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NOTES MADE AT SEANCE HELD WITH MRS. HELEN DUNCAN AT 3 SHERIDAN ROAD, S.W.19. ON 27TH MARCH 1944

Albert:[7] It's difficult for me to get the amount of power I would like to get. I have got a person here who I am going to try and build. It's for the gentleman towards the back (Joseph Newton). It is a gentleman who passed with abdominal trouble – kidney. Neither old nor young. George.

(A form appeared but dropped down very quickly)

Albert: Did you notice his moustache? (Mrs. Lyon – the sitter nearest the cabinet – "I caught a glimpse of it") George is not his name.

(The form again appeared at full height but, unable to retain the power, soon dropped to the floor again)

Albert: The next form is for the lady in the corner (Mrs. Lyon). Go out, sir, do not stand in here.

(Tall figure appeared, bowing his head and turning it from side to side slightly.)

Albert: Did you notice he wore a turban of some kind? (Mrs. Lyon: "Yes and he had a small beard and moustache") I have now got a child here. (Mrs. Lyon: "Please come out; I know who you are") It is a coloured child.

(Small form appears but quickly sank down. Then a bunch of ectoplasm on the floor came out of the cabinet reaching forward until it reached a point almost level with Mr. McIndoe, sitting two places from the cabinet)

Albert: They are not holding.

(White bunch on the floor again – rose up high as though trying to build a form, curtains closed and then opened again but the form sank to the floor).

Albert to Mr. McIndoe: What on earth possessed you to pick this day? (McIndoe: "Because one or two witnesses are going in tomorrow and we don't want the other side to say they only saw Mrs. Duncan seven or eight years ago")

(Curtains opened. Large white expanse of ectoplasm shown which covered the medium, Albert to medium: Stand up. Then ectoplasm was seen coming from the region of the medium's mouth in a thick fold which went down to the floor and up again towards the edge of the cabinet.

After ectoplasm had disappeared, Albert walked Mrs. Duncan right out of the cabinet. (Mrs. McIndoe: There's nothing to be seen in the cabinet")

When Mrs. Duncan was back in cabinet and curtains closed Mrs. McIndoe said "Somebody is pulling at my chair")

Albert: I am going to show it is quite a solid material. (Big knock heard). May I ask a favour of one of you young men. (Laurie Wilson). I want you to stand up and then I

[7] Albert was the main control of Helen Duncan for around twenty-five years.

am going to ask you to put your foot on a rod that will come out, to prove to you that no cloth could do what this is going to do.

(Laurie stood up and moved forward from his chair about four feet. He was then about four feet from the cabinet. He put his right foot on the white rod which had come out in front of him. Suddenly he staggered backwards. The rod had pushed upwards, nearly throwing him off his balance. After the seance he said the rod had been about 9" above the floor and when he put his foot on it he pressed it down and inch or two. When it pushed up under his shoe it forced his foot up to about the height of his thigh which threw him back off his balance. The rod continued to move upwards and disappeared over the top of the curtain. Of its nature he said afterwards that it felt like cylindrical tube of perhaps 4" or 5" diameter with a hard core of 2" or 3" and soft covering.

During séance Laurie described it in these words "It felt soft and spongy as would a thin steel rod, thickly bound round with cotton wool". Albert: Would not you say it was like rubber?" Laurie: Perhaps like sorbo rubber.)

Albert: I am going away now but I know that I had to produce something and I had a reason for doing that. Mrs. Duncan sat in that court all day today and was escorted here by an outsider. (Geoffrey Wilson). You did not let her out of your sight did you young man? (Geoffrey: "No") You are quite sure she was not swallowing something. ("Yes"). There is my reason that I did that. I did not want to let Mr. McIndoe down and I have not done so. I want to say "God be with you till we meet again". And by the way, Nurse, I still adhere to my prophecy. That is all and I will now say Au revoir.

(Mrs. Duncan in a very few seconds came out of the cabinet, still partly under control. Lights raised. Mrs. Duncan's eyes were open but had a staring expression)

—~—☼—~—

Reference to a strong "steel" rod can be noted on another occasion almost two decades earlier, involving the original small Duncan circle, which would be around 1926, prior to the introduction of Albert. Then under the direction of Dr. Williams, he is the least-known control but it appears he was the first in laying the foundations of the home development circle at the Duncan residence, introducing the direct voice. The quote below is taken from "The Two Worlds of Helen Duncan", by Helen's daughter, Gena Brealey, and Kay Hunter, published in 1985 (reprinted in 2008), page 52:

As he spoke [Dr Williams], out through the curtain surrounding the corner of the room which served as Helen's cabinet, came a substance not unlike cheesecloth or butter muslin. The material continued to flow until there seemed to the sitters to be at least ten yards in a soft pile in the room. Henry [Helen's husband] asked if he could touch it and was told he could. He said afterwards that it was dry and soft to touch. The other sitters remarked that there was no odour. Throught the opening of the curtains they could see Helen sitting in her hard-backed chair, and the ectoplasm flowing from her nose and ears. They were amazed to see the substance flowing down the front of her dress on to her lap, then down on to the floor and out to the centre of the room. The curtains were drawn together, then the substance started to recede until the entire volume had gone back into the cabinet.

There now appeared a rod about three feet long. It came all round the sitters and stopped at Jim Murray. Dr. Williams told him to take hold of the rod and bang it on the floor. When he had done this, he was asked if the rod felt solid.

"Solid as steel," he replied.

He was then told to place the rod so that it rested on two chairs two feet apart, and to sit in the centre of the rod. He did as directed and was lifted up above the heads of the other sitters, who were asked to stand up and check that there was no rope or anything else holding Jim up.

The sitters were very careful in their examination of any spirit phenomena. Joe Souter and Frank Murray stood on chairs to make sure nothing was holding Jim from above. The voice asked if they were certain there was nothing holding Jim up so high, "no material substance", as Dr. Williams called it. He then thanked them, and told Jim he would be lowered, and would they please watch carefully.

Jim was lowered gently to the floor, the rod disappeared, and Jim was left standing in the middle of the circle. Dr. Williams' voice then said, "I will leave you for the present. Good-night, and God bless you all."

During this stage of development much phenomena was witnessed–voices, lights, and the continuing development of the ectoplasm, which at times resembled a spider's web, and at other times solid steel.



Helen and her husband, Henry Duncan

MADAME VICTORIA DUNCAN

Helen Duncan needs little introduction as a materialisation medium. Without doubt the best resource of researched original material on Helen Duncan is the free online journal, "Psypioneer", edited by Leslie Price; details are on the index page. We have noted in the "Pioneer" that Helen Duncan occasionally took Spiritualist meetings, with a trance address given through Helen by her main control, Albert Stewart; please see Vol. 1, No. 5, October 2014, "Builders of Bridges".


Madame Victoria Duncan.

However, it is little known that Duncan wrote about her experiences in her own weekly column, "My Second-Sight Secrets", published in "The People's Journal" of Dundee in 1933. In part what we would commonly refer to today as an "agony aunt", Duncan referred to herself as a "counsellor and friend" in psychic matters; she would also work in a role as "Psychic Detective", revealing some of the "Disappearance Cases I Have Solved".

Below is published one of her cases in psychic detection published in "The People's Journal", Saturday November 11th 1933, page 24:

> MANY people have consulted me, often as a last resort, in their anxiety to trace relatives who have disappeared. I have been remarkable successful in solving mysteries of this kind.
>
> A young Glasgow woman visited me, expecting that I would provide her with confirmation of her husband's death by drowning. On the contrary, I was able to tell her that he was alive and well, but I had to add that he had become involved in trouble which was to lead to police action.
>
> This young woman was accompanied by a lady friend. She told me she had called regarding her husband, who was missing, and who, she had good reason to believe, had committed suicide by drowning.
>
> "He was acting queerly for some time prior to his disappearance," the young woman told me, and I feel sure he won't come back."
>
> "You have already taken clairvoyant advice in regard to this matter," I said to her, and she agreed.

"And you were told your husband was dead; that he had been drowned in a quarry hole."

"Yes, out at G—." She mentioned the name of the disused quarry on the outskirts of Glasgow.

"Then, why come to me?" I asked.

Motive for Leaving Home.

The young woman hung her head, but suddenly she raised it and said, "Oh, two heads are better than one, aren't they?"

"The head has nothing whatever to do with clairvoyance," I replied. "The messages I received do not come from my brain in the ordinary sense of the word. I do not think back or think forward. I see."

Observing that my client was becoming flustered, I hastened to add, "But don't let us worry about these things. I shall help you to the best of my ability. Have you brought any article belonging to your husband with you?"

"Yes," she said, with relief in her voice, "I've brought a linen collar; the collar he took off just before he went away. Will that do?"

"Splendidly," I replied.

As soon as I received the collar into my hands I sensed that the man who had worn it was still alive, and I told my client so, adding, "I do not like to say that I am right and that someone else is wrong, but I certainly must tell you that your husband is alive. He had a motive for leaving home," I proceeded, but the young woman interrupted me saying, "Oh, no, we were perfectly happy, Mrs Duncan."

"This has nothing to do with his home life or his domestic happiness," I explained. "He had a motive for going away. Wait a minute. I'm getting it. Didn't he act as a treasurer for an employees' holiday fund?"

My client nodded.

"There was a sum of about £50 in the fund?"

"I cannot tell you the exact amount," she said.

"He had spent some of the money and taken the remainder with him."

"I know he was treasurer of the fund, and that the money was yet to be paid out, but I don't think he has been spending any of it."

"Well," I said, "I wish to assure you that your husband is not dead. He is living at—" (I mentioned the name of a village on the outskirts of the city.) "He is afraid to communicate with you just now in case he should provide the police with a clue to his whereabouts. You have had a visit from the police, haven't you?" My client nodded.

"And they asked you if you had been in touch with your husband, and you truthfully replied that you had neither seen him nor heard of or from him since he went away."

"That is so," she replied.

"Your husband has a sister who lives not very far from where you stay, but you have not called on her."

"No, we are not on speaking terms."

"In a few days your sister-in-law will call on you to say she has had a communication from your husband."

"Well, I think if he is going to write to anyone it will be to me."

Arrested By Detectives.

"Your house is being watched by the police, and he will not write to you. Your husband will return home, but—and I do not like to tell you this—he will almost immediately be taken into custody on a charge of appropriating the holiday fund to his own use."

"If only he comes back," she replied with emotion, "everything will be all right. We will make up the money somehow."

"That is an honourable thought," I said, "but I regret to say you will find it impossible to make good the loss of £50. You will try hard nevertheless. He will go before the Court and be found guilty and sentenced to a short term of imprisonment. But do not grieve too much over it. This will be a lesson your husband will never forget, and, so far as I can see at the moment, your troubles will be over."

A fortnight or so later my client's companion appeared at my consulting room.

"Did you see it in the paper?" she asked me.

"See what?"

"About the sentence on—," she explained.

I then recollected the visit of her friend and what I had predicted in regard to her husband, but had to confess that the court case had escaped my notice.

"It all came out as you said," my visitor stated. "The exact amount of the money missing was £50 18s. He wrote to his sister and she went over to his wife with another letter he had enclosed for her. In this letter he said he was returning home that night. Detectives were watching for him, and when he returned about midnight they followed him upstairs and arrested him just after he had entered the house."

Some more examples of Helen Duncan's psychometry (a psychic way of seeing through touching the object) and clairvoyant consultations in the next issue.

Leon Isaacs

Pioneer of infra-red séance photography

By the 1930s infra-red film and filters, etc. became generally available and would potentially lift many of the barriers of seeing inside the dark séances and recording the phenomena. One early pioneer of infra-red séance photography was Leon Isaacs. Below is a profile of Isaacs by Philip Paul published in the "Two Worlds", August 25th 1956, page 7:



Leon Isaacs, a self-portrait

BRITAIN'S GREATEST SEANCE ROOM PHOTOGRAPHER

AS fleet of eye as a popping flashbulb and as quick in movement as a snapping shutter, he looks back upon 23 years of darkened rooms and unflagging patience in quest of a dual end—to commune with the "dead" and to capture upon his photographic plates irrefutable evidence of those meetings.

He has emerged from these years of seeking with an unchallenged reputation as Britain's leading seance-room photographer and an unparalleled collection of pictures of the "miracles" contrived through (and, alas, sometimes by) well-known and obscure members of the mediumistic fraternity.

Against this background of unceasing exploration stands a story of personal courage and fortitude. For more than half his life he has struggled against agonising ill-health. Sometimes he has had to leave his cameras or the dishes in his dark room to lie prostrate on the floor in order to gain relief from his pain.

Tragic passing

Tragedy struck at him through the death of his wife, whose physical life was extinguished beneath the wheels of a runaway bus. He arrived home at the end of a day's labours to learn that the parting of that morning had been their last upon earth.

Even a case-hardened member of the Society for Psychical Research has described him in print as "a charming and sincere Spiritualist." He refutes the description—happily, not in reference to his charm or sincerity but with regard to the final term. "I am not a Spiritualist," he says. "I am a psychic researcher."

Fifty-four-year-old Leon Isaacs was born in Rochester, Kent. He was one of five children. His father was a Hebrew minister and, naturally, he was provided with a strictly orthodox religious education. "But by the time I was 15 I had begun to think myself out of it."

Because of accident

On leaving school he was apprenticed to the trade of photo-engraving. For 20 years it was his profession. Countless hours of bending over the intricate work, combined with lifting heavy weights of metal, caused a curvature of his spine. Only now, after years of osteopathy and spiritual healing, is he finding freedom from its effects.

In 1937, he was offered a post as a studio photographer with the "Daily Mirror." He accepted at once. There followed many happy years of creative work. He left the "Mirror" in 1952.

His interest in matters psychic began when he accidentally found a copy of a Spiritualist weekly newspaper. In it was an advertisement by Marylebone Spiritualist Association. Intrigued, he joined the Association and set about learning all he could by reading books by Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes and authors of comparable calibre.

Two years later, he attended a seance in North London at which Mrs. Perriman was the medium. A Scots voice spoke out of the darkness, informing those present that the communicator had been a Glasgow photographer. Leon was told that he was to begin taking pictures in physical circles, using infra-red materials.

This convinced them

At another seance of that period, where Mrs. Henderson was the medium, he saw the materialised form of a "dead" relative who was entirely unknown to anyone else present.

"I was convinced of Survival." Leon remembers, "but I wanted to prove it for others." Among mediums with whom he worked were Jack Webber, Colin Evans, Harold Evans and Ronald Cockersell (now Ronald Edwin).

The last named recently published a book in which he confessed that many of the effects presented at his seances were faked. He also stated that Leon had been deceived.

Comments Leon: "He was not fraudulent all the time, but I was not taken in by his tricks. I made no comment at the time because it would have frightened him into stopping the sittings. I might then have lost some of the genuine effects.

"I had him at my home after the book was published and asked him to tell me what was fraud and what wasn't. He was completely confused about it and couldn't remember what had been genuine and what otherwise."

Disaster averted

Beside his experience of direct voice and materialisation. Leon has had remarkable evidence and accurate prophetic messages through mental mediums. Foremost among these, he names Vout Peters. Bertha Harris. John Lovette, Gordon Higginson, Lilian Bailey and Eileen Blaschke. Twice his changes of residence have been predicted—and twice during the war the homes he vacated were blown to pieces soon after his departure.

He has experienced various spontaneous phenomena in his own bedroom. At a direct-voice circle, his wife communicated and told him to set up a camera beside his bed. She would then awaken him one night and he could secure a picture of her. Leon arranged his infra-red apparatus on the left of the bed, with a release mechanism to enable him to make an instantaneous exposure. Months passed.

He heard a voice

Then, one night, he awoke with a start, to see a solid-looking figure, draped with veiling, silhouetted against the window. "I spoke to the figure and asked it to come to the other side of the bed, where I had focused the camera. I closed my eyes to compose myself and heard a voice speak to me. But when I opened my eyes the figure was gone.

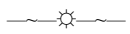
“Shortly afterwards, at a sitting with a clairvoyant, my wife told me she had materialised, but I couldn’t see her face clearly and she seemed to fade away. Since then, at odd intervals. I have heard a few words spoken, in an objective voice, beside my bed. Sometimes, there has been a weight as though someone is sitting on the bed beside me.

“Two months ago this happened and I woke up and said, ‘Can you touch my hand?’ Then there were half a dozen firm touches on the bed covers. I was the only occupant of the house at the time and we have no domestic animals.”

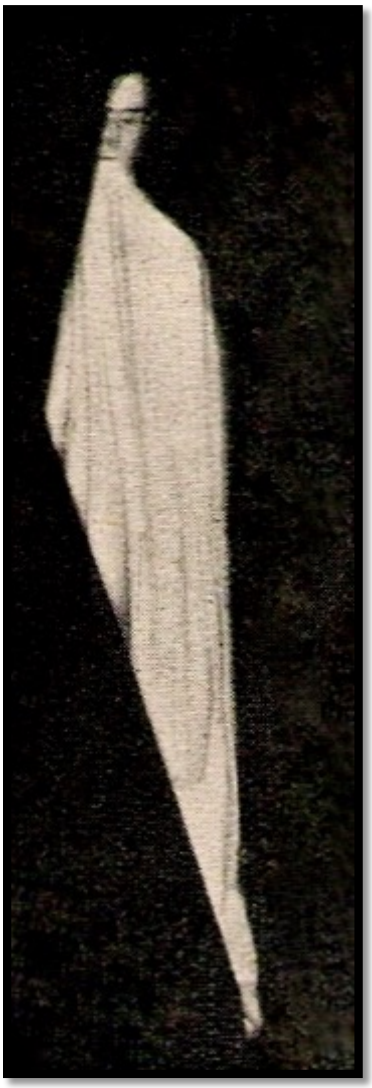
When we research

One of Leon’s endeavours is to “maintain an even keel on this difficult subject of Survival.” In the matter of seance experiments, he is convinced that Spiritualists qualify as highly as psychic researchers. “In fact, Spiritualists get better results because they treat mediums as sensitives, which is always a better approach than the cold, scientific way.”

Equally, he believes that “it is very difficult to get evidence of Survival. It is no use going to six mediums and then giving up in despair. It needs great patience.”



Looking back at infra-red in Psypioneer:



Isaacs was not the first to photograph phenomena by the *new infra-red process*. It can be noted in Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 5, May 2012, "Infra-Red photography and the Physical Mediums", that Mr S.G. Donaldson (he married the well-known physical medium Kathleen Goligher) photographed Helen Duncan in the séance rooms of the Belfast Spiritualists' Alliance, Belfast, on Sunday June 5th 1932. The report, with the photograph shown, was published in "Psychic News", June 18th 1932. In the same publication on April 7th 1934 the paper published a photograph of the medium Mrs Dorothy Henderson, possibly taken by Leon Isaacs, stating, "The photograph, the first of its kind, was taken in the dark, using the new infra-red ray process…"

Although this may seem a contradiction to the Donaldson photograph, Helen Duncan did not work in total darkness, so both are valid reports. The editorial in the issue stated (as republished in the Psypioneer issue given above):

INFRA-RED RAYS IN THE SEANCE ROOM

THE remarkable photograph taken with the infra-red ray process in Mrs. Dorothy Henderson's seance room last week opens up tremendous possibilities.

It means that, in co-operation with the spirit guide in charge, Spiritualists should be able, in future, to obtain a permanent record of psychic phenomena which occur in the dark.

This photograph was obtained, using the new Ilford infra-red filter and plates, and a Sashalite lamp.

The flash takes place behind the infrared screen, and enables an instantaneous exposure to be made. All that is visible is a very dull red flash of light as the exposure is made.

It should be quite possible, where mediumship is strong enough, to obtain perfect photographs of materialised forms. Sitters would then have records of the appearance of their beloved "dead."

The new process will be of value to trumpet seances as it should be quite easy to obtain photographs of trumpets levitated in the air.



This photograph, the first of its kind, was taken in the dark, using the new infra-red ray process, at a seance with Mrs. Dorothy Henderson, seen on the right in trance. Ectoplasm is just visible on the medium's lap.

The infra-red process is an excellent aid to the Spiritualist movement, as it will help to make the chances of fraud very unlikely. It will also dissipate the old bogey of "Oh, it happened in the dark!"[1]

[1] The former SNU President, then editor of the "Two Worlds", in April 1933 received serious concerns that Mrs Henderson was fraudulent. These did not appear to go to the Spiritualist press; however, later in July/August 1936, under the editorship of Oaten, serious allegations against Henderson were published.

In the 1956 article on Leon we can note:



"I was convinced of Survival," Leon remembers, "but I wanted to prove it for others." Among mediums with whom he worked were Jack Webber, Colin Evans, Harold Evans and Ronald Cockersell (now Ronald Edwin).

I personally became interested in Ronald Cockersell/Ronald Edwin after reading his book, mentioned by Isaacs, "Clock without Hands" (1955). In Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 6, June 2013, various fraudulent mediums were featured, some being exposed by infra-red photography; it was noted that the next issue would cover the self-confessed fraudulent medium Ronald Edwin Cockersell, whose photographs, taken by Isaacs, had caused a sensation at the time. Coincidentally, when I started my research I received some correspondence from a Mr David Chester and it was through his researching his family history that he found the name 'Ronald Edwin Cockersell' mentioned in Psypioneer. David was able to supply additional family information.

The article "Ronald Edwin Cockersell Fraudulent Medium – Genuine Psychic?" was enhanced by "Psychic News" supplying Psypioneer with quality séance photographs, including those of Isaacs.

Ronald Cockersell committed suicide in 1968





For the full story see Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 7, July 2013

Colin Evans



The name of Colin Evans was also mentioned in the Philip Paul report on Leon Isaacs. In Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. 8, August 2014, there was a lot of detailed information on the photographic techniques of séance room infra-red photography employed by Leon Isaacs and others.

It was noted in the article's conclusion that there were numerous "sweeping statements" accusing Colin Evans of frauds but these may well be unfounded and in need of further research and more explanation.

Image below:

In some of those taken on earlier dates when the spirit guides were apparently a little uncertain of what risks they could take with the infra-red light, the trumpet is quite close to my face—"shadowing and shielding the actual ectoplasm extruded from the medium, against the direct rays of the infra-red light," as one guide explained—but still evidential enough. My hands were, of course, held usually, and there was no projection or handle on the trumpet, but it had a band of luminous paint on the trumpet by which as many as three hundred people on several occasions (six hundred, once, at the Conway Hall) were able to follow its gyratory movements in the air up to the moment when the photograph was taken, so that no doubt can arise as to whether, in my trance, I might have been in some way supporting the trumpet against my face.[2]



[2] "Levitation of a séance trumpet. Photograph on the left by Leon Isaacs, and on the right by Dr. Nandor Fodor, courtesy International Institute for Psychical Research."

The Isaacs article makes no mention of Isaacs' work with the transfiguration medium Mrs. Elizabeth Frances Bullock, or that Leon Isaac was the official photographer at the International Institute for Psychical Research. In 1934 Mrs Dawson Scott, J. Arthur Findlay and Shaw Desmond had founded the International Institute for Psychical Research (IIPR). Initially its séance rooms, laboratory, etc. were established at 16 Queensberry Place, London SW7, the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA).[3] At this time Arthur Findlay was the LSA President; today it is known as the College for Psychic Studies, still located at the same premises.

Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 6, June 2012, reported on Elizabeth Bullock, a pioneer of public transfiguration séances, who cooperated with researchers in infra-red photography. Below is quoted from the issue from the year 1935:

INFRA-RED CINEMA FILM OF MRS. BULLOCK'S TRANSFIGURATIONS



PSYCHICAL Research history was made last Friday (February 22nd), at the International Institute for Psychical Research, London, by the taking of an infra-red cinema film of the transfigurations of Mrs. Bullock, the Manchester Medium.

In the presence of a small group (a doctor, a physicist, a chemist, the Research Officer and two ladies), the Medium passed into trance. Her face was illuminated by four powerful reflectors enclosed in light-tight metal boxes behind infra-red filters. The visible light, however, was so dim that Mr. Leon Isaacs, the honorary photographer of the Institute, standing two yards away behind the cine-camera, could only see a red blur and had to be given, for start and stop, signals by the Research Officer, who was peering into the Medium's face. At the rate of 24 exposures per second, the camera recorded the changing of Mrs. Bullock's face into that of a Chinaman.

The Chinaman, apparently, was disconcerted by something. He disappeared soon and "Mooney," an African control, came and asked that the Medium's earrings should be removed, as the Chinaman dislikes wearing them. The request was complied with and the Chinaman came back.

There were other unidentified facial representations which are available for study. Two infra-red and two ultra-violet "stills" were also taken.

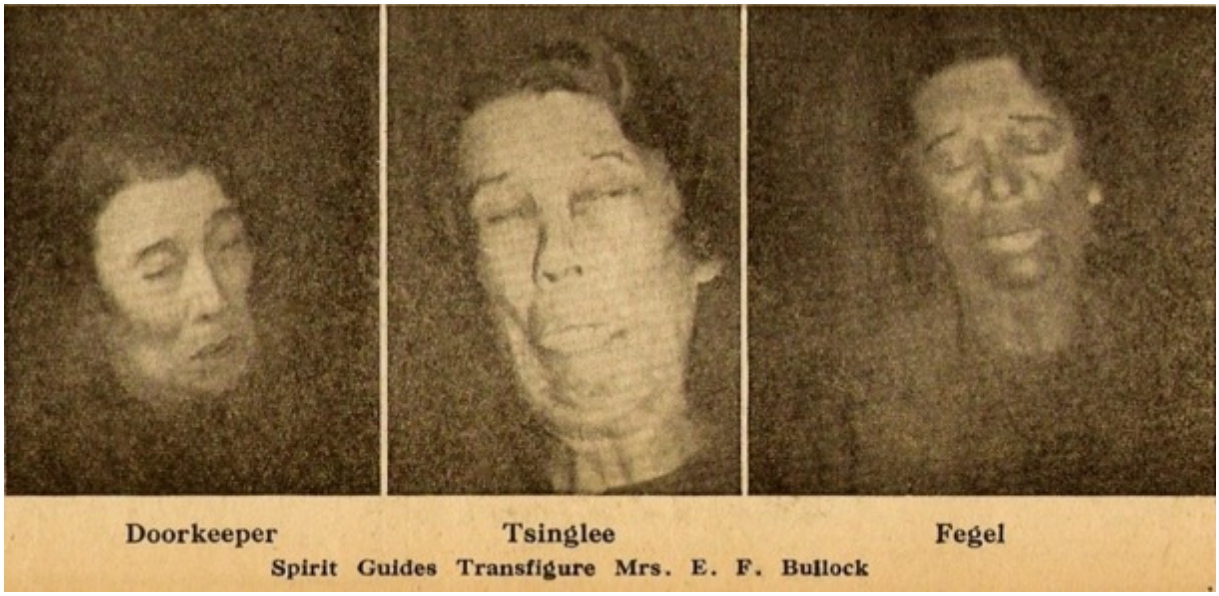
The only complaint made by "Mooney" was about the whirring of the cine-camera, which caused the Medium discomfort, but she stood the trying moments with admirable courage.

[3] Further, as announced in *Light* on August 17 1934, page 439: "The International Institute for Psychical Research has secured premises at 21, Harrington Road, South Kensington, S.W.7. They consist of a seance room, office, dark room, workshop and washing room. Alterations are being made to fit the premises for the Society's work. The services of Miss May Carter have been secured for the Secretarial post. The Society hope to begin activities at an early date." Later, in 1939, the IIRP amalgamated with the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS), forming the International Institute for Psychic Investigation (IIPI).

The end piece of the film was immediately cut off for a trial development. The pictures came up sharp and distinct. Mr. Isaacs had no hesitation in declaring that the cinema record was quite successful. It will stand more than life-size projection, promising thereby an excellent chance for a searching study.

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The images below are not credited, so it is uncertain whether these were taken by Leon Isaacs. They were published in the "*Two Worlds"*, April 15th 1950; Elizabeth Bullock died in 1965, aged 79.



Doorkeeper Tsinglee Fegel

Spirit Guides Transfigure Mrs. E. F. Bullock

The same issue of Psypioneer refers to Queenie Nixon, who publicly demonstrated transfiguration throughout the country and was a familiar face at the Arthur Findlay College. In 1967 D.M. Hosley captured infra-red photographs of Queenie's transfigurations.



I believe the set of photographs were taken at Batley Carr, West Yorkshire, in September 1967. Hosley was a technician in the psychology department of the University of Leeds. Queenie's album is now an exhibit at the Britten Museum & Library at the Arthur Findlay College.



Queenie died in February 1989 at the Royal Hospital, Chesterfield, in Derbyshire. She was 71.

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MADAME VICTORIA DUNCAN

It was noted in the previous issue that it is little known that Helen Duncan wrote about her experiences in her own weekly column, "My Second-Sight Secrets", published in "The People's Journal" of Dundee in 1933. Duncan referred to herself as a "counsellor and friend" in psychic matters; she would also work in a role as "psychic detective", revealing some of the "Disappearance Cases I Have Solved". In the last issue one of her cases in psychic detection was published; I noted at the end of the article that there would be some more examples of Helen Duncan's psychometry (a psychic way of seeing through touching the object) and clairvoyant consultations in the next issue.

However, I found a more valuable article in "The People's Journal", November 18th 1933. The early development of Helen's physical mediumship is somewhat contradictory in the various biographies about her development; these were looked at in Psypioneer, Vol. 11, No. 2, February 2015, "Helen Duncan: Early reports of her mediumship". The article below gives a first-hand account of her trance mediumship and her control of two years, Matthew Douglas, and the introduction of Albert Stewart.

In the "Two Worlds", September 30th 1932, James Leigh interviewed the alleged materialised form of Albert, republished in Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 2, February 2010. Albert refers to "Matthew Douglas" as "Marklew Douglas":

"When were you first brought into contact with the medium, and what attracted you?" was the first question submitted him. His voice, coming from the head of the form—personally, I was unable to distinguish the features—was both clear and pronounced.

"It is a most difficult question to answer briefly," he said. "When I had resided on this side a number of years, I was approached by a person interested in establishing communication with earth, and I was asked whether I would like to participate in a series of experiments. The man who addressed me was called Marklew Douglas. 'You seem to be very clever in making things,' he said. 'Probably you would be useful,' I was shown the process of building materialised spirit forms so that they become visible to people in the material world. Douglas suggested that I might possibly have the gift of moulding the



Artist's impression of Albert Stewart

substance—which I call psychoplasm—into recognisable forms, and at his invitation I consented to conduct some experiments.

"I made many attempts, with varying success. Sometimes I was more successful than at others, but I persevered with the work. Later I discovered that I was not to make the semblance of a human form at all. I had only to clothe the thoughts of the people who presented themselves for materialisation. My task was simply to clothe the thought-form with psychoplasm so that it should become, for a short period, tangible and visible and 'real' to your senses.

"It was this work which brought me into contact with Mrs. Duncan. For her I have the highest regard; and I am grateful to the Higher Powers that this channel has been opened out to me, so that I can occasionally render strength and comfort to those who suffer the temporary loss of loved companions."

It can be noted that what is generally referred to as "ectoplasm" in the quote above is called "psychoplasm" (on other occasions Albert also used the term "the substance"). When Helen was tested in the early 1930s at the London Psychical Laboratory, the research department of the London Spiritualist Alliance (today the College for Psychic Studies), the researchers called it "teleplasm".[9]

J. Arthur Findlay in his book "The Torch of Knowledge", referenced in the previous issue of Pioneer, stated, page 95:

We call it ectoplasm and our friends on the other side mix it with what they call psychoplasm, a composition of their own, and the finished product they call teleplasm. As teleplasm it can be seen and felt, and it is by means of this teleplasm that they manifest their presence to us earth people.

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[9] See Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 3, March 2013: "Spirits of the Trade: Teleplasm, Ectoplasm, Psychoplasm, Ideoplasm – Marc Demarest".

My First Experiences in Trances

By Madame Victoria Duncan

I HAVE already told you my experiences at materialisation seances after I had begun serious investigation of spiritualism. This week I propose to tell you of incidents that occurred at trumpet seances, which was the next stage in my progress as a spiritualist.

It was from the "other side" that the circle to which I acted as medium was advised to secure and utilise a trumpet. The reason given was that by means of a trumpet the spirit intelligence would be able to communicate more evidence.

Its use, we were informed, would enable the spirits to conserve their energy and thus ensure communications from a great number of persons who had passed on. It was added that the new method would involve less strain on the medium.

Having been instructed to exclude all white light, we began our first "trumpet séance" in utter darkness, but so that any movement of the trumpet would be visible we had the top and bottom of it painted with luminous paint. The trumpet, by the way, was in two sections, which fitted telescopically.

Trumpet's Peculiar Movements.

We had not long to wait for the first movement of the trumpet. I confess I was somewhat startled when it rose at a great speed from the floor.

After a momentary pause it moved in a circle with amazing rapidity. In its progress it seemed to graze the head of each sitter. Next it soared close to the ceiling, where it remained stationary for a few moments before descending as quickly as it had risen.

As soon as the trumpet came to rest invisible hands removed flowers from their vases and gently touched the heads of several of the sitters.

Voices were heard. They sounded as if they came over a telephone wire, not as if the speakers were in the room.

At the outset a strange sort of buzz came from the mouth of the trumpet, but this cleared to a certain extent, and the words became fairly distinct and intelligible.

The first voice we heard claimed to be [that of?] the controlling intelligence. He gave [the?] name of Matthew Douglas and stated he was a native of Kirkcaldy. That a gentleman of that name did at one time live in Kirkcaldy we were able to confirm at a later date. He urged us to continue our trumpet sittings and promised some wonderful manifestations if we did so.

For some time afterwards we sat regularly twice a week, and, at Matthew Douglas's suggestion, we widened the circle by bringing in more friends.

A Joyful Answer.

Just before one of the seances my youngest boy contracted measles. It was a serious attack and he was really very ill. In the circumstances I decided we must abandon the seance, but I found it impossible to get in touch with all the people who had been invited to attend. I sent word to as many as I could and decided I would crave the indulgences of the others when they arrived.

This I did, whereupon one of the guests remarked, “Why, Mrs Duncan, this is the very time to hold a seance. Let us ask if the boy is going to get well.”

“All right,” I agreed. My husband and I and four guests were standing in the bedroom where the boy was sleeping. The room was lit by incandescent gas.

Suddenly I felt something drop at my feet. I looked and saw a snowdrop. Next instant a snowdrop fell on the bed. You may imagine my feelings. I concluded these to be signs that the boy would not recover.

In an overwrought condition, I said “Let’s hold a seance. I must find out what is going to happen, whether it be good or bad news.”

We adjourned to the next room and sat in darkness. One of the little circle, having offered up a prayer, asked, “Is Mrs Duncan’s boy going to be all right?”

How relieved I was when the answer came in the affirmative in form of three very heavy raps on the table in the centre of the room. So loud and pronounced were the raps that it seemed as if they had been registered with a heavy sledge-hammer.

Lifted from the Floor.

Then came a sound which was like the flapping of the wings of a large and powerful bird. Right round the room the bird seemed to fly. When the sound ceased the voice of one of the sitters broke the stillness.

“Oh,” she exclaimed, “see what I’ve got – a flower. It was placed in my hand.”

“Oh, I’ve got one, too,” shouted another of the sitters.

The gas was lit, and it was discovered that in the hand of each of the circle had been placed a snowdrop. We then examined the table, on which the heavy raps had been registered, and found that not the slightest mark had been made.

I felt tremendously bucked up by this seance. I was certain my boy was going to recover, and in this I was not disappointed.

By the way of an experiment it was decided to rope me to a chair to see if this would in any way interfere with the manifestations. This done the lights were extinguished, and in the darkness the trumpet was seen to move about the room just as it had done previously.

The controlling intelligence then instructed us to light up the room, and when this was done it was seen that my bonds remained intact.

“Remove the bonds. Do not put out the light; just turn it down low,” was the next instruction we received, and no sooner had this been complied with than I had a feeling that the floor was receding from under me. I understand one has the same feeling when rising in an aeroplane for the first time.

At a loss to explain my sensation, I asked the sitters, “Did any of you feel any difference in the floor?”

There was a chorus of negatives, to which I replied, “Well, I did. I feel it yet. The floor seems to be going farther and farther away from me.”

“It is imagination on your part,” a member of the circle suggested.

“Is it my imagination?” I remarked derisively, “Look now. I cannot touch the floor with my toes. The floor seems to sinking under me.”

“There is nothing to worry about,” interposed my husband. “You are being lifted up. Keep perfectly calm.”

By this time I was fully a foot from the floor, and I felt greatly alarmed.

“Great goodness,” I exclaimed. “They might let me fall. Think of my weight in this easy chair.”

“There is no fear of their letting you fall,” said my husband, “you will be all right.”

“Will I?” I countered. “I’m not risking it,” and with that I slid forward to the front of the chair and dropped down. The drop gave me a good shake up.

What was even more alarming, however, was the fact that no sooner had the chair been relieved of my weight than it flew right over my head to land without a sound on a big table in the centre of the circle.

Went into Trance.

The chair was lifted by two male members of the circle and returned to its original position. Then from the trumpet came a voice telling us to extinguish the light. When this had been done we heard a noise which indicated that the rope with which I had been bound to the chair was being gathered up by someone.

This was confirmed when, from the trumpet, came the voice of Matthew Douglas, telling the circle that the medium was to be tied by spirit intelligences.

Quite clearly we heard the handling of the rope. I realised that my hands were being tied, and then consciousness left me.

When I regained consciousness I had the feeling of waking from a short sleep. I imagined I had just “toppled over” for a few seconds whereas I had been “away” for nearly half an hour. My hands and feet were benumbed.

“Have I been asleep?” I asked the circle.

“No, you have been in a trance,” one of the sitters replied.

“What has been happening?”

I had no recollection or knowledge of what had taken place from the moment I felt the rope on my hands. Here is an account of the seance as given to me by several of the sitters.

They had heard the handling of the rope, and next the trumpet began to circle round the room.

When the movements of the trumpet ceased a voice said, “Put up the light. Good-night.”

The gas was lit, and I was found bound to the chair and in a trance for the first time since I had begun my investigation of spiritualistic phenomena.

The sitters carefully examined my bonds. They found that the roping had been most methodically carried out. For a time they were at a loss to discover the knots, but eventually they were located under the chair. They were three in number, and were unmistakably the work of an intelligence who had had seafaring experience.

The unravelling of the knots took a considerable time, and it was during this operation that I awoke to what was going on around me.

First Real Trance.

This experience, of course, was only a partial trance, and now I propose to tell you of the first occasion when I went into a complete trance, that is to say, from the beginning to the end of the seance, and when I awoke to find that I had absolutely no recollection of what had taken place in the room.

The sensations I experienced as I was falling into the trance were unforgettable. I felt as if I were going to faint, yet I felt as if I were rising into the air, not dropping as one feels when in a fainting condition.

When I became normal again I was convinced I had just recovered from a faint. I imagined I had been unconscious for only a few seconds, and was amazed when I was informed that I had been in trance for almost an hour and a half.

Visitors from the "Other Side."

As I have explained, I had no recollection of what had transpired, and for details of the seance I was indebted to the sitters. Many voices were heard, and from the "other side" several visitors had come to comfort relatives in the circle.

The last to appear was the mother-in-law of one of the sitters. She had passed on in a village in Fife only a week previously, and the ailment to which she succumbed was made plain to every member of the circle. Unfortunately I, for the time being, took on the woman's health condition, and when I awoke I was feeling far from well.

A gentleman, whose wife had passed on twenty years ago met her again, and he was extremely happy because of the experience.

"Are you sure it was her voice you heard?" I asked him.

"Certain, absolutely certain," he replied with sparkling eyes. "You see she mentioned things that were known to no one but ourselves. She spoke of money that I had invested in a small business and asked me if I was still getting a return for it."

A lady told me her husband had come to her and spoken about a book she had given him as a present. She said to him, "But that book has disappeared out of the house."

"Oh no" came the reply. "I lent it to Major –"

The lady made inquiries and confirmed the message she had received from her husband. The book had been in Major – 's possession for nearly two years. It was very valuable, and she was glad to get it back, especially as it was a memento of her husband.

Another lady was told by her husband to consult a certain doctor, who was named, in regard to a pain in her chest. "You will require to undergo a major operation," he explained, "but do not hesitate. There is no cause for fear. I shall be with you."

The lady acted on this advice, and three weeks later she underwent a serious operation, from which she made a splendid recovery. She told me she felt her husband very close to her when she lapsed into unconsciousness under the anaesthetic.

Visited by Investigation Committee.

After this I went into trance regularly. One night whilst I was attending a meeting of the Spiritualist Church, of which I had become a member, a gentleman approached me and asked for an invitation to the next seance to be held in my house. He was not a member of the church, but I knew he was interested in spiritualistic phenomena, so I at once complied with his request.

A day or two later I was asked to give a test sitting for the committee of this Spiritualist Church, who proposed to send an investigation committee to my house for the purpose. I agreed to this, and was surprised when the gentlemen I had invited to the seance proved to be a member of the investigation committee.

This was explained by the fact that he was an intimate friend of a committee-man of the Spiritualist Church. The deputation numbered seven, the majority of them being professional men.

"Isn't it strange that after you had invited me here I should be asked to act on this committee?" the gentleman remarked to me.

"It is rather strange," I replied.

The committee brought with them two ladies, and I was asked if I had any objection to their examining my clothing in an adjacent room before the seance commenced.

I said I had no objection, and the ladies carried out a very rigorous search of my clothing and person.

I was then conducted back to the room in which the seance was to be held, and placed in a chair, after which they encircled me with paper streamers. These were placed round my hands and feet in such a way that even the slightest movement would have broken several of the strands.

Shortly after the light was extinguished, I went into trance. At the conclusion of the seance it was found that not a single streamer had been broken, and the investigators, one and all, expressed their satisfaction with the results obtained.

A New Controlling Intelligence.

Naturally I inquired as to the nature of these. I was told that several manifestations had taken place. A sister-in-law had appeared to one gentleman, to another a son, while a third had seen his wife. The best manifestation of all was of a little girl who had appeared and spoken to her mother and father.

For fully two years I acted as medium for seances conducted on the foregoing lines, and then came a change where Matthew Douglas intimated that he was leaving us and that another controlling intelligence would take his place. The reason for the change, he explained, was that we might be enabled to obtain a different kind of phenomena.

Matthew Douglas's successor proved to be a Colonial Scot, who gave the name of Albert Stewart, and who explained that he had passed on in Sydney, Australia.

He further informed us that prior to emigrating to Australia he lived in Dundee.

Albert stated that he emigrated as a youth of 18, and had passed on 17 years later. On his instructions we used a red light at our seances, and presently we were getting some remarkable phenomena.



AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION

In the early Helen Duncan test séances



In early 2015 I tried to establish when Helen Duncan's main control, Albert Stewart, who would serve Helen for around a quarter of a century, first took over full control of the medium. My main agenda at the time was to try to find some explanation as to why her previously independent recorded *full-form materialisation* mediumship was not apparent in the early scientific test séances at the London Spiritualist Alliance (today it is known as the College for Psychic Studies). The LSA research department was called the "London Psychical Laboratory" (LPL).

From October 1930 the first series of test séances were conducted with Helen Duncan by the LPL, and later (in a different building) by the National Laboratory of Psychical Research (NLPR), starting their séances in May 1931. These series of test séances at the two institutions would damage the name of Helen Duncan for the rest of her life.

The name of Helen Duncan at the start of these test séances would not have been generally known outside Scotland. The initial séances with the LPL later led in March 1931 to Duncan being engaged under a contractual agreement for a series of regular séances, commencing on March 13th, exclusively for the LPL, with the Duncans temporarily moving to London from Dundee at the expense of the LSA.

During the initial séances in 1930 at the LSA Helen and her husband Henry met the director of the National Laboratory of Psychic Research, Harry Price. The NLPR laboratory was then situated on the top floor of the LSA. At the end of December 1930 the NLPR moved a short distance away. On May 4th 1931, apparently without the knowledge of the LSA, Duncan sat for the NLPR, effectively breaking the contract with the LSA. Duncan would sit for the NLPR on five occasions (the final séance on June 4th), resulting in the LPL bringing their contractual agreement to an end on June 12th 1931.

Both subsequent reports were very unfavourable towards the medium – owing to the analyses of "ectoplasm" and the suggestion of "regurgitation" mentioned in both reports.

My 2015 research to establish when Helen Duncan's main control, Albert Stewart, first took control was not straightforward, as until October 19th 1929 there are no independent reports on Duncan's mediumship and her development. The biographies, etc. had to use the Duncan family information, which is very contradictory and generally unreferenced. My initial conclusions were published in Psypioneer, Vol. 11, No. 2, February 2015; below is quoted from this issue:

Early reports on the development of Helen Duncan's mediumship and of her controls/guides are somewhat sketchy and appear contradictory in the published accounts of recent years. These accounts are:

Alan Crossley *The Story of Helen Duncan*, 1975, reprinted 1999

Gena Brealey The *Two Worlds of Helen Duncan*, 1985, reprinted and revised in 2008

Manfred Cassirer *Medium on Trial – The Story of Helen Duncan and The Witchcraft Act*, 1996

Mary Armour *Helen Duncan, My Living Has Not Been in Vain*, 2000

Malcolm Gaskill *Hellish Hell Last of Britain's Witches* 2001

Nina Shandler *The Strange Case of Hellish Nell*, 2006

Robert Hartley *Helen Duncan The Mystery Show Trial*, 2007

The development of Duncan's physical mediumship took place in the 1920's. A circle formed on Thursday nights, and the first sitters according to Brealey (Duncan's daughter) were Helen's husband Henry, brothers Jim & Frank Murray, and Joe Sauter. The circle was halted, according to Brealey, due to Henry having a heart attack; when it resumed, it included another sitter Mrs MacLain.[11] This made a total of five sitters, but Crossley adds another unnamed lady (p.19).

It is difficult to say when the circle began. Crossley gives the early part of 1926, however, this does not fit in with Brealey's account as Crossley states Henry and Helen were married in 1918, and three years later Henry had his heart attack. This would mean the circle had begun in the early 1920's (Brealey states her parents were married on May 27th 1919, Cassirer, Hartley, Shandler & Gaskill give 1916 but the general date remains as May 27th),[12] Hartley states the home circle began in September 1925 but there is no direct reference to this account.

The first circle control was "Dr. Williams," agreed by: Gaskill, Armour, Shandler, Brealey, and Crossley. Gaskill states "Matthew Douglas" followed Dr. Williams "… a deceased gentleman of Kirkcaldy, advised the circle to invest in a trumpet, …" He continues: "After Matthew Douglas came the spirit of 'Donald', a controlling intelligence they all found unbearably lewd, not least Henry, …" (p.81); only Gaskill states this actual order of controls.

Cassirer and Hartley state the first control was: "Matthew Douglas". That Donald followed Dr. Williams is stated by: Crossley, Brealey, Shandler. Gaskill states: Dr. Williams recalled Donald and replaced him with Albert Stewart. Hartley further adds (p.30), "He [Stewart] organised the séances from the spirit side of life initially along with another spirit control Dr. Henry James Williamson, another Scot, purported to be a former Unitarian Minister from Mint Street, Dundee. Henry claimed to have verified these details." It can be noted in the previous issue of Psypioneer "Seven Sittings with Mrs Duncan L.S.A. – 1930-1" at the fifth sitting, on 28th November 1930:

[11] Known as Mac, or Auntie Mac, to the children.

[12] Lis Warwood confirms: "I have found the marriage record for Helen Duncan – she married Henry Duncan on May 27, 1916, when both were just 19 years old."

> The control declared himself to be not Albert, but Henry James Williamson, and that he liked everything but stubborn men and women. Albert, however, presently reported that the new control was no good, and that he would take the control over.

The development of full form materialisation is again uncertain; for example, Crossley states on p. 27 that it was after Albert and Peggy had arrived:[13]

> "The materialisations had by now developed from small, jelly-like forms to full human figures capable of independent thought and speech."

Hartley states on page 30:

> "Fully formed human figures that could speak and think independently were produced at her seances. This coincided with the appearance of a control named Albert Stewart in 1929".

Brealey gives a vivid account of full materialisation when the circle was under the control of Donald page 53:

> "He [Donald] would begin the seance by opening the curtains of the cabinet, standing at one side while the entranced Helen sat in her upright chair. He would then ask the sitters if they could see them both, after which Helen would be asked to stand up, sit down, walk around the room, then return to sit again on her chair in the cabinet while Donald remained beside her chair …

The circle members around this period were asked by Donald to invite two or three visitors to the weekly circle so evidence could be given to a wider audience:

> "By this time materialisation was a regular occurrence. As each materialised spirit appeared, Donald could give full name, cause of so-called death, and date of passing."

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As we can note, no firm, referenced information can be gained as to when Albert Stewart first took full control of Helen Duncan. Robert Hartley speaks of "the appearance of a control named Albert Stewart in 1929" but there is no reference or information given.

However, it does appear that full-form materialisations were being produced by Duncan. In February this year my appetite was again awakened when I found an article by Helen Duncan, "My First Experiences in Trances", republished in Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 1, February 2017. In the article Duncan mentions only two controls; firstly she states, "The first voice we heard claimed to be Matthew Douglas and stated he was a native of Kirkcaldy […] He urged us to continue our trumpet sittings and promised some wonderful manifestations if we did so."

Duncan further stated:

> For fully two years I acted as medium for seances conducted on the foregoing lines, and then came a change where Matthew Douglas intimated that he was leaving us and that another controlling intelligence would take his place. The reason for the change, he explained, was that we might be enabled to obtain a different kind of phenomena.
>
> Matthew Douglas's successor proved to be a Colonial Scot, who gave the name of Albert Stewart, and who explained that he had passed on in Sydney, Australia.

[13] Page 27, reprint edition, 1999 – page 34, first issue, 1975.

Unfortunately, no indication of the date is given. The first published independent report previously mentioned was by James Souter, published in "Light", October 19th 1929. The report notes that Duncan "is a remarkable trumpet Medium, but what is more important is the materialisations which have taken place since she developed this type of phenomenon in March of this year." The short report states:

> The forms build up clearly and distinctly (as many as fourteen have manifested at one sitting); they speak clearly, giving their names and other convincing particulars, answer satisfactorily all questions put to them, they handle objects both light and heavy play musical instruments. They have brought articles from other rooms and other houses at a distance apart. The Guides, three in number, are good hard-headed, canny Scotsmen who know what they are about, carry out their part with precision and dignity and have a right sense of their responsibility. Mr. J. B. McIndoe, of Glasgow, and Mr. Herbert Hill,[14] president of the Bon Accord Spiritualist Church witnessed these materialisations and were so impressed that they have invited Mrs. Duncan to give a series of séances in Glasgow.

John McIndoe, SNU President 1930-1938, would give the first detailed independent report on two sittings he attended. He published a report on the Duncan mediumship in the SNU journal, "The National Spiritualist", October issue, 1929; this was republished in "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 3, May 2015.


John Brown McIndoe

The article does not mention Duncan by name, McIndoe records:

> "The forms were distinctive, varied, lifelike and noiseless in their movements, not one of them remotely resembled the medium in build. Their voices were also distinctive and quite different from the medium's. Nothing in any way suggesting trickery of any kind was observed"

> "Soon another voice is heard calling "Mother" and a young girl emerged from the curtains, came over and spoke to one of the new lady sitters, who recognised her as her daughter. She conversed with her in a low tone, apparently giving a comforting message, and handed her mother a rose, taken from a bunch placed in the cabinet.

> "Then another girl form of different build took her place, coming from the other side of the cabinet, and was claimed as her sister by one of the ladies. She also brought a rose with her"

> "I need not describe all the forms who appeared. There were eight of them, one child, two young girls and an older woman, and four men. Six of them came right out in front of the curtains, and seven of the eight spoke to us. One of the controls "Donald" had quite a conversation with us. He was a well built man. By request he brought a mandoline from the cabinet, and twanged the strings. We could easily see the hand which held it, but not the one which touched the strings. Finally he handed it to a sitter. He was asked to touch my outstretched hand. This has not previously been done. He appeared to make several attempts to do so. On the last his hand was plainly visible above mine, but he failed to touch it, and disappeared very suddenly, while the medium gave vent to a groan as if in pain. At the conclusion of the sitting there was blood on her mouth and chin, and some

[14] Scottish District Council: Aberdeen Bon Accord National Spiritualist Church, Room No. 2, Shepherd's Hall, Union Terrace, Aberdeen. President: Herbert Hill. Hon. Secretary and Treasurer: Mrs Bowman, 4 Claremont Place, Aberdeen.

had trickled down on her dress. This had occurred on previous occasions when a form suddenly vanished for some reason or other.

"At the second sitting "Donald" was asked about it and explained that he had come out too far. On that occasion something did touch my hand, held close up to the curtain. It had the appearance of a stump with two fingers, and was rather hard, but the contact was too brief to allow any definite opinion to be formed.

"The notable features of the second seance were that there were two children right out moving in the circle at the same time. They came one from each side of the curtains. Later on by request of a sitter two apports were brought. One was a small ornament from the room below."

It can be noted that Souter and McIndoe refer to multiple controls/guides; however, Albert Stewart is not mentioned by name. It may appear that in October 1929 he was not yet present and not in full control or named!

A critical point of observation may have been overlooked!

It may well be assumed that at some unspecified date later than October 1929 Albert Stewart was to take full control of Helen Duncan. We have seen that the history of the alleged controls is far from precise, with many contradictions. The most precise, on the surface, would be the independent reports by former SNU President John McIndoe, who mentions Donald as "one of the controls", which does give some consistency to the various reports that Albert followed Donald. However, the medium in her own words contradicts this by stating quite precisely that after two years with Matthew Douglas Albert followed. The truth is at present not within our grasp.

What is clear is that full-form materialisation was in force and vouched for by the independent reports regardless of who the control/s were – which was not demonstrated at any of the test séances of 1930-1931.

At present, it seems that the name 'Albert Stewart' did not appear (at least publicly) until around August 1930 in an article by Harvey Metcalfe. The preliminary reports from the London Psychical Laboratory did start with satisfactory encouraging results for the investigators, for example as published in "Light", May 16th 1931:

The production of "ectoplasm" has taken place at all sittings but varies in quantity from time to time. The ectoplasmic emanations usually issue from the mouth of the Medium.

The substance is as a rule white, but may be sometimes described as grey or slate colour, and a few times has appeared a dark brown. It is motile and seems to possess a sort of vitality. It bunches, folds and unfolds, divides into portions and joins up again.[15]

The "ectoplasm" has been produced in such quantities that the Medium when standing up has been covered over the head, round the shoulders, and over the whole of the body down to the feet. On two occasions it was produced while the Medium stood under the light.

[15] The second sitting at the LSA on October 30th 1930 records: "Sir Oliver Lodge went up to the medium and held the substance in his hand, and he and the sitters saw it gradually with a slightly wriggling motion withdraw, sliding slowly over his hands towards the position of the medium [and] disappear while he was holding it." The full report is published in Psypioneer, Vol. 12, No. 2, March 2016.

The Medium came out of the cabinet with no "ectoplasm" showing and stood under the red light at a distance of about eighteen inches; the mouth opened and the substance was seen gradually forming on the tip of the tongue until it resembled a cherry. It afterwards swelled up in the mouth unfolded and hung down about eight inches from the mouth. The substance moved slightly and remained for about one minute; then it began to retreat into the mouth, and gradually disappeared until the mouth, wide open, was seen perfectly empty. The Medium, still in trance, then backed into the cabinet.

It was clearly observed that, during the emergence and disappearance of the substance, no movement of the Medium's throat, neck or body was apparent. No muscular contractions suggesting swallowing or vomiting occurred.

It should also be realised that when the substance retreated into the mouth, it diminished at the tip of the tongue into the likeness of a cherry as it at first appeared.

The cherry-like mass disappeared into a small point and finally vanished altogether. None of the substance appeared at any time in the pharynx.

Sometimes, when large masses of the substance begin to lessen in bulk, it appears to melt away first at the edges.

Throughout all the sittings with both laboratories the phenomena were generally *ectoplasmic formations*; they did not reach to full-form materialisations, with different independent voices of materialised forms – including children's voices or trumpet phenomena, as the quoted independent reports suggest. Only the Metcalfe report of a séance on August 20th 1930 names the alleged Albert Stewart, so we know from this date that he was operational and using Mrs. Duncan.

The séance was held in a house, possibly at the Duncans' home in Dundee. It is apparent that Albert's practice of showing his medium and himself standing together at the beginning of each séance had begun by the report republished in Psypioneer, Vol. 11, No. 2, February 2015. It can be noted in the report that other materialisations with Albert were being produced in the circle.

An Important Consideration – In Helen Duncan's Early Test Séances

Although the exact dates are not established we *know* by the independent October 1929 reports that Albert was not the main control and may not always have been active.

We also know he was the last control to take over!

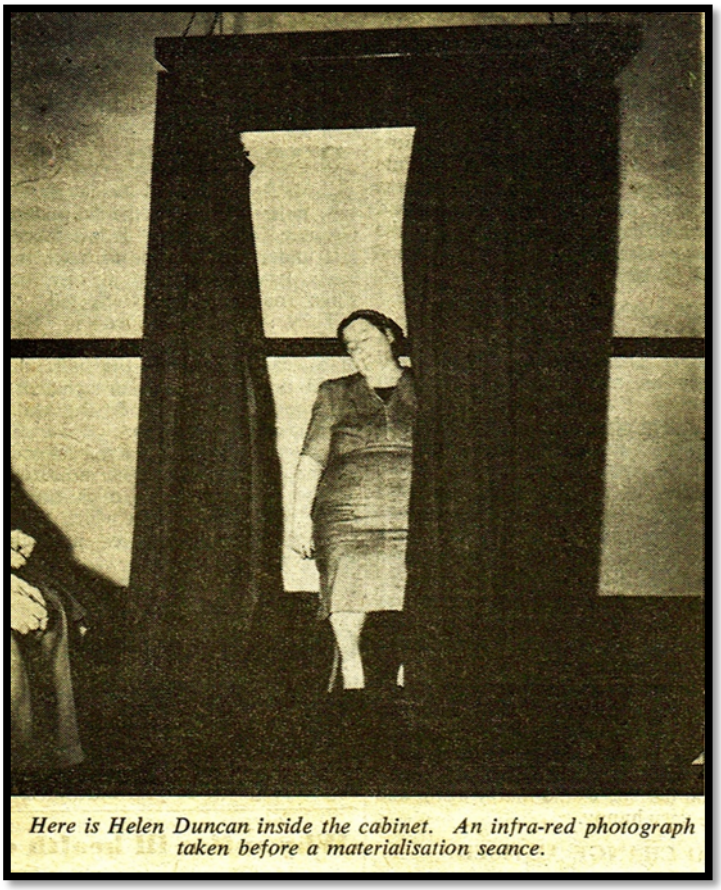
This may go some way to explaining why there was a decline or drop in the phenomena exhibited to the researchers! It was because Albert (on the present known information) would be basically out of the development/home circle, as the most prominent full-form materialisation mediumship, etc. through Helen Duncan was exhibited by Donald and Matthew Douglas over some years, not by Albert.



HELEN DUNCAN SEIZED AT A SÉANCE IN 1956

Police searching for beards, masks and a "shroud"

On November 10th 1956 the "Two Worlds" reported that Helen Duncan had been grabbed in a police raid at a private seance in Nottingham on October 28th, this time not because the medium was breaking the Vagrancy or Witchcraft Acts, as they were changed/repealed six years previously, in 1951.[5]



Here is Helen Duncan inside the cabinet. An infra-red photograph taken before a materialisation seance.

POLICE RAID HELEN DUNCAN SEANCE

Medium grabbed and searched after cabinet is torn down

NOTTINGHAM police broke into a Helen Duncan seance last week, grabbing the medium, searching her, taking flashlight pictures in a series of happenings "reminiscent of an American gangster film," says our correspondent.

They shouted that they were looking for beards, masks and a "shroud" which they alleged were the fraudulent means by which she produced her materialisations. But they found nothing.

The seances were held in the home of J. Timmins, a physiotherapist and healer. On the Saturday night a patient, later discovered to be a policewoman, attended with a man she said was her husband, but who was a policeman in disguise. Nobody materialised for them.

When it was all over and they were chatting over a cup of tea with the rest of the sitters they said how wonderful the sitting had been. These two people had also booked for the Sunday night seance for themselves and for two friends.

[5] The image shown is said to be an infra-red photograph. This is interesting, as I am aware of only one other image of Duncan using infra-red photography, which was in Belfast in 1932 by Mr Donaldson. Please see Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 1, February 2017. We can note in the image shown that Mrs Duncan is in in her later years, but it appears it was not taken at the residence of Timmins in Nottingham, as they used the corner of the room where Duncan was seized.

In many of Duncan's seances the cabinet was in the corner of the room, with a makeshift cabinet comprising a curtain-pole and two curtains. We can note in this photograph that it seems to be a purpose-built room, not using a corner, and the cabinet is suspended from the ceiling.

Law interrupts

After this seance had been in progress for 20 minutes, banging was heard on the outside door accompanied by the bell ringing. Albert, her control, who was speaking through the medium, asked Mrs. Timmins and Mrs. G. Hamilton, the medium's friend who had accompanied her, to take care of Helen Duncan.

When the door was opened the police came in. According to Timmins' account they made a dive over the sitters in the front row and tore down the curtains which formed a cabinet in a corner of the room.

Then two policewomen grabbed the medium while policemen took flashlight photographs. By this time the lights were put on. One policeman ran downstairs to admit other officers, among them an inspector.

Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Timmins tried to pull away the policewomen who had started to search Helen Duncan. They said they were looking for the "shroud." This presumably referred to the white mass of ectoplasm out of which figures usually materialise at her seances.

Mrs. Duncan, as part of her normal seance procedure, wore black undergarments—she never wears white to prevent confusion with the ectoplasm.

The inspector ordered everyone to stay where they were. Then he changed his mind, told them to go to another room and not to leave until their names were taken.

Mrs. Duncan's burns

In all this excitement Timmins forgot to ask the police whether they had a search warrant. He insisted, however, that every sitter should be searched, but the inspector said that if he interfered with the proceedings it would be his duty to arrest him.

Timmins went over to Helen Duncan and saw that she was ill. Later there were two burns on her stomach. She was controlled by Albert, who asked for a doctor to be called. The medical man arrived within five minutes.

Seeing how ill the medium was, he obtained police permission to take her to a bedroom where he treated her for shock. Even then the policewoman insisted on accompanying him.

The doctor was then allowed to make a search. He said he found nothing on her that could have produced any fraudulent results.

The police questioned Mrs. Duncan for about one and a half hours. In turn, every one of the 20 sitters was questioned. All the time the police kept asking for masks, beards and shroud.

Timmins and the others replied that the seance proceedings had been genuine and that no matter how much the police searched they would not find evidence of fraud.

None of the sitters left till 11.45 p.m., about two and a half hours afterwards. Even then the inspector later telephoned Timmins to ask if he could arrange a seance with Helen Duncan at which he could take another photograph by infra-red or otherwise.

If this proved to be genuine, he said he would drop the case and they would hear no more about it. It was suggested by him that the flashlight photographs had revealed nothing that could be construed as incriminating.

Timmins replied that the police had no evidence of fraud against Helen Duncan. In her present condition he was sure the doctor would not sanction another seance, as the police had already done her a lot of harm.

A police search of the house and the luggage of both the medium and her companion revealed nothing.

The police returned again two days later to question Helen Duncan and Mrs. Hamilton. Again and again they asked the medium to "come clean," to tell them where she kept the beards and moustaches with which the forms had appeared—this time there was no mention of any shroud.

The police suggested that as she was "getting old" they would "make it easy" for her. When they left they said she might be charged under the Fraudulent Mediums' Act of 1951 because they alleged that one materialised figure which came for a policewoman was that of a man who was still alive.

If the medium were charged, said the police, Timmins would also be prosecuted with aiding and abetting.

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The following week the "Two Worlds" continues these dramatic events:

POLICE USE "GESTAPO METHODS" TO BREAK UP SEANCE?

ON Monday, four days after *Two Worlds* printed exclusively the account of Nottingham police raiding a Helen Duncan materialisation seance, grabbing the medium and searching her, the story was printed by most of the leading national newspapers. Some published headlines across six columns.

The medium is now in Edinburgh's Western General Hospital, "obviously the result of these terrible happenings at Nottingham," says her husband.

A "Daily Herald" reporter was told by the hospital that she was receiving treatment for diabetes. A "Daily Mail" reporter was told that she was "comfortable." A "Daily Telegraph" reporter said that immediately she returned home she became ill. A "News Chronicle" reporter said she suffered so badly from shock that she was now "very ill" in hospital.

A police official denied to the "Daily Express" that there was any rough handling and said, "The matter is still under consideration."

This followed its account that John Timmins, in whose house the police raid occurred, said, "I protested to the police about the manner of the search."

Several newspapers stated that Spiritualists were angry over the police interruption while the medium was in trance and "are protesting against what they call Gestapo methods."

"Surely my wife will have a champion from among the thousands to whom she has been the humble means of bringing solace and comfort in their hour of sorrow," says the medium's husband, who refers to her "terrible and ignominious ordeal" at the hands of the police.

He understands, he says, that the papers concerning the case have been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Meanwhile an attempt is being made to get a question asked of the Home Secretary in the House of Commons.

A Taunton Spiritualist says that three years ago, after Helen Duncan had given three successful materialisation seances in that town, they were visited by the police and "found ourselves in the midst of investigations which went on for six weeks."

Their home was turned upside down. Nothing material was found and the matter was "shelved as no cause for complaint."

Typical of the sentiments expressed in letters and telephone calls we have received is the following.

"Shocking methods"

I WAS so shocked by the inhuman treatment meted out to Helen Duncan by the Nottingham police that I feel the matter must not be allowed to rest there.

The police acted illegally, and overstepped the bounds of their duty in manhandling a woman, who is presumably innocent until proved guilty. They also apparently accused her of fraud.

These shocking methods on the part of the police should rouse the whole Spiritualist world to action.

If illegal and brutal methods such as these are to be tolerated there will slowly be no freedom in anything. Heaven knows what will be the results on Mrs. Duncan's health, through shock.—J. Allen, l5 Sunderland Terrace, London, W.2.

Further, the “Two Worlds” continues its coverage on December 15th, 1956:

Helen Duncan's husband to sue police for damages

She dies five weeks after they raided seance

BY MAURICE BARBANELL

HELEN DUNCAN’S husband decided, on my advice, when I saw him in his Edinburgh home last Saturday, to bring an action for damages against the Nottingham police. They raided and broke up the medium’s last materialisation seance, while she was still in trance, five weeks before she passed on.



Helen Duncan died on December 6th 1956

The family lawyer had urged Henry Duncan to institute proceedings and vindicate his wife’s name. But Duncan was concerned, among other problems, about the costs. I told him not to worry. The Movement, I said, would be behind him.

He then telephoned the lawyer and instructed him to take the necessary legal steps. They will also press for a public inquiry into the police conduct.

After discussing all the issues involved with Duncan, I was delighted to find the whole large family unanimously agreed on these steps.

Helen’s passing, two days earlier, at the age of 59, ended what many Spiritualists regarded as the martyrdom she had endured since 1933, four years after her psychic career began, when she was convicted and fined for fraud in an Edinburgh court.

“The verdict was against the weight of the evidence,” said the SNU’s exponents’ committee, an opinion endorsed by the Union’s next annual general meeting.

Eleven years later she was convicted under the notorious and antiquated Witchcraft Act of 1735 and sent to prison for nine months. In the opinion of leading Spiritualists this was a gross miscarriage of justice.

Up to the court

Now that legal proceedings against the police are being instituted it will be for the court to decide to what extent Mrs. Duncan’s passing was due to the raid.

“MEDIUM’S DEATH BLAMED ON RAID” was the “Daily Express” headline last Saturday. “TWO BLAME SHOCK IN TRANCE FOR MED1UM’S DEATH” was the one used by the “Empire News.”

Her death certificate cited “diabetes and heart failure” as the causes.

The family maintained, “There can be little doubt that the police action hastened her death.

“Despite long ill-health.” They added in their statement, “she continued to put Spiritualism before self and personal discomfort, which mattered little in the furtherance of what she believed to be her duty.”

Even when Helen was in Holloway jail in 1944 she had constant medical attention for diabetes, angina pectoris and valvular disease of the heart.

The Rev. Thomas Jeffrey, a Church of Scotland minister who conducted the cremation service last Monday, has described her as “Scotland’s Joan of Arc.” His conviction of Spiritualism was partly based on attending her seances for about 15 years.

“The shock suffered by the police interruptions at a private seance on October 28, 1956,” said the family, caused such mental suffering that she was not the same woman from that hour. We feel that her faith in human justice was so shaken that there was nothing more to live for.”

“Come home to die”

When Mrs. Duncan left home, the family told me, “she looked well, with colour in her cheeks.” After Nottingham, she looked as if she had “come home to die, with all the world’s cares on her shoulders.”

Ever since her return home Helen had constant medical treatment, both in hospital and at home.

Her shock was increased a few days before her passing when Nottingham’s Chief Constable wrote her saying that all the papers in connection with her last seance had been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions. His letter was surprising, as there had been no communication between them.

Henry Duncan described the letter as “cruel—after a month’s lapse to send this to her, knowing the state of her health.”

She had to have medical attention for shock after the police broke up the seance while she was in trance, grabbed her and shone white flashlights on her. They searched her and subjected her to 90 minutes’ questioning.

Spiritualists who were present described the raid as “Gestapo-like” and “reminiscent of an American gangster film.” But a police officer denied that anybody had been handled roughly.

Though Mrs. Duncan, her luggage and the house were all searched—the police said they were looking for false masks, beards and a shroud—nothing incriminating was found.

I was able to give Henry Duncan a spirit message from his wife when I called. On the previous night in Glasgow, Margaret Lyon, the healer who is also clairvoyant, told me that Helen wanted me to give her love to “Hen,” the nickname she always used for her husband.

Though it was only a day after her passing, she had met her beloved daughter, Nan, and had been greeted by Albert, her chief control at all her seances, who had sustained

her through all the dark hours. Finally, Helen commented that the spirit world was even more wonderful than she had hoped.

Margaret knew about Helen's passing before the news was published. On the day of her death the healer was conscious of the unmistakable odour of the ectoplasm, as she had experienced it at the many seances Helen had given in her home.

The Duncan family were delighted to get the message. The husband, the three daughters, the two sons, and their husbands and wives are all Spiritualists—Helen's extraordinary mediumship convinced them long ago.

And their behaviour was impressive. They were performing all their household duties with a calmness of demeanour that was admirable. They were a magnificent example of how Spiritualists should behave when faced with bereavement's acid test.

Soon after I arrived, Henry Duncan quoted his lawyer's opinion that he had excellent grounds for action against the police. Henry—I have known him and his children for 25 years — sought my opinion on instituting proceedings.

In view of the long controversy that had raged round his wife's mediumship, he asked, would he have the Spiritualist movement behind him? I assured him that the overwhelming majority would support him.

As a typical example of his wife's selflessness, he said that when she came home she was worried about whether news of the police seizure had caused anxiety to her family.

"I can't leave you"

Soon after the raid, and before she returned to Edinburgh, Helen's astral form appeared to him. "What's wrong?" he asked. Sobbing, she replied: "I was going to leave you, but I can't." This he understood to mean that she fought against dying.

He recalled a statement she had often made: "I will never live to see another trial." I reminded him of another saying, prophetically fulfilled: "I will survive those who accused me." She named these antagonists who had all passed over.

I was surprised to see her coffin. It seemed too small for the body of a woman who weighed 20 stone when last we met. But, I learned, her weight had gone down to 12 stone towards the end.

Helen was one of the most remarkable mediums to appear on the Spiritualist scene. Her seances, held in good red light during the past 27 years, must have been attended by thousands. Many of them testified to seeing loved ones materialise and hearing their typical voices.

This accumulated evidence from apparently solid forms, who reproduced their earthly bodies, included their speaking in foreign languages that the medium did not know.

Mrs. Duncan always insisted that she be searched by women sitters before every seance.

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The article continues about her trial at the Old Bailey, which does not concern us now…

Editor's endnote:

Without doubt this is one of the most disturbing stories in our history; Charles E. Loseby, her defence barrister during her 1944 Old Bailey trial (assisted by Mr. T. S. Pedler), was appointed by the Spiritualists' National Union solicitor, Godfrey A. Elkin. Loseby from his Guernsey home was outspoken after the Nottingham police seizure and the death of Helen Duncan, stating in law that any person who by "gross negligence accelerates the death of another is guilty of murder. I personally, therefore, am satisfied that Helen Duncan was murdered."

One of the most important functions of "Psypioneer", and now of the Spiritualists' National Union's publication "Pioneer", is to present the CORRECT FACTS concerning Spiritualist history, etc.

In the first of these articles concerning the seizure of Helen Duncan I removed the footnote at the end of the article which stated:

> **Footnote.** Helen Duncan was convicted wrongly in the opinion of Spiritua1ists—a few years ago under the old Witchcraft Act. It was this conviction that led to Spiritualists campaigning to change the antiquated law that robbed them of religious freedom. The Fraudulent Mediums' Act was the result.

This conviction in *fact* had nothing to do with the *campaigning to change the antiquated law.* The petitioning of Parliament had been in progress since the arrest of Henry Slade, shortly after the first imprisonment of a Spiritualist medium, Francis Monck, under Section 4 of the 1824 Vagrancy Act. The British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS) 'Spiritualists' Defence Committee' was the first to challenge the Conservative government's Right Honorable R. A. Cross, Secretary of State for the Home Department, as to the rights of Spiritualist mediums in November 1876.

In 1916 the Spiritualists' National Union, under their President and Vice-President, Ernest Oaten and James J. Morse respectively, set up the "Spiritualist Parliamentary Fund", which was inaugurated at the July AGM; it was this fund (under later name changes) which would pay for all of Helen Duncan's court costs.

"Pioneer" has published in six parts, beginning in Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2015: *The Effect of the Vagrancy Act – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union*.

Recap on the police raid:

The above articles hinge on the police raiding the private residence of Mr and Mrs Joe Timmins, violently breaking up a private Helen Duncan séance, grabbing the entranced medium, taking flashlight pictures and searching her and the premises. The police shouted that they were looking for beards, masks and a "shroud" which they alleged were the fraudulent means by which Duncan produced her materialisations. But they found nothing. It was later found on the previous day's séance held on Saturday October 27th that an undercover policewoman (PC Cutts) with a man she said was her husband attended.[6] They both booked for the Sunday séance and for two friends.

At the Sunday séance, after twenty minutes banging was heard on the outside door accompanied by the bell ringing; according to Joe Timmins' account:

[6] Joe Timmins' account is published in "Helen Duncan: My Living Has Not Been in Vain", by Mary Armour, 2000 pages. On pages 77-88 Timmins states that he was aware the lady was a policewoman, as he had previously treated her for a foot condition; she had recently married Mr Cutts.

> "… they [Cutts and three others] made a dive over the sitters in the front row and tore down the curtains which formed a cabinet in a corner of the room. Then two policewomen grabbed the medium while policemen took flashlight photographs. By this time the lights were put on. One policeman ran downstairs to admit other officers, among them an inspector [Detective Inspector Smalley]. Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Timmins tried to pull away the policewomen who had started to search Helen Duncan. They said they were looking for the "shroud." This presumably referred to the white mass of ectoplasm out of which figures usually materialise at her seances."

The sitters were ordered into another room and detained for about two and a half hours after the raid; Timmins forgot to ask the police whether they had a search warrant. He insisted, however, that every sitter should be searched, but the inspector said that if he interfered with the proceedings it would be his duty to arrest him.

Duncan was clearly ill and still allegedly under the control of Albert Stewart; Albert asked for a doctor to be called, who arrived within five minutes. The doctor obtained police permission to take Duncan to a bedroom and she was treated for shock, accompanied by a policewoman. The doctor searched Helen; he found nothing on her that could have produced any fraudulent results. The police questioned Duncan for around one and a half hours and searched her and her companion's luggage.

The inspector later telephoned Timmins to ask if he could arrange a seance with Duncan "at which he could take another photograph by infra-red or otherwise."[7] According to Timmins, the inspector further said that, if this proved to be genuine, he would drop the case and they would hear no more about it. It was suggested by him that the flashlight photographs had revealed nothing that could be construed as incriminating.

Two days later the police returned and again questioned Duncan and her companion, Mrs. Hamilton, asking the medium to "come clean", to tell them where she kept the beards and moustaches with which the forms had appeared—this time there was no mention of any shroud.

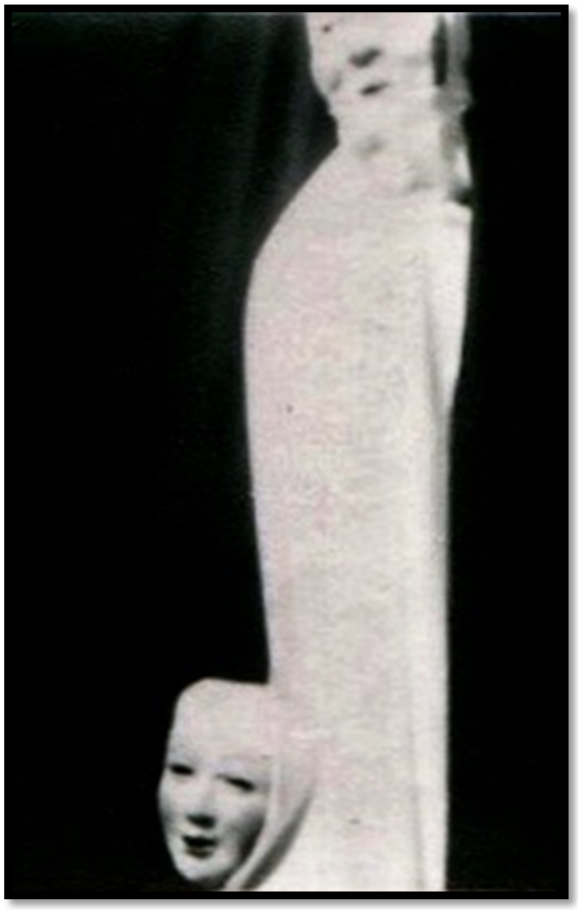
Helen was warned she might be charged under the Fraudulent Mediums Act of 1951 because they alleged that one materialised figure which came for a policewoman was that of a man who was still alive. If the medium was charged, Joe Timmins would also probably be prosecuted for aiding and abetting. Shortly after Duncan ended up in Edinburgh's Western General Hospital she died five weeks later from diabetes and heart failure on December 6th 1956 at her home in Edinburgh.

—~—☼—~—

[7] This comment may suggest that, as well as flashlight bulbs, infra-red was used; it would be of interest to know whether these photographs are still archived by Nottingham police at present; I am looking into this.

What can we make of these unprecedented events under the Fraudulent Mediums Act of 1951 – which led directly or indirectly to Duncan's death?

It may be considered by some that this is reminiscent of the police undercover officers in the previous seances in 1944 and the seizure of the medium – resulting in Duncan being sentenced to nine months' imprisonment under a clause in the Witchcraft Act.



The police raid in 1944 at Portsmouth showed that no incriminating evidence was found; this was also the case at Nottingham. At Portsmouth the sitters asked to be searched; the police refused. This appears to be the case at Nottingham. We can note that Timmins "insisted, however, that every sitter should be searched…" Timmins was told not to interfere.

One can only speculate as to why at Nottingham there was such a police presence, including four undercover officers and a Detective Inspector. A month later, a few days before Duncan's death, Nottingham's Chief Constable wrote to her informing her that all the papers in connection with her séance had been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

As no material, incriminating evidence was found, all that remained was the undercover police testimony that one materialised figure which came for a policewoman was that of a man who was still alive.



The photographs shown here were taken at a Helen Duncan séance on March 8th, 1939 in the Cheltenham area. It was common for Duncan's materialisations to show beards, etc.; we can note the gentleman has a rather well-established moustache. Depending which side of the fence we sit, some could suggest the faces are mask-like. The figures are shrouded, so one can understand why the police were *searching for beards, masks and a "shroud"* if Duncan was considered a fraud.

But, of course, no such items were found. The images are part of the Britten Museum & Library, housed at Stansted Hall.

Nothing is noted in the reports about payments made to Duncan. The undercover police officers witnessed two séances and booked for two friends on the evening of the raid. This was Duncan's income, so no doubt fees would change hands. If

the police had previous evidence of any fraudulent activity on an ongoing inquiry and of money being taken, this could put their action into a better perspective. [Duncan's fee[8]] Any pre-existing evidence would not be revealed until the inquiry was completed and charges brought forward. Duncan died before any charges existed.

Malcolm Gaskill, in his book, "Hellish Nell", makes reference on page 352:

> "… it is likely that either the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Chief Constable contacted the Home Office, because on 15 November Helen Duncan files from 1944 were called up from the archive."

As noted, Nottingham's Chief Constable wrote to Helen Duncan a few days before her death informing her that all the papers in connection with her last seance had been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions. So, for whatever reason, it appears the police were once again out to get Helen Duncan and the prosecution was ongoing to her death, but, unlike in 1944, holding a séance in 1956 was perfectly legal.

Maurice Barbanell makes a valuable comment in his column, "All Worlds Are One", in the "Two Worlds", November 17th, 1956, as quoted below:

> THE medium was warned privately by us some months ago from information received that the police were after her again and that she should be on her guard.
>
> It behoves her, and the organisers of her seances, to take rigid precautions to ensure that nobody attends her sittings unless they can be vouched for. They should be on their guard against agents provocateurs, police officers in disguise, seeking material for a prosecution.
>
> The methods invoked by the Nottingham police, described as "reminiscent of an American gangster film," must have had their origin in some "complaint." This may be genuine or, as in the past, due to the malice of vested interests, too often belonging to opposing religions that wish to destroy mediumship.
>
> THE Nottingham case has been referred to the Spiritualists' National Union and the Spiritualist Council for Common Action to see if any legal or constitutional issues are involved.
>
> It must be pointed out, however, that Helen Duncan no longer works under the aegis of the SNU, having withdrawn from that organisation. Neither were the Nottingham seances held in a Spiritualist church where, if there is police interference, the cry of religious freedom can be raised.

Regarding the break between Helen Duncan and the SNU which resulted in the suspension of her certificate in 1945, the full story is published in "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 5, September 2015: "Why did the S.N.U. remove Helen Duncan's diploma in 1945?"

The reasons behind the police raid and whether or not a prosecution would have been undertaken against Helen Duncan if she had lived remain a mystery.

[8] Timmins, in his statement referred to in footnote 6, gives the details: "We usually have about eight sitters who pay from 10-11 shillings, then many of our personal friends who come free …" Duncan received free accommodation, etc. and kept all the fees paid.

To conclude, Malcolm Gaskill raises a few interesting points on page 356 of his book:

> The drive to remember Helen Duncan, and to see justice done, started from the moment she died. Within a week, *Two Worlds* was inviting contributions to a memorial fund and the Home Secretary, Gwilym Lloyd George, was pestered until he replied that the matter had to be taken up with the Chief Constable of Nottingham. In the end the fund money was not spent in the intended manner. Henry, a man crumbling inside, was being cared for by Gena and was in no state to organize his own affairs, let alone a lawsuit. In any case his solicitor, who at first had been optimistic about their chances, now advised him to drop the case due to insufficient medical evidence to suggest that the police had caused Helen's death.
>
> In addition, Percy Wilson was concerned that if the case was made *sub judice*,[9] it might hold up action and comment in other quarters. Mr Timmins dropped his action too, announcing piously that turning the other cheek was behaviour more befitting a Spiritualist. Why Helen Duncan had been raided again after all these years therefore remains a mystery. There were no rumours of conspiracy, as in 1944, and probably local police simply heard about the seances, perhaps after receiving a complaint, and intervened to protect the public. That said, prosecutions under the Fraudulent Mediums Act were very rare.
>
> And there is one final intriguing piece of evidence: the Anglo-French landings to reclaim the Suez Canal, which involved the Secret Service, were the largest British seaborne military operation since D-Day. The coincidence — and it is surely no more than that — is stranger because the police raid occurred less than thirty-six hours before the assault against Egypt began.

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Victoria Helen MacFarlane & Henry Duncan married on May 27th 1916

[9] Under judicial consideration and therefore prohibited from public discussion elsewhere.

The book also gives illustrations of handwriting by Dr W. J. Crawford while alive, and after his death produced by psychic means.

Other items of the Lyceum Union donation include glass slides, including the images shown below of a young man apparently moving a trumpet by means of ectoplasm, in what may be an attempt at producing direct/independent voice. The glass slides are numbered but on this item the corresponding reference has not yet been located, but hopefully it will be found to identify the medium.





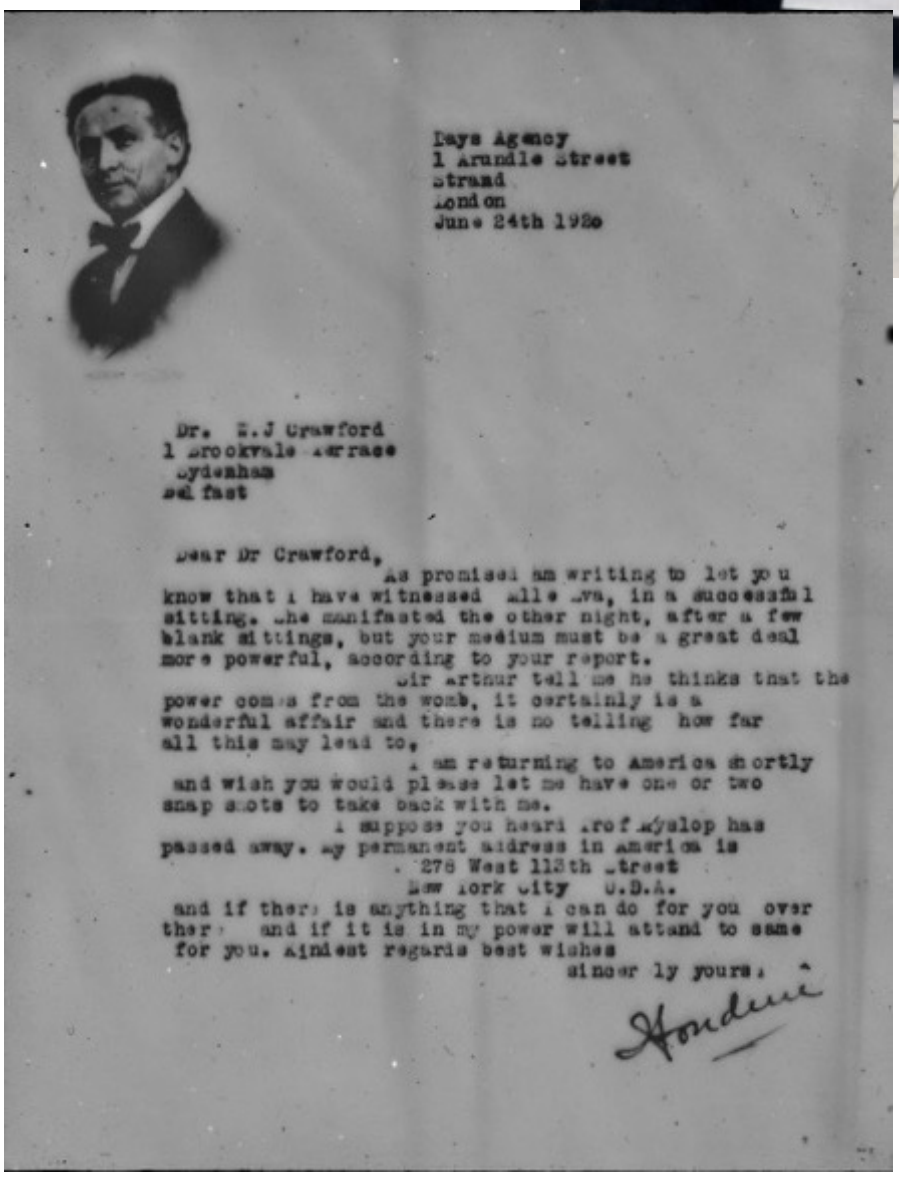
"Pioneer", Vol. 3, No. 2, April 2016, published "Houdini & Conan Doyle – Story of Strange Friendship and an Historic Quarrel". It was Sir Arthur's wife's mediumship in 1922 that would instigate an irreparable breakdown in the friendship of Harry Houdini and Conan Doyle.

This sent Harry Houdini on a mission for the rest of his life to prove Spiritualism a fraud; he died on October 31st, 1926.

This public hostility, however, was not always the case, as shown in a letter dated June 24th, 1920 to Dr W. J. Crawford, which appears on one of the glass slides.

Below is the glass slide followed by the text:





Days Agency
1 Arundle Street
Strand
London
June 24th 1920

Dr. W.J Crawford
1 Brookvale Terrace
Lydenham
Belfast

Dear Dr Crawford,

As promised am writing to let you know that I have witnessed Mlle Eva, in a successful sitting. She manifested the other night, after a few blank sittings, but your medium must be a great deal more powerful, according to your report.

Sir Arthur tell me he thinks that the power comes from the womb, it certainly is a wonderful affair and there is no telling how far all this may lead to.

I am returning to America shortly and wish you would please let me have one or two snap shots to take back with me.

I suppose you heard Prof Myslop has passed away. My permanent address in America is

276 West 113th Street
New York City U.S.A.

and if there is anything that I can do for you over there and if it is in my power will attend to same for you. Kindest regards best wishes

Sincerely yours,

Houdini

Days Agency
1 Arundle Street
Strand
London
June 24th 1920

Dr. W. J. Crawford
1 Brookvale Terrace
Sydenham
Belfast

Dear Dr Crawford,

As promised am writing to let you know that I have witnessed mlle Eva in a successful sitting. She manifested the other night, after a few blank sittings, but your medium must be a great deal more powerful, according to your report.

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New York City U.S.A.

and if there is anything that I can do for you over there and if it is in my power will attend to same for you. Kindest regards best wishes

sincerely yours.

Signed Houdini

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Within a month of receiving this letter from Houdini Dr W. J. Crawford was dead. It can be noted in the "Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology":[4]

> Crawford committed suicide on July 30, 1920. Four days before his death he wrote, "I have been struck down mentally. I was perfectly all right up to a few weeks ago. It is not the psychic work. I enjoyed it too well. I am thankful to say that the work will stand. It is too thoroughly done for any material loopholes to be left."

William Jackson Crawford was born in New Zealand in 1881, according to the above publication. He was an engineering lecturer at Queens University, Belfast, Ireland. Houdini's letter would be referring to Crawford's work with the Goligher Circle. Around 1914 he began to investigate the physical phenomena of Kathleen Goligher and the group around her, known as the Goligher Circle. His investigation continued until his death in 1920.

[4] *Encyclopædia of Psychic Science* by Nandor Fodor, LL.D., prefaced by Sir Oliver Lodge, published in 1934 by Arthurs Press Limited, London. This was later updated in 1966 (The Citadel Press, Secaucus, New Jersey), with the involvement of Leslie Shepard. Thanks were due to Maurice Barbanell and the staff of *Psychic News* for providing research material for the compilation of its Foreword, February 1966, by Shepard. Today it's called *Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology* and is based on both the *Encyclopedia of Occultism* by Lewis Spence, London, 1920, and Fodor's *Encyclopædia of Psychic Science,* substantially revised and supplemented by new material written by Leslie Shepard.



'Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology' continued:

From his research, he developed a set of speculations on the scientific laws behind the phenomenon of telekinesis (now known as psychokinesis or "PK"), which he presented in his books, "The Reality of Psychic Phenomena" (1916), "Experiment in Psychic Science" (1919), and published posthumously "The Psychic Structures in the Goligher Circle" (1921).[5] During his research, he converted to Spiritualism, though his theories played down the role of spirits in favour of a psychic force.

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Harry Price, in his book, "Fifty Years of Psychical Phenomena", published in 1939, gives a fair overview on pages 82/3:

THE GOLIGHER CIRCLE

Still another young woman was the centre of a circle formed in Belfast to develop the telekinetic and other phenomena of an Irish family named Goligher. Kathleen Goligher and her three sisters were all mediumistic, and the other members of the family (father, son, etc.) formed the 'circle.'

The manifestations attracted the attention of Dr. W. J. Crawford, a lecturer in engineering at the Municipal Technical Institute, Belfast, and he decided to make a prolonged study of the dynamics of telekinesis as demonstrated by Kathleen Goligher and her sisters. The séances were held usually at Mr. Goligher's house or occasionally in Dr. Crawford's own home. It is with the utmost difficulty that an investigator can adequately control one medium; but Dr. Crawford considered that he could properly immobilize a room full of mediums and their relatives, in darkness or semi-darkness, and this fact is one of the great weaknesses of Crawford's many reports of his experiments.

Crawford sat with the Goligher circle for six years until he committed suicide on July 30, 1920. There is no evidence that his death was connected with his psychic investigations. He concluded that the raps, levitation of the table, etc., were accomplished by 'cantilevers' made of teleplasmic 'rods' or extrusions from the lower portion of the medium's body, and made many experiments (described in detail in his books) in order to confirm his theory. He also concluded that one end of the teleplasmic 'rods' was used for making the raps which were frequently heard, the intelligence behind the raps coming from the medium herself. He even obtained impressions of the 'pseudopods' or 'arms' in various plastic substances. Finally, photographs of the alleged 'psychic levers' were published.

Shortly after Crawford's death, Dr. E. E. Fournier D'Albe visited Belfast with the intention of continuing and confirming Crawford's experiments. He had twenty sittings with Kathleen Goligher and duplicated many of Crawford's tests. His report was

[5] Available to read on-line or to download, including the illustrations.

published in 1922 and is completely negative.[6] He stated that all he saw—and photographed—could be explained in terms of normality and his findings created something of a sensation, coming as they did after Crawford's so very positive results. Miss Goligher (now married) rarely exercised her mediumship after the adverse report, and the case will remain one of the many interesting psychic mysteries.


Dr. W. J. Crawford

Despite Fournier D'Albe's adverse report Crawford's findings were acknowledged by Charles Richet, who records some of Dr Crawford's work in his "Thirty Years of Psychical Research", published in English translation in 1923. Richet notes on pages 431/2:

"Decisive value must be given to Crawford's experiments. Next to those with Eusapia and Home, they are the most complete on record. Professor Sir William Barrett, who was present at one of these séances, verified that the table moved without contact and that there were raps inexplicable by usual mechanical causes."

Professor Sir William Barrett was a founder member of the Society for Psychical Research. His report with the above quote is in the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research (PSPR), lxxvii, page 335.

What is most interesting, generally speaking, is Kathleen Goligher; while in the process of exhibiting ectoplasmic structures, during the whole séance she is not in a trance state but fully conscious throughout and observing the phenomena.

It is stated in the above Harry Price quote, "Miss Goligher (now married)". Kathleen married psychical researcher and pioneer of infra-red photography in the séance room, Mr S.G. Donaldson.

"Pioneer", Vol. 4, No. 1, February 2017, "Looking back at infra-red in Psypioneer", shows the first infra-red photograph of Helen Duncan taken by Donaldson in the séance-rooms of the Belfast Spiritualists' Alliance, Belfast, on Sunday June 5th, 1932. Price also stated, "Goligher (now married) rarely exercised her mediumship after the adverse report …"[7]


Kathleen (née Goligher) Donaldson

It can be confirned in the article which follows that the now Mrs Donaldson had not sat on a regular basis for some years. The article was written by an experienced investigator into physical phenomena, SNU President (1930-1938) John B. McIndoe. See also "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 3, May 2015, "Helen Duncan & John McIndoe – A Scots Materialising Medium"; it was McIndoe who gave the first detailed report on Helen Duncan and brought her to public attention.

[6] *The Goligher Circle*: May to August, 1921, London, 1922. [This is available to read on-line or to download illustrated]

[7] Kathleen Donaldson 1898-1972, died aged 73.

Below was published in the "Two Worlds", June 12th, 1936, front page and page 370:

ECTOPLASM PHOTOGRAPHED

A RECENT SITTING WITH KATHLEEN GOLIGHER

BY J. B. M'INDOE


John B. McIndoe

MRS. DONALDSON (Kathleen Goligher), whose phenomena were the subject of prolonged and thorough investigation some twenty years ago by the late Dr. W. Crawford, of Belfast, has not sat regularly for a number of years; but she has not lost her powers, and there can be little doubt that with regular sitting the phenomena witnessed by Crawford would be repeated, and perhaps amplified.

The adoption of recent scientific discoveries to Psychic Research make possible investigation on lines not open to Crawford, and would certainly confirm his conclusions as to the reality of the phenomena, and probably throw a flood of light on the nature of ectoplasm and psychic structures.

In recent years I have sat twice with Mrs. Donaldson, and the main phases of the phenomena recurred. The last occasion was on April 10th, 1936. The sitting was at Mr. and Mrs. Donaldson's house, near Belfast, where I was a guest, and was a more or less impromptu affair, arising out of a conversation on infra-red photography at the dinner-table.

An hour or two later, Mrs. Donaldson, with her husband and myself, went to an attic-room, where Mr. Donaldson had rigged up the apparatus for infra-red photography. The source of the infra-red rays was a 1,500-watt lamp inside a box, with artificial-silk reflectors, and infra-red screens, so arranged that only reflected rays were projected towards the medium. The rays were focused on the floor, in front of the medium's chair. The infra-red rays source was on the floor, so that the rays were horizontal, the box being about 5 feet from the medium's chair. The camera was at right angles to the path of the rays, about 4 feet away. Focusing of rays and camera was done on a white handkerchief on the floor, placed where the psychic structure was expected. Ilford infra-red plates were used.

Two photos were taken. No. 1 had 8 seconds' exposure, and is reproduced here. No. 2 was taken a few minutes later, and had only about 5 seconds' exposure, a creaking floor-board having been mistaken for a signal to stop. It was insufficiently exposed.

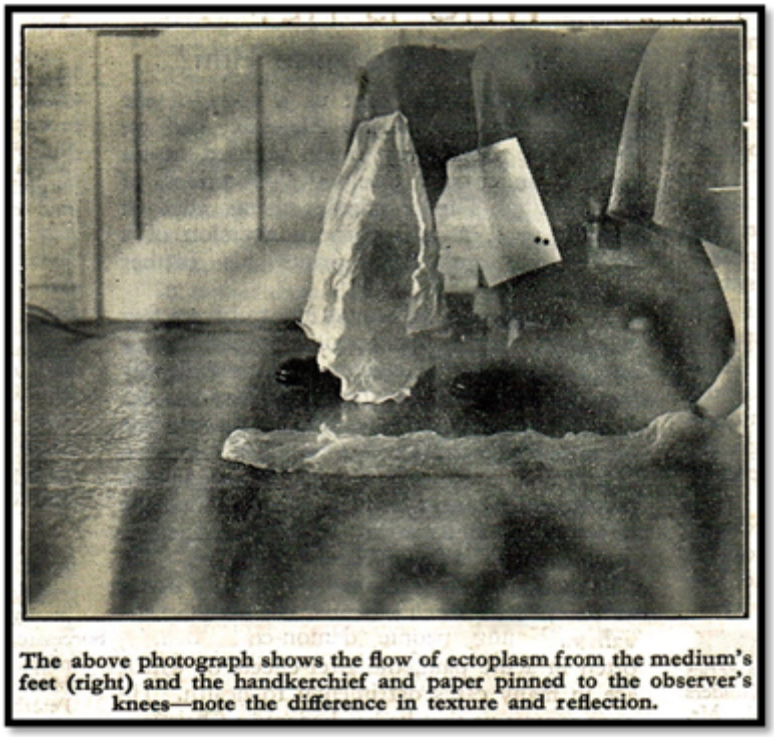
Mrs. Donaldson sat in a wooden chair, her feet firmly on the floor. At no time did she show any sign of trance.

Mr. Donaldson operated the camera and the infra-red apparatus.

I sat facing the camera, my chair at right angles to Mrs. Donaldson, on her right hand, and close to her. During most of the sitting her hands rested on her knees, and my left hand rested on them, so that I should have been able to detect any muscular movement of arms or legs. I observed none, nor could I detect any muscular reaction when knockings occurred, either in hands, feet, or head of the medium.

The knockings, however, were very faint. They were the signals by which communications came, and directions where to take photos. In order to get some possible basis for comparing the texture of any psychic structure which might appear I had pinned a white handkerchief and a sheet of white notepaper to my knees. These are plainly seen in photo.

The sitting was in the dark. A certain amount of light, however, came when the infra-red rays were in use. Soon after the sitting began faint taps were heard. They sounded to me as if from below the medium's chair. They indicated that photos could be attempted where this signal was given. This came a few minutes later. The result was a photo of a psychic structure emanating from the medium's feet, and fully 18 inches long. (The second photo shows a similar but shorter structure.)



The above photograph shows the flow of ectoplasm from the medium's feet (right) and the handkerchief and paper pinned to the observer's knees—note the difference in texture and reflection.

Two nebulous irregular bands will be noticed near the left of the print, apparently rising from the floor and curving over in the direction of the medium. Somewhat similar formations appear in the second photo, but in it they are not as distinct (perhaps due to under-exposure), but they appear to originate from or near the medium, curve downwards along the floor, and then upwards, finishing in a vertical direction. But it should be observed that the vertical height represented in the photo is little over 18 inches.

What those curves mean I cannot say. I can find no normal explanation for this. Those familiar with Crawford's work may remember that in the first photo of a psychic structure which he obtained, it appeared to emanate from the body of one of the circle, Mr. Samuel G. Goligher, and terminate in the medium, Kathleen Goligher's, chest. (Obviously, the terms emanate and terminate may be reversed.)

After the photos had been taken I put my right hand, palm upwards, on the floor, and asked for taps on it. None occurred. I placed a sheet of notepaper on my hand, still on the floor, and requested taps on that. Still no taps came, but something which gave me the impression of having a blunt, rounded end, about an inch in diameter, gave a decided horizontal push against the side of my hand nearest the medium. Whatever it was it felt warm, which surprised me. I immediately felt the toes of the medium's slipper; they were colder than what had pushed my hand, and seemed to me to be more pointed. I am positive the medium's feet did not move; my left hand on her knees would have detected it had they done so. Then I placed two half-crowns, one on top of the other, on the floor, and asked that they be struck together or displaced. Neither took place.

Later, I placed a handkerchief over them and asked for it to be removed, while keeping my hand in contact with it. Nothing appeared to happen. Soon afterwards the sitting concluded, having occupied little over half an hour. When the light was turned up, the handkerchief was found about 5 feet from where I had placed it, apparently tossed there.

At no time was the psychic structure visible, though the rays coming through the infra-red screen allowed the white handkerchief to be seen.

The above account has been checked and agreed as correct by Mr. S. G. Donaldson, so far as it concerns matter of which he was personally cognisant.

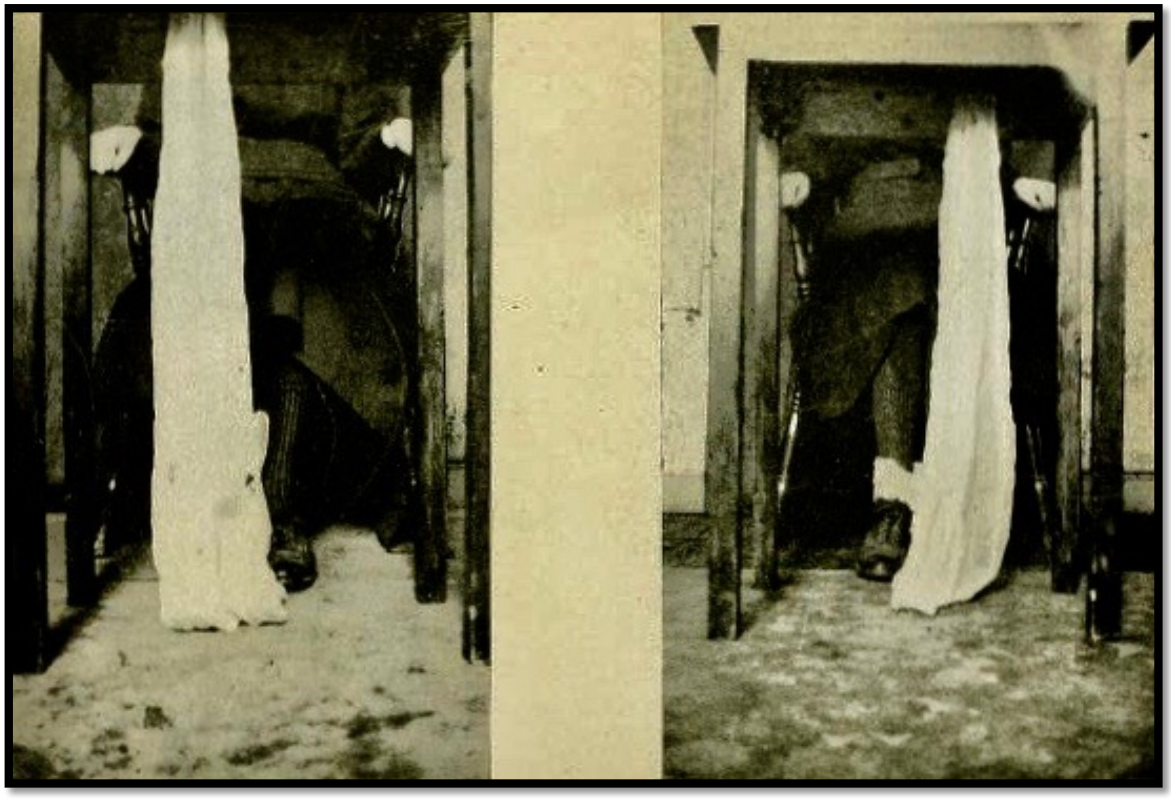
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Editor's endnote:

There appears to be a more balanced conclusion of disagreement between researchers than may appear on the surface. Dr Crawford was criticised for having inadequate controls and lack of precautions against fraud and accused of self-deception, and it is claimed that his experiments were not convincing. Criticism was also made of Crawford's reluctance to admit other researchers into the Goligher circle. A researcher of note is Hereward Carrington, who had researched Eusapia Palladino and Mina Crandon (Margery). He added to the criticism of Crawford, although he did not sit in the Goligher circle.

Carrington noted that the photographs taken by Crawford looked "dubious in appearance". This is currently found under the heading, "Critical evaluation", in the entry for Kathleen Goligher on Wikipedia! This is an example of how we must use these websites with caution and as a dubious guide only. Carrington did say, as referenced by Wikipedia, that the photographs taken by Crawford looked "dubious in appearance" but if another quote was used from the same article, it could act in the positive! "Genuine phenomena were probably seen here also, and were observed and studied by Dr. Crawford."

To read in context all research, I believe, is of upmost importance to evaluate what is actually meant. The photographs below of the ectoplasmic structures are taken from "The Psychic Structures at the Goligher Circle" by Crawford, published in 1921 and not part of Carrington's book. The quotes are taken from "The Story of Psychic Science", published in 1930, "The Case of Kathleen Goligher (W.J. Crawford's Investigations)". Carrington concludes:



We have not, unfortunately, space to enter into the details of this theory of Dr. Crawford, and describe the many tests he devised in order to demonstrate its correctness. His books are filled with diagrams and figures, and are of extreme theoretical interest. The theory was also advanced that 'raps' were frequently made by means of this psychic arm, which tapped the floor or other object upon which raps were heard. Dr. Crawford placed trays of clay and putty on the floor of the room, and asked that raps be made upon this, in order that impressions might be obtained of the psychic structure doing the rapping. These impressions were obtained, and a number of photographs of these impressions have been published in Dr. Crawford's books.

Shortly before his death, Dr. Crawford succeeded in obtaining a number of flashlight photographs of the 'teleplasm' issuing from the body of the medium, and supporting the table. These were published in his posthumous work, Psychic Structures at the Goligher Circle. It must be admitted that they are dubious in appearance; at the same time, we do not know what curious forms genuine ectoplasm may take, and many of these have a striking resemblance to the photographs obtained in other cases—Eva C., Margery, etc.



In estimating the value of Dr. Crawford's work, two facts must not be lost sight of: (1) That, with rare exceptions, no other investigators had an opportunity to check-up his results, since outsiders were rarely admitted to the sittings. (2) That all the members of the family sat in the circle, and the medium did not sit alone with her investigators, as has been the case with practically all other mediums in the past. Because of these facts, doubt must always exist as to the validity of Crawford's conclusions. Further, Dr. E. E. Fournier D'Albe obtained a long series of sittings with the Goligher Circle, in 1921, and arrived at a completely negative result (see his book, *The Goligher Circle*). His conclusion was that no supernormal phenomena had occurred in his presence, throughout the entire series of sittings. It must be stated, on the other hand, that the methods of investigation and conclusions arrived at have not met with complete approval even by skeptical critics of the evidence. And there the case stands—for after the publication of Dr. Fournier D'Albe's book the medium refused to give any more sittings, and the case is apparently closed.

What may be the ultimate truth regarding it, we shall probably never know. Certain it is, however, that Dr. Crawford's tests are among the most ingenious ever undertaken, and I think it may be said that, in view of the undoubtedly genuine phenomena witnessed in the presence of Home, Palladino, and other mediums of this type,—genuine phenomena were probably seen here also, and were observed and studied by Dr. Crawford.

This article started with a letter from Harry Houdini in apparent conviction of mediumship sent to Dr William Jackson Crawford, to whom he wrote to affectionately as a friend. In 1924 Houdini published "A Magician Among the Spirits"[8] and on pages 173/4 (Ayer Co. Pub. reprint, 1998) Houdini states:

> While at Mr. Feilding's[9] home in London I had the pleasure of meeting this Dr. Crawford and talking with him for several hours. During the talk he showed me pictures of what he claimed was ectoplasm exuding from different parts of Kathleen Goligher's body and told me he was going to use them in a forthcoming book.
>
> "Do you honestly believe that everything you have experienced through your contact and experiments with the girl is absolutely genuine?" I asked him.
>
> "I am positive in my belief." he answered.
>
> After he had gone Mr. Feilding turned to me and asked:
>
> "What do you think of Dr. Crawford?"
>
> "He seems mad to me," I answered.
>
> "Houdini, you are mistaken," he replied.
>
> Nevertheless I do not think that Dr. Crawford was the right man or had the right sort of a mind for an investigation. To me his credulity seemed limitless. E. E. Fournier d'Albe's report of Dr. Crawford's seance with the Goligher Circle coincides with my judgment. In a communication addressed to "Light" in August 1922 d'Albe referring to his own tenth seance says:
>
> "I found to my surprise that I could myself with some little management, produce the phenomena with my feet exactly as I had observed them."
>
> Dr. Von Schrenk-Notzing charged d'Albe with entering his investigation with "prejudice against the genuineness of the Goligher phenomena." This d'Albe denied, ….

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Finally, two interesting articles appeared in Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 12, December 2013: "Five Experiments with Miss Kate Goligher by Mr. S. G. Donaldson" and "The Confession of Dr Crawford – Leslie Price".

The five experiments were undertaken in 1933 and the images recorded by infra-red; please consult the article for the reports.

[8] This is available to read on-line or to download illustrated

[9] Hon. Everard Feilding

HUNTER SELKIRK

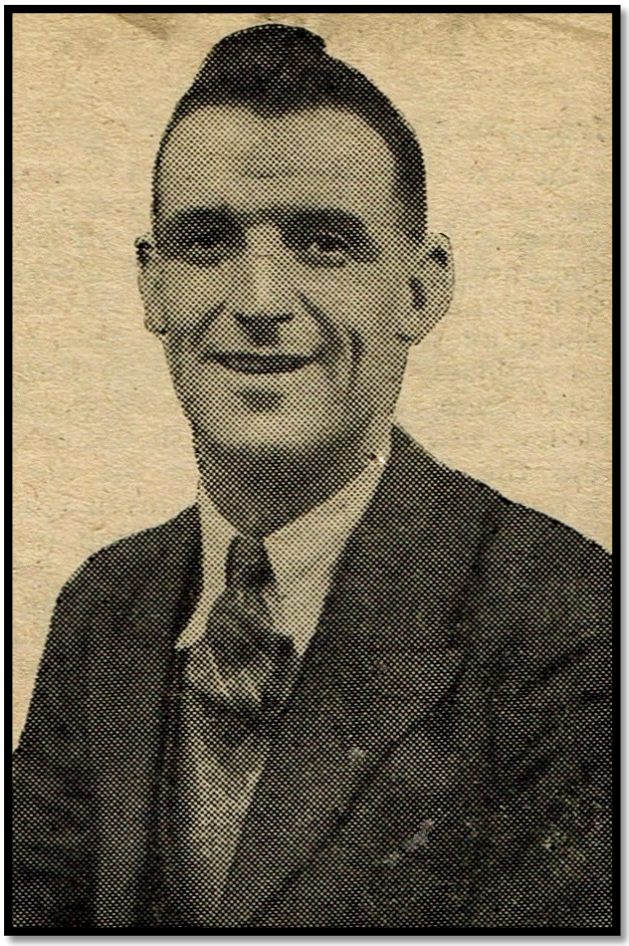
1900 - 1965

The name Hunter Selkirk is little recognised today unless you have had association with Craghead SNU Church, where his name is still very much alive. The Selkirks were very much involved in the history of the Church. This is clearly seen on the church website under the section, "History of our Church". On January 1st 1933 Craghead National Spiritualist Church was opened for the dedication of the religion of Spiritualist services. Later Hunter was its President for 13 years and his brother Jack for two years. In 1983 the church came into sole trust with the Spiritualists' National Union – please see its website.[3]

Much of the available information on Selkirk's mediumship appears to come from a book by Harry Emerson. Originally published in 1946, it describes the author's experiences with the medium; in 1984 it was republished by Craghead SNU Church. Other independent reports were published in the "Two Worlds"; below is taken from October 6th 1944, pages 270-71:

HUNTER SELKIRK

The Northern Trance Medium and Clairvoyant



ONE of the most popular and successful mediums in the Northern Counties is Mr. Hunter Selkirk, of Craghead, Durham, who has spent over twenty of the 44 years of his life in demonstrating the fact of human survival and the possibility of communion between the spirit world and this. Tall, dark and muscular, Mr. Selkirk is a collier working at the coal face, as was his father before him. He ventured to suggest in fact that cutting coal was even less exhausting than taking large propaganda meetings. That is perhaps due to the fact that when upon the platform he puts his whole energy into his work.

In a recent chat I learned that he was born in the neighbouring town of Pelton, Durham, and his parents were connected with the Church of England. From the early age of six he became accustomed to visions of spirit people. These occasioned no surprise. What did surprise him was the fact that other people did not see as he did. He later found that his visions were denizens of another world. When he was ten years of age his father was killed in the terrible explosion at the West Stanley Colliery and his mother was left to bring up a family of nine children. Life was hard, luxuries unknown, and education facilities small.

[3] Craghead Spiritualist Church: http://www.cragheadspiritualistchurch.btck.co.uk

A week after his father's death, Hunter saw him clearly standing at the bedside. He appeared in his pit dirt just as at the moment of death. His father impressed him with the care of his mother and gave him some advice. On telling his mother of the incident he was told he had been dreaming. Mrs. Hunter, however, must have taken the matter seriously for she told the Vicar, who decided that the boy's spiritual welfare needed supervision and drafted him into the Church choir. He often saw spirits in church and frequently received premonitions concerning worshippers who were about to pass over, and this peculiarity has become a regular part of his psychic life.

At 14 years of age, young Selkirk went into the coal pit to work, and there, with a brief break, he has laboured ever since.

Asked when he began to take a serious interest in Spiritualism he told me that when he was about 18 years of age, he decided to go to a New Year's dance at the Hedley Memorial Hall. On the way to the hall, however, his father appeared to him in the street, and said he was to go back, He took the advice, but hearing that a Spiritualist meeting was to be held at the same hall on the following Sunday, he decided to attend and see what it was like. The speaker was Mrs. Lovatt, and in the course of her clairvoyance she gave young Selkirk a striking description of his father with full details of his death. "You have seen him" she said, "and he asks me to say I want you to do the work this woman is doing and to help others as I am helping you. Cast thy bread upon the waters and it shall return to thee."

Mr. Selkirk became a regular attendant at the local Spiritualist society and sat in the developing circles, where his clairvoyance steadily strengthened. Subsequently he joined a "home circle" at the home of Mr. Barker, and this continued for seven years. He soon became entranced, gave evidential messages and delivered long addresses in the trance state. A good deal of physical phenomena also occurred, raps were heard, pictures moved, tables and other objects were levitated some feet away from him, materialised lights appeared, and these phenomena have characterised his mediumship ever since. Many people can testify to materialised forms having appeared at his circles—though he is not fond of physical phenomena and would much prefer those of mental type.

His first public meeting was at Green Street, Sunderland, over 20 years ago. There was a large audience, and he spoke in the deep trance state but gave no clairvoyance. The effort was so successful that he has been on the platform ever since. He soon added clairvoyant demonstrations to his trance addresses, and has received thousands of letters of thanks from sorrowing people to whom he has proved beyond doubt that their loved ones still live. Many years ago he joined the Craghead N.S. Church, and has been its treasurer for some years. He says that the loyalty of the northern folk have made his work a pleasure. He and the loyal band of workers have built a splendid brick church at Craghead which houses some 250 people. During the war the government have taken it over and the congregation meet in the Temperance Hall, but they are looking forward to a speedy return home, and increased activities.

Most of Mr. Selkirk's work has been confined to the Northern Counties. His work in the pit prevents long journeys, though he has paid occasional visits to London and Glasgow. Whilst the war lasts he refuses to be absent from the pit, but hopes when the world becomes sane, to take up public work over a larger area.

Mr. Selkirk recently gave splendid evidence at a large meeting addressed by Lord Dowding at the City Hall, Newcastle. Still a young man, he should have many years of useful service before him for God and the spirit world. All his brothers and sisters are Spiritualists, and his brother Jack also promises to follow in the footsteps of his elder brother.

The Northern Counties have produced many remarkable mediums and none more sincere and honest that Hunter Selkirk, whose happy, jocular, almost care-free temperament, makes it a joy to know him.

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Hunter's physical mediumship also included healing. One of the medium's guides/controls, simply named 'The Doctor', was known to materialise at the séances. Pioneer brings this to attention, as it has touched on another medium, Isa Northage. She was a physical medium and during her healing sessions her spirit doctor would materialise in full view of the sitters and the patient to perform his operations – he cured by removing growths, clots and bone splinters, etc.

Isa's doctor was called 'Dr. Reynolds' – please see Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 2, April 2016: "Spiritualist Healers of the Past – Isa Northage". (The series also looked at psychic healers as opposed to spiritual healers). The article published below by Grace W. Boyers DSNU, unfortunately, does not go into the healing side in much detail; it is taken from the "Two Worlds", May 9th 1947, front page and concluding on p. 147:

MATERIALISED SPIRIT DOCTOR GIVES HEALING

NORTHERN SINGERS STAGGERED BY PHYSICAL PHENOMENA

On the 17th March, 1947, a seance was held at the Craghead Spiritualist Church. There were nine sitters, present, and the medium was Mr. Hunter Selkirk.

Four of the sitters formed a well-known quartet of male voice singers, and after a very earnest prayer by Mr. J. Selkirk, the proceedings commenced with musical renderings beautifully sung by the quartet. After a short time the guide of the medium gave us greetings, assuring us that the conditions were good, which was subsequently well borne out.

With little or no delay there then began a succession of visits from those who normally now live in another sphere. First came Topsy, a lively, and thoroughly confident young girl, who was obviously very much at home and delighted to be with us. Her completely materialised form swept through the curtains, and she chatted briskly to all and sundry, with a quip and jest typical of any English youngster in high spirits on earth. She explained that her frequent appearances throughout the seance helped to regulate the force used for the production of the materialisations. She certainly carried a bright and happy influence through the evening, like a recurring theme song.

Lost her Earthly Disabilities

To one sitter came his mother, whom he acknowledged gladly, and with whom he carried on a conversation for some minutes. She spoke of the fact that she had quite lost her earthly disabilities, and of her happiness at being there. Close together, they stood in full view of the watching sitters. Hardly had she disappeared, when other fully materialised figures followed in quick succession.

Bobby, a young local lad, whose accent was so typically that of the district, caused much amusement. I found this contrast of voice and accent especially entrancing, and evidential, particularly as Bobby was succeeded by Jimmy, a Cockney boy as different from Bobby as could be imagined. Both exhibited a freedom in their movements, and entertained us with their special brands of humour.

A Spirit Kiss

Of deep interest to one sitter was the appearance of his brother. This young man came forth from the curtains, a tall, upright figure, bareheaded, and eager to make himself known to his brother. Giving his correct name, he shook hands with my companion and asked to be introduced to me. I was formally introduced to an individual in the ordinary conventional way our society demands! He kissed my hand with old world courtesy, then drew my head into the crook of his arm to implant a kiss lightly on my forehead! The soft drapery, clothing the arm, swept like gossamer over my face, delicate and slightly warm, but the touch and behaviour was that of a very real and alive personality.

To his brother he gave much evidential matter, which, by nature of its family reference, should remain private. It was, however; enough to cause the sitter to feel a little stunned by the visit. The complete naturalness of the visit, coupled with the fact that this was the first appearance of the brother since his passing many years ago, drew from the sitter renewed comment on the wonder of the phenomena, and it left a deep impression on many which is not likely to be forgotten.

Thunder Struck and Staggered

A former member of the quartet was a surprise visitor to the singers. Two of the number were attending a seance for the first time, and were, in their own words "thunderstruck and staggered" at the solid appearance of a man whom they had known some time before as one of their number. The visiting friend sang a little with the quartet as he retired, after thoroughly satisfying them of his identity.

To one sitter there came the tall and commanding figure of his guide, with whom he carried on a long conversation regarding his future work.

An unusual feature of the seance was the forceful presence of a French doctor, a guide of the medium, who all this time was in deep trance within the curtains. The doctor insisted on giving treatment to one of the sitters, who acknowledged that the guide certainly knew where the trouble was, and that, in his own words, "the power was terrific, nearly lifting me off my feet." This statement is remarkable, in view of the fact that he was talking of a materialised spirit doctor, not a man still in earthly flesh! This is a problem for those who maintain that the spirit people are but shadows or figments of the mind of either sitter or medium.

One Significant Word

To me personally, there came through the curtains a nun, a woman with whom I have been familiar all my life. Anyone who remembers a previous article of mine might remember that I mentioned the appearance of this woman at my bedside when I was a child of five, and whom I have seen frequently many times since. She spoke to me on this occasion of family things, and personal hopes, making use of one significant word. This meant nothing to anyone there whatsoever, but to me at that time it conveyed definite evidence of the knowledge, those we call our friends in spirit, have of our affairs on this side of life.

Disappeared above Sitters

Towards the end of the seance Topsy returned and came round one side of the curtain, took the seat offered her by Mr. Jack Selkirk, swung her legs free of the floor for a few minutes, then came into the centre of the semi-circle to chat with us for a short while. She then took upon herself a more gracious form of a spirit progressed, and her childish irresponsibility gave place to a wise philosophy, with which she slowly drew the seance to an end, finally disappearing *above* us.

Prayer and thanks concluded a wonderful evening.

In all, there were no less than nine fully formed materialised forms, several of them making more than one appearance, most of them free of the curtains some time during their visit. It would be difficult to believe they were anything but what they claimed to be—visitors from another sphere, so closely in touch with our own as to make their contact with us only a matter of the right conditions. If that were not enough, then the evidence they brought of their separate individual selves is further testimony of their memory and continued regard for those they love and seek still in this earth life.

Additional Notes of Seance

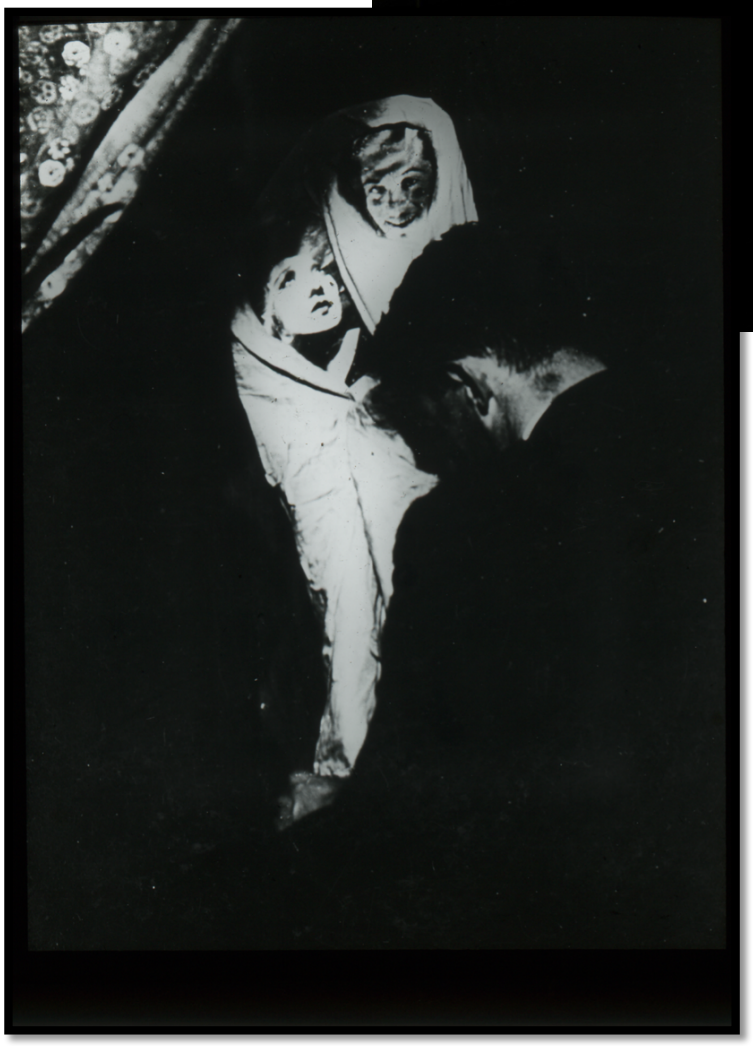
By JACK SELKIRK

The Apollo Quartet, Mr. Todd, Mr. A. Todd, Mr. Swarm, and Mr. Hetherington, came from South Shields. The sitter who received his mother was the tenor of the quartet, Mr. Hetherington. After they had ended their private talk she asked him to sing, and as he stood and sang that beautiful old hymn, “Abide with Me,” she knelt in the centre of the circle in prayer. Something happened near the end of this séance which has never happened before in any of our seances, Topsy and the quartet were singing, “The End of a Perfect Day,” when a beautiful, snow white dove flew out of the top of the cabinet right over the heads of the sitters, it did this twice, then came and perched upon my shoulder, cooing and fluttering its wings; once it touched my cheek with its bill. As the last note of the old song lingered in that little room, Topsy rose slowly towards the top of the cabinet, with the dove fluttering around her. It was something I shall remember for a long time.

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Another reason Pioneer brings the above article to attention is because in a recent donation to the Britten Museum & Library by the Lyceum Union are contained two rare lantern slides of Hunter Selkirk's materialisations, one being 'The Doctor', referenced in the above article. There are no details given about this photograph, apart from "Hunter Selkirk and his well-known French doctor guide".





This second photograph is taken at the same unknown location as the image of the Doctor; the images of the two young ladies are said to be "Iza and Nellie the flower girl – guides of Mrs. Cook a member of the Selkirk circle. Photograph taken June 7th 1932". This suggests the other image will be around the same date; it also gives the name Bob Ellis? Maybe the photographer is a circle member or totally unrelated.[4]

[4] If we look at ectoplasm through the heyday of materialisation, there are similarities in its make-up, in procedure almost like a design of a phase of development; but given that it is physical phenomena, it is of course open to normal means, i.e. both can achieve the same effect.

I believe this image shows Hunter Selkirk and his circle, or maybe a general séance



The article below gives a good overview of a Hunter Selkirk séance. It is taken from the front page of the "Two Worlds", July 4th 1947, concluding on page 210. The photograph shown was published within the article:

THE ASCENSION OF A MATERIALISED SPIRIT

WONDERFUL PHENOMENA DRAMATICALLY DEMONSTRATES THE TRUTH OF SURVIVAL

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On Monday, June 16th, a small group of Spiritualists met at the Craghead Spiritualist Church to sit with the well-known north country medium, Mr. Hunter Selkirk. (The proceeds of his seances go to the Church Building Fund, and he has raised £100 during the last six months. The Church will be paid for in the Autumn!) To sit for the phenomena of materialisation is a very serious undertaking for any medium, but Hunter Selkirk appears to regard the matter as nonchalantly as any other incident in his daily routine. He arrived at 6-20 p.m., gay and lighthearted, and enjoyed a cup of tea and a smoke before the seance, which began at 6-30 p.m. Quite informally he stubbed his cigarette and, in his working clothes, walked over to a chair in the corner of the room, and speedily passed into the trance state. The chair was situated in front of the space to be used as a cabinet. So far the curtains were not drawn. Quietly and quickly a group of about twelve people followed and gathered round him in a roughly formed semi-circle.

Good Vibrations

When all were settled, Jack Selkirk, the medium's brother, offered a very sincere invocation. Then Zuru, the medium's guide, gave a few words of welcome to the members of the circle, after which he lifted the chair (still under him) and stepped backwards into the corner, requesting the curtains to be drawn in readiness for the seance. Before allowing the materialised forms to appear he passed the remark that the vibrations were very good. During the phenomena that followed, from a visitor's point of view, the super-normal happenings that took place were more evidential than the conversations which ensued between some of the forms and the sitters. One or two



A MATERIALISED SPIRIT VISITOR AT HUNTER SELKIRK'S SEANCE

spirits had been before several times, and were quite at ease when talking to their earthly friends, but as the conversations were more in the nature of seance re-unions, there was no special attempt at establishing detailed evidence in these cases.

Spirit Levitated.

At the commencement of the manifestations a pillar of ectoplasm seemed to form at the parting of the curtain. This, in the dim red light, seemed motionless for a time and then quite suddenly took on the human characteristics of a young vivacious girl named Topsy, whose mission seemed to be that of cheering everyone into a happy and lighthearted frame of mind. She quite knowingly explained that the motive was primarily to create good conditions for successful phenomena. Having raised the vibrations, she said that she was going to be levitated. "Hold hands everybody!" she exclaimed suddenly, and as we did so, the lower end of her ectoplasmic skirts moved outwards and upwards until her body was bent and suspended at shoulder height in mid air!

Topsy's Mission.

In this position she passed a witty remark about being "neither up nor down." She looked as if she were reclining in an invisible hammock. Then she dropped again, more quickly, and the sound of her feet could be heard as she touched the floor again. Topsy is one of the regular band of spirit helpers who work with Hunter Selkirk, in their joint mission to provide convincing evidence of spirit return, and she was just as much at ease in her ectoplasmic garments as Hunter had been a few minutes previously smoking his cigarette, and her loud voice rang and resounded throughout the room. Her witty remarks would be heard quite plainly in the church although the seance room door was closed.

A Tall Nun.

A much taller figure, that of a Nun, appeared and beckoned one of the lady sitters to come and stand close to her. She informed this lady that she was constantly with her and had assumed the role of spiritual guardian from her childhood days, and was now delighted to have the opportunity of seeing her in material form. The tall Nun then turned to the lady's husband and thanked him for his earthly guardianship in more recent years, and as a sign of loving affection kissed his cheek, returning a minute later to that world of spirit from whence she had come. The husband explained later how, when the nun had gone, he had regretted not having asked for her name—his wife being almost speechless with wonderment at her unique experience to think of this important detail.

Mind Reading.

With this question on the fringe of his mind he awaited the appearance of the next figure to ask for this information. It was Jimmy, Selkirk's Cockney guide, who immediately asked this gentleman if he wanted to ask a question! Taken by surprise, the gentleman asked for the Nun's name. "I'll ask," said Jimmy. "I won't be a 'crack'." Re-appearing, after conferring with his spirit colleagues, he informed his enquirer that the "lidy was from Spine (Spain) and her nime was Juanita." He then explained how the Nun's aura blended with that of the sitter and because of this she was able to carry out her work as spirit guardian. Jimmy then broke into song and sang his party piece—'The Lambeth Walk' with which he was joined by the members of the circle. (Jimmy had been killed during one of the blitzes on London during the recent war.) A further

materialised figure claimed contact with another member of the circle, but appeared to be under great difficulty in the more dense earthly conditions, yet conveyed great anxiety to establish his identity.

North American Indian Healer.

Zuru then intervened and announced that a giant North American Indian guide had come to speak to Mr. Aikman, and asked him to prepare himself to see a very big man and not to be afraid. Everyone gasped when a colossal figure, very tall and powerfully built, appeared and beckoned Mr. Aikman towards him. The atmosphere became distinctly colder as this mighty figure emerged. When asked for his name, he informed his earthly friend that it was 'Dawn'. In a heavy, deep, and sonorous bass voice he exclaimed, "Me bring you strong power. Me help you because you worth it." (Mr. Aikman suffers from ulcers in the stomach which has a weakening effect upon him). After he had conversed a little longer, and taken his departure, Topsy reappeared to brighten up the vibrations again. "Has he gone?" she asked mischievously, which made everyone laugh, and recover from their spell-bound attitude arising from the appearance of the "Thunderstorm," as Topsy called him. She then told us that he was a tribal chief and still conversed with his tribesmen in "a Redskin river valley."

Family Reunions.

A spirit called Willie Wilkinson then appeared and held a conversation with his father, who was present. Prior to his transition (March 3rd, 1931) he had been organist at Kyo Laws Choir, Annfield Plain. This was his sixth appearance in ectoplasm, and he told his father more news about his musical activities on "the Other Side." The next re-union was between Mrs. B. M. Mather and her spirit husband. He referred to his sister, who passed over ten months after him, and her baby which had been left behind. "Isn't he a fine chap?" he said. "If only things had been different," he added regretfully, inferring the fact that they had not been blessed with children. A cultured spirit gentleman then beckoned another sitter to him. He was a smaller man than the medium, with a definitely smaller face, on which there was to be seen a typical 'van Dyke' beard. His name was Dowell Todd of Sunderland, a former President of the Northern District Council. He gave a personal message for a former colleague.

Spiritual Transformation.

Upon his departure, Jack Selkirk commenced singing a hymn, during which Topsy put her head through the curtains and said, 'Jackie, desist! You sound like a lost sheep upon the mountain—one little blare!" The atmosphere was changed again into one of gaiety and laughter. She became more serious however as the seance drew to a close, and said that she would now be "transformed into what I am" (an older and very wise person in spiritual reality). "If, in the days to come," she said to the sitters, "you need a friend, your call shall be heard where I am now going. I shall now throw off my physical garments and assume my spiritual ones, as you will all do some day."

Ascension of Spirit Form.

She then asked us to sing a farewell hymn and as we complied with her request she began to ascend before us. She looked beautiful as she began to rise, without any visible means of support, into the space above us. As she reached a level near the top of the cabinet, and well above our heads, she slowly assumed a horizontal position and returned to her medium through the top of the cabinet. She was apparently already de-materialising, as it was noticed that her body partly penetrated the metal rod supporting the curtains. This was indeed a wonderfully convincing and beautiful sight, which left no doubt in our minds that we had been experiencing the "communion of spirits and the ministry of angels."

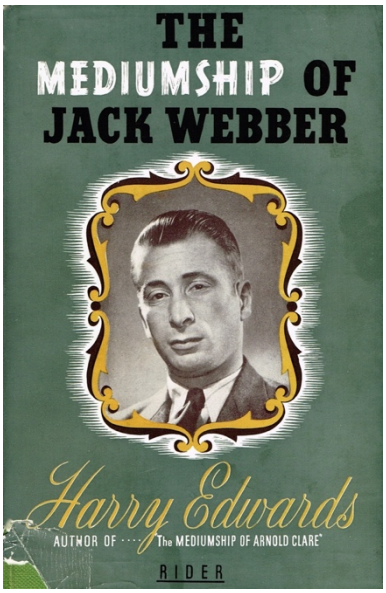
JACK WEBBER

John Boaden Webber

1907 - 1940

"At Birmingham twenty-six roses were apported into the circle through closed doors and windows and were distributed to the twenty-six sitters.
(The number of people sitting was not determined until the very last moment).

"Psychic News," July 8th 1939"



Webber's life was short. His prime public work as a physical medium was achieved over a fourteen-month period from late 1938, producing numerous photographs of his psychic phenomena by flashlight and infrared photography. His mediumship at the time was well covered within the Spiritualist press, the "Two Worlds", "Psychic News", etc.; today his mediumship is kept alive in Harry Edwards' book, "The Mediumship of Jack Webber", published in July 1940 shortly after his death on March 9th 1940, aged thirty-three.[2]

Edwards first encountered Webber in Hendon, London in April 1938; he notes in his Foreword in 1939:

"…over four thousand persons witnessed the phenomena, from small home circles to mass seances of five hundred people."

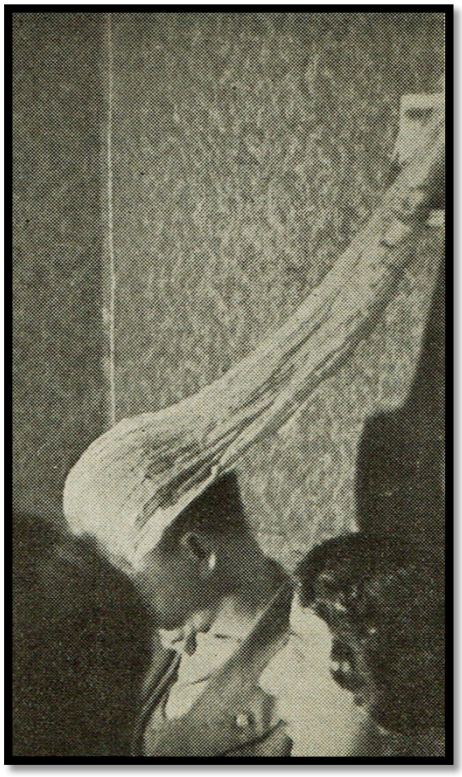
The article below is taken from the "Two Worlds", June 30th 1939:

ECTOPLASM EXAMINED

SEEN AND HANDLED BY EXPERIMENTERS.

MR. HARRY EDWARDS reports that experiments are still proceeding with the remarkable mediumship of Mr. Jack Webber, and we publish herewith a photograph of an ectoplasmic structure which was taken at Webber's private developing circle, which shows a remarkable ectoplasmic effect.[3]

Prior to the photograph being taken, the guide had given permission to the sitters sitting on each side of the medium to handle the ectoplasm, and to unfold it. The width of this ectoplasmic structure was about one yard and a half, and required the effort of two of the sitters to unfold it to its extreme width. The formation was very clammy to the touch, the sitters testified that it felt like a closely woven silk, and that it was possessed of a peculiar odour.



[2] A PDF of the book can be downloaded free.

[3] The only photograph with this article is shown below; this image is elsewhere in the same issue.

Ectoplasm seen and Handled

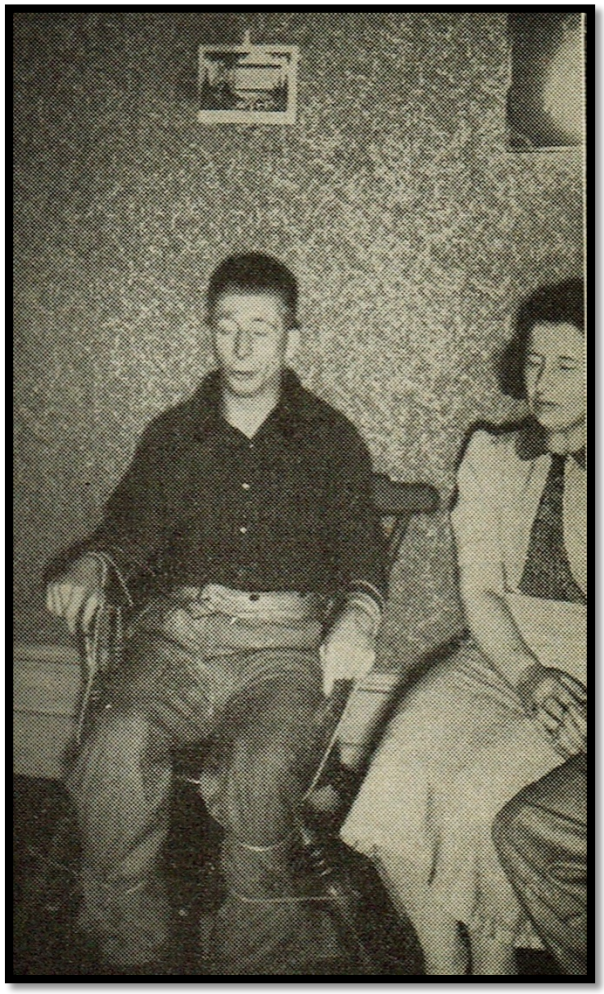
On another occasion at this same seance, the ectoplasm was seen by the aid of a red light operated by the spirit controls themselves, to reach from Mr. Webber's mouth to the floor, it was spread out for several feet in front of him, being approximately two to three yards in length.

The return of the ectoplasm to the medium appears to take place in a fraction of a second. This has been carefully witnessed in red light. One moment the ectoplasm is extended before the medium, then a swish is heard, and with tremendous rapidity, it disappears into the medium's body so quickly that the eye cannot follow it. One moment it is there, the next it has gone.

What have regurgitationists to say to this?

The chair was smashed

Another remarkable happening at Mr. Webber's seance was the fact that a heavy Windsor chair was smashed to pieces. The seat of the chair, one and a quarter inches thick, was broken across in two places, the arm of the chair was broken off where it joined the back, and the legs and supporting bars were wrenched out.



This incident happened to the armchair in which Jack Webber was bound, when it was brought to the floor after the medium had been levitated in the chair. An effort was being made to photograph, by infra-red rays, the medium bound to the chair, while still levitated.

A few minutes previously, Webber had been taken up into the air, and had descended with considerable force. The controls were endeavouring to repeat the feat when the descent of the chair was so forceful as to break it in pieces. The photograph on another page shows the armchair actually in the process of being broken up, and readers will notice the entire absence of tension of the medium's body; there is no downward force being exerted by him as far as can be seen.

Tremendous Force Necessary

The nature of the physical force necessary to break up a chair in this manner arouses interesting problems. Assuming the medium was levitated two to three feet, and suddenly dropped, this would not account for the force required to smash the chair. The most reasonable thesis is that the very considerable psychic forces which were used to lift the chair and medium in the air were suddenly reversed, thus accentuating the descent.

It is also noteworthy that when the medium is entranced and such an unusual incident occurs, rendering the physical body of the medium liable to injury, or when, during a seance, the trumpets return with a force, striking the medium's head, there has never been any harm done to the medium himself, not even a reddening of the skin. Normally, of course, such incidents would severely bruise or cut the medium.

The incidents described above took place in Mr. Webber's own developing circle in a red light, and in addition to the usual sitters, Mr. Bernard Grey (of the *Daily Mirror*), Mrs. Grey, and Mr. Leon Isaacs were present.[4]

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The above séance is mentioned in Edwards' book but not referenced to the above article; however, the photographs, which were taken by Leon Isaacs, are reproduced in the book. It is noted that Bernard Grey of the "Daily Mirror" lived in Wembley. As a journalist he published a report of a séance he attended on May 24th 1939, which covered a two-page spread in the "Sunday Pictorial". He prefaced his report with an affidavit swearing that what took place happened and was true.[5]

The article which follows is an earlier report and gives a more detailed look into Webber's mediumship. It was published on the front page and continued on page 50 on January 27th 1939 in the "Two Worlds", by their Special Reporter:

The Mediumship of Jack Webber



FULL FACE MATERIALISATIONS

ON Friday, January 20th, I attended a seance conducted by Jack Webber at the premises of Mr. Harry Edwards, in Balham, London, in the company of Mr. H. B. Millar, who was in charge of the recording arrangements, made possible by the use of his portable "Phono-Disc" recording apparatus.

Other than the equipment necessary for the seance, such as luminous plaques, skipping rope, small handbell, three metal trumpets, etc., chairs for the sitters, there were no unnecessary fittings or fixtures; the room was [lofty?] and the ceiling well out of reach of anyone who might have attempted to touch it, even standing on a chair—a point which is of importance when considering the phenomena which occurred later.

[4] Leon Isaacs took many of the photographs of Webber's seances. Photography does not necessarily show genuine mediumship, as unscrupulous mediums may use tricks. Pioneer has previously published the séance photographs by Leon Isaacs with Ronald Cockersell, who tricked Isaacs; the photographs are shown in Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 1, February 2017: "Leon Isaacs – Pioneer of infra-red séance photography – Britain's Greatest Seance Room Photographer – Two Worlds".

[5] The paper may well have been in the Mirror Group- the "Sunday Pictorial" was renamed the Sunday Mirror in 1963.

Prior to the sitters assembling in the circle, two of us were invited to secure the medium to his chair with a single length of stout rope; a lady first obliged by sewing the medium's jacket securely with white thread—I examined her handiwork, approved it, and proceeded to rope the medium in a fashion which must have caused him considerable physical discomfort, the other sitter making himself responsible for the remainder of the roping. A microphone stood in the centre of the circle, I seated myself next-but-one to the medium, and practically as soon as the lights were extinguished, the heavy breathing of the medium indicated that a supernormal condition had supervened.

General levitation of the equipment, which had been placed on a small table in the corner of the room, first occurred. The path of the levitated articles could be easily followed by the bands of luminous paint which supplied a phosphorescent glow in the darkness.

I was careful to note that various objects, trumpets, small bell, etc., were floating well out of reach of the entranced medium. The trumpets occasionally rose to the ceiling, and could be heard tapping against the plaster. I was fortunate, enough during the seance to witness practically the whole of the phenomena that occurred. The small hand-bell floated across, a glowing ball of metal, and remained poised before my face. I invited it to touch me, which it did, gently moving across my face in a manner which satified me that it was actually floating. Then it drew back a yard or so, and suddenly flew towards me at a speed which made me draw back involuntarily. It continued across the room, in a flashing arc of phosphorescent light, so quickly did it travel.

At this juncture, the sitters were told by the entranced medium (presumably under the control of a guide) to put on the lights; this was done and I observed the ropes to be in their original positions, and noticed a trumpet by his side, rocking gently as though it had just come to rest. Lights were extinguished again, and a mass of material fell across my feet. On putting the lights up, it proved to be the medium's jacket; still sewn across the front; the ropes were still intact.

Then the seance began in earnest: floating objects paid me considerable attention. For instance, a trumpet crossed the room and repeated the procedure observed by the bell at an earlier stage; first, the mouthpiece passed gently across my face, then the body of the megaphone, finally, the trumpet-end, in a fashion which demonstrated the unquestionable nature of the levitation.

A luminous plaque—a piece of plywood some nine inches by four—coated with luminous paint, floated across to me, and hovered before my face; I invited the plaque to repeat the performance of the trumpet, which it did, bringing the luminous surface within half-an-inch of my nose. I must mention that during the whole of the seance, the sitters' hands were linked round the circle.

A pair of castanets rose in the centre of the circle, crossed to me, and rapped out a well-marked rhythm on my head; they then floated back across the room to a different tempo, occasionally tapping the frame from which the microphone was suspended.

Occasionally, a trumpet crossed to the medium, tapping his arms, shoulders and head, presumably with a view to indicating that he was still in his ropes.

Prior to this, nothing evidential of spirit return had occurred, apart from the physical phenomena which were undoubtedly supernormally produced.

A control announced that an attempt would be made at recording; Mr. Millar prepared his task in the dark—and a record was soon ready for cutting. A trumpet rose to the microphone, and a powerful baritone voice led the singing of a hymn. Mr. Millar informed the voice that the volume of sound was likely to distort the recording owing to the nearness of the trumpet to the microphone; whereupon, it immediately withdrew a foot or two, still floating above the circle.

The recording was played back immediately on the same machine, to the great satisfaction of the sitters, who found it an exciting experience to hear their lusty voices as a background to the fine singing which had come through the trumpet. This procedure was repeated, and several good records secured. "Paddy," Jack Webber's youthful control, spoke without the trumpet; his childish treble, with its Celtic lilt, advised the sitters to carefully consider the phenomena they had witnessed and apply the lesson they had learned to their ordinary lives. A three-minute record was thus secured, the play-back being made on "Paddy's" request, when he demanded the same treatment which had been accorded to the other voices. Mr. Millar is to be congratulated on the fine results which were secured under difficult conditions; the co-operation of the unseen operators was also noticeable; when Mr. Millar announced that the end of the record was approaching, for example, whatever was being said by the communicator was quickly brought to an end.[6]

Again, although the nature of the communications was not always evidential, these were fine demonstrations of direct-voice.

For me, the most outstanding event of the seance was the materialisation of two faces. A luminous plaque rose from the floor, and came within a few inches of my face; rising from it, partially concealed in what appeared to be a shining band of material, some two inches wide, was the face of a woman—I should estimate her to be between 40 and 50 years of age; it was perhaps a little larger than three-quarters life size, and near enough to me for me to observe the fine moulding of the features, which were illuminated with the glow from the plaque. Particularly, I noticed the nose and nostrils, which seemed to be perfectly chiselled as from alabaster or some similar material.

A Living Face

The face was quite solid—three dimensional, without colouring, but obviously alive; I encouraged it to talk while it floated there, resting on the plaque which was quite unsupported. The lips moved in attempt to answer me, but produced that strange "ticking" sound that seems to precede any attempt at speech under these occasions. Eventually, the woman whispered "I have no pain now; I do not suffer as I used to . . . . isn't it glorious . . . . mother." The information was not for me, nor was it claimed by the others. Then the plaque withdrew, and the face disappeared.

Afterwards, when discussing this phenomenon with an observer, he remarked "While you were staring at it, I did something which might have had me thrown out—I passed my hand all round the plaque; there was nothing there!"

The woman's face was remarkable for the fine moulding of the features—almost like a piece of Greek sculptury; the absence of skin-creases probably accentuated this, and while it was obviously the face of a mature woman, there was a suggestion of youthfulness about it. The eyes were partly in shadow, owing to the lighting arising from the plaque, so that it was difficult to determine whether or not they had been materialised;

[6] A recording of another séance with one of Webber's alleged controls, "Reuben", singing via direct voice can be heard: Google "Jack Webber's Spirit Control - Reuben".

yet during the; whole time the face remained there—a matter of several minutes—there was no suggestion of eyeless sockets.

The second face, which appeared after an interval during which records were made, and the earlier physical phenomena were repeated, also came across to within a few inches of my face, supported by the luminous plaque.

This time, the strong masculine features were surmounted with a white, typically Egyptian head-dress; the long, Roman nose gave it a look of severity and the eyes—what I could see of them, looked piercingly into mine. This face was unlike its predecessor in that there was a suggestion of swarthiness about it. Pronounced facial ridges in the flesh enhanced the severe expression, and the set of the jaw and mouth suggested a powerful character. Several times, the head bowed in front of me, and, projecting from the headdress, I noticed a triangular device which stood out, and threw a shadow back on the forehead. I heard other sitters commenting on the "hair"; they apparently overlooked this triangular projection, which had its base in the head-dress, and apex standing well out from the head. It seemed to be constructed from different material, and was evidently not intended to be overlooked. I commented on it, and, after remaining in front of me for a brief period, the head withdrew and disappeared.

Head-dress Device

This, too, was solid, and three dimensional in appearance, certainly more life-like than the first, nearer to life-size, and without the mask-like appearance that characterised the first, before it spoke.

Needless to say, there were no sitters in the room resembling either face. I later learned that the device in the head-dress corresponded to that worn by priests and officials of the ancient Egyptian temples; it apparently signified rank in the temple—this no doubt explains the repeated endeavours of the head to draw my attention to the device.

Shortly afterwards, the seance came to an end. The medium was still in his ropes and the equipment was lying about the floor of the room. Several good records had been secured, although one or two attempts to communicate via direct voice with other sitters were poor.

Trance States

Considering the seance afterwards, it occurred to me that the apparently meaningless levitation of articles, rapping of castanets, etc., corresponded with the ebb and flow of the trance state. Like other states of consciousness, mediumistic trance is not a static condition; under seance-room conditions, there seems to be a marked "tide," which, on the influx, brings remarkable phenomena such as the faces I have described, and on withdrawing, leaves behind the simple levitation of articles. This seems to be repeated until the energy is exhausted.

Investigators would be wise to consider this point before condemning the strange and apparently inexplicable levitation of articles such as castanets, skipping ropes, bells, etc.

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Editor's Note:

Not knowing the person who wrote the above report rather inhibits the full credibility of the report; part of the report is *quoted* in Edwards' book and referenced but the direct *quote* is edited, removing, for example, "The information was not for me, nor was it claimed by the others" (referring to the alleged materialised head).

Harry Edwards' destiny was to become one of the movement's finest spiritual healers. He began his investigation into Spiritualism in 1936, then starting to sit for his development and becoming aware of his healing potential, as well as trance speaking and clairvoyance. Webber for around two years was under his sponsorship, moving to London and working as a professional physical medium. Harry Edwards was the head of the 'Balham Psychic Research Society,' under whose auspices Webber worked. It should be noted that Edwards had only been in Spiritualism for around eighteen months or so and could not at this time be considered as an experienced psychical researcher into the various phenomena said to be exhibited by his friend Jack Webber.

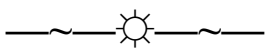
The Spiritualist weekly journals of the day are the best source of information, reporting the unfolding reports of the events shortly after they happened; as soon as the reports were reproduced, they became edited and often out of context, etc.

The journal reports were mostly fair, which may be in favour of the medium or maybe against, giving a balanced view of the original accounts. The genuineness of the mediumship was regulated by the Spiritualist press and their readers. Many physical mediums were publicly exposed by the journals by Spiritualists.

The reports published in 1940 in "The Mediumship of Jack Webber" are selective and positive accounts of Webber's mediumship, but when readers read the original amazing accounts of his remarkable mediumship within the journal pages in 1938/9, Webber's mediumship was beginning to be questioned by some sitters.

One criticism was that Webber used *one* length of rope, which, when slack, could be taken up and be able to release his arms freely; also pointed out is the fact that *all paraphernalia was placed on a table on the medium's immediate right*.[7] These points can be clearly observed in some of the photographs published in the 1940 book. The challenge to Webber's mediumship was potentially damning, starting in the February 17th 1939 issue of the "Two Worlds". The paper published both sides of the controversy over some months. In the issue cited above its editor, former SNU President Ernest Oaten (1919-1945), made these remarks:

> Editorial remarks.—Since *The Two Worlds* has repeatedly given publicity to Mr. Webber on the testimony of various people who have sat with him, and of photographs received, we are obliged, in the interests of truth, to publish the foregoing. Our sole desire is that the facts should be made known. The above are statements of eye-witnesses pro. And con.[8] We are glad that there was no flash and grab, a form of procedure with which we have no sympathy. After carefully reading the statements on both sides, one can only conclude that evidence on either side is inconclusive. A majority of the sitters, at any rate, are satisfied that evidence for the actuality of psychic phenomena is lacking.



[7] "Mr. Webber's Mediumship Questioned", published in the "Two Worlds", February 17th 1939.

[8] As the previous footnote, not published in this issue of Pioneer.

PART ONE:

Spiritualistic phenomena of the past

In the history of Modern Spiritualism there have been many variations of physical mediumship; some of these phases were fleeting and not generally repeated as the various types of phenomena developed or simply seem to have disappeared. Over the next few issues Pioneer will be looking back to the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Starting off with James J. Morse, the following article describes how he was changed as regards the dimensions of his body, arms and hands: [22]

ELONGATION AND SHORTENING OF MEDIUM



"On Friday, August 12th, Mr. Morse was entranced in our office, and the controlling spirit elongated his body in various ways. The medium was made to kneel down with his chest against the end of the table and his arms placed on the top of it. In this position it was impossible for him to move his body forward. His left arm was first stretched till the bones in the shoulder were felt to be considerably apart, and till it was about three inches longer than the other arm. Then the right arm was stretched, and afterwards both were contracted. Measurements were being rudely taken, when the spirit requested that a measuring tape should be used. The natural length of the medium's hand was ascertained to be 7½ inches, which became elongated to 9 inches, and was afterwards reduced to 6¾ inches. The medium then sat upon a chair, when his chest was expanded, previous to which it measured 13 inches across, but after expansion it was 17¼ inches. This was not accomplished by simply inflating the lungs, as the spirit spoke through the medium all the time, and gave directions as to how the measurement should be taken. The medium then sat upright, and it was found that from the corner of the shoulder-bone to the seat of the chair, measured 24 inches. After the elongation of the body, which was not effected by the medium rising from the seat in any degree, the elevation of the shoulder-bone from the chair was 27½ inches, and after contraction this measurement was reduced to 19¾ inches. These changes seemed to be effected without effort or straining.

"The controlling spirit stated that these elongations were effected by the will-power of himself and another spirit. Each atom of the body and aggregation of atoms forming tissues and organs could be made the objects of this will-power and shaped accordingly. The spirits not only used their own will, but stimulated the latent will of the medium."

[22] Published in *The Medium & Daybreak,* August 19th 1870, and cited in the *Spiritual Magazine*, 1870, p. 401. The quote is taken from *The Facts of Psychic Science* by A. Campbell Holms, 1969, University Books Inc., N.Y. (originally published 1925), pages 317-318.

Below is taken from "The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism Fraudulent and Genuine" by Hereward Carrington, published in 1907, pages 394-399.

It gives the testimony of psychical researcher Mr Henry Diedrich Jencken, barrister-at-law. Henry, incidentally, was married to the younger Fox sister in December 14th 1872 in London; Kate became known as Kate Fox Jencken. Jencken over several séances investigated the phenomena of elongation with the medium Daniel Home in 1867. There is also the testimony of the Master of Lindsay (the Earl of Crawford), who in December 1868 witnessed Home's levitation, where it is alleged he levitated out of a window and floated back through the window in which the witnesses were seated.

Another case of elongation is quoted with the medium Mr Alfred Peters in 1900, investigated by the sceptical Frank Podmore, an influential member of the Society for Psychical Research. His report was published in the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research, *suggesting* how these phenomena could be produced by trickery:[23]

Elongation

Another of the marvellous feats witnessed in Home's presence was that of "elongation," in which the medium's body was apparently, lengthened or drawn out a number of inches, and quite beyond the limits of any normal extension possible. This is one of the best attested, and at the same time one of the most incredible phenomena witnessed in this medium's presence, varied as those phenomena were. One or two typical reports of this phenomenon are as follows:



"Mr H. D. Jencken, of Norwood, England, communicates, under the date of December, 1867, his experiences at four séances, at which the body of D. D. Home was elongated; and on all these occasions, Mr. J. used his utmost endeavor to make certain of the fact. On two of them, he had the amplest opportunity of examining Mr. Home, and measured the actual elongation and shortening. At one, the extension appeared to take place at the waist, and the clothing separated eight or ten inches. Mr. J., who is six feet, hardly reached up to Home's shoulder. Walking to and fro, Home especially called attention to the fact of his feet being firmly planted on the ground. 'He then grew shorter,' says Mr. J., 'until he only reached my shoulder, his waistcoat overlapping at his hip. . . . Encouraging every mode of testing the truth of this marvellous phenomenon, Mr. Home made me hold his feet, whilst the Hon. Mr.— placed his hands on his head and shoulders. The elongation was repeated three times. Twice, whilst he was standing, the extension, measured on the wall by the Hon Mr—, showed eight inches; the extension at the waist, as measured by Mr.—, was six inches; and the third time the

[23] Pioneer: Unfortunately, there are no details given of the actual séance procedure, e.g. whether the medium was searched before or after, etc. In a case like this it would have been beneficial for Alfred Peters to have been searched.

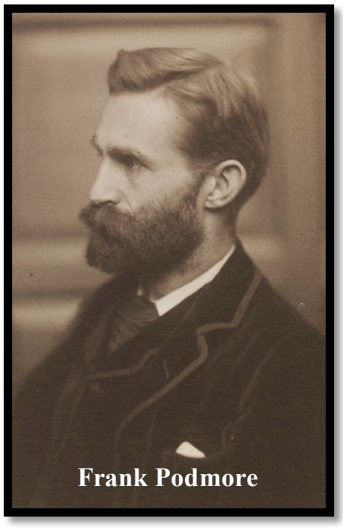
elongation occurred, Mr. Home was seated next to Mrs. —, who placed her hand on his head, and her feet on his feet, had the utmost difficulty in keeping her position, as Mr. Home's body grew higher and higher; the extreme extension reached being six inches.'"[24]

Very much the same description of the phenomenon was given by the Master of Lindsay (the Earl of Crawford), as follows:

". . . I saw Mr. Home, in a trance, elongated eleven inches. I measured him standing up against the wall, and marked the place; not being satisfied with that, I put him in the middle of the room, and placed a candle in front of him, so as to throw a shadow on the wall, which I also marked. When he awoke I measured him again in his natural size, both directly and by the shadow, and the results were equal. I can swear that he was not of the ground or standing on tiptoe, as I had full view of his feet, and moreover, a gentleman present had one of his feet placed over Home's insteps, one hand on his shoulder, and the other on his side where the false ribs come near the hip-bone. . . . The top of the hip-bone and the short ribs separate. In Home, they are usually close together. There was no separation of the vertebrae of the spine; nor were the elongations at all like those resulting from expanding the chest with air; the shoulders did not move. Home looked as if he was pulled up by the neck; the muscles seemed in a state of tension. He stood firmly in the middle of the room, and, before the elongation commenced, I placed my foot on his instep. I will swear he never moved his heels from the ground."[25]

It is true that there are several minor defects in the records, as given above, which detract from the strength of the evidence. Thus, it is hard to see how the Earl of Crawford had a "full view" of the medium's feet, when we learn that they were covered by the feet of another sitter; nothing is said as to the amount of light admitted at these séances, and it is very suspicious that the vertebrae did not separate, when the length of the elongation would seem to call for such separation, if genuine. However, the defects in the report seem to me to be such as would be made by any person drawing up a report of unusual occurrences; minor inaccuracies exist, but the central facts seem to have been carefully noted, and rather more than the usual care exercised against fraud. It is hard to consider seriously this phenomenon as genuine; but, on the other hand, if we are to keep an open mind, what *right* have we to dismiss the phenomenon as impossible or inconceivable, merely because it is not understandable? If we had been at the séance in question, it is possible that our belief would be as strong as those who recorded the phenomena; for the present, it would seem best to hold our judgment in suspense, awaiting further evidence.

A case of apparent elongation occurred in 1900; it was investigated by Mr. Podmore, and a report of the case printed in Journal S. P. R., Vol. X., pp. 104-9. In this case the medium, Mr. Alfred Peters, stood in the corner of the room, which was poorly lighted, and, after being "controlled," began swaying backward and forward. Two sitters stationed themselves one on either side of the medium, placed their feet on his feet, and one hand on his hip (the one nearest to them), the other hands grasping those of the medium. Under these conditions, the medium was elongated. "Both my brother and I looked to see that we were still on his feet, and that our hands were on his waist; we were both conscious that the hands we had placed on the waist were being carried up as the elongation gradually took place.


Frank Podmore

[24] *Planchette*, by Epes Sargent, p. 100-1.

[25] *Dialectical Report*, pp. 207-8, 213-4.


Alfred Peters

Keeping our eyes upon him we found that we had to stretch our arms to their fullest extent (without rising from our seats) to retain their position on the waist. On my attempting to arise from my chair, the 'Indian' requested me to remain seated. At last a point was reached when I called to my brother, 'If he goes any higher I can't reach,' my arm being stretched to its very fullest extent; at the same time I was conscious, and so was my brother, that our feet were still on the medium's feet. The 'red Indian' (who was controlling) called to us then to observe his hands, one arm (the hand and fingers being open and extended) being quite six inches longer than the other; from our position, this was difficult for my brother and me to see, but was quite apparent to Mrs. S. . . . Again our attention was directed to the fact that the shorter arm had been lengthened to match the other. We had now arrived at the limit of our powers of extension, and, with a warning from the 'Indian,' the medium collapsed on to the floor."

When this case appeared (which is at least interesting, if only to show that phenomena of the kind still occur), I sent in a criticism of the case, suggesting three possible methods of trickery by which the phenomenon might have been accomplished.[26] I then said:

"(1) We are told . . . that he appeared to be drawn upward by his hands,' which were 'stretched straight out above his head.' Now are we sure that his hands could reach nothing sufficiently substantial to enable him to raise his body in this way? Of this we are told nothing definite. The ceiling of the 'bow window' was lower by six inches than that of the remainder of the room; and there were curtains separating them. On what were the curtains hung? On a rod, as is usually the case? And if so, would this rod be sufficiently substantial to sustain the medium's weight, assisted, perhaps, by one or both feet? As for the hands seen against the ceiling, they may have been the medium's shown *alternately*, he, meanwhile, supporting' himself with the other hand. The objection to this hypothesis is that the medium's feet were held, and on this basis they would necessarily have to be free. When we read that the medium's 'feet were held, we must presume, in this case at least, that it was his *shoes* that were so held, and very insecurely at that. I would suggest, therefore, either that the medium slipped out of his shoes and left them under the careful supervision of their guardians while he 'elongated' himself, as above described; or that dummy feet were substituted, whilst his own followed the rest of his body, as they would under ordinary circumstances.

"(2) My second hypothesis is that dummy feet were substituted, or his shoes left under observation, as above described, and that the medium mounted in some way by means of his stocking feet. This would cause his body to be elevated from the floor to the extent described and enable his arms to be seen against the ceiling, as they would really be at that height from the ground floor. The question is, on what did the medium find a foothold? We read (p. 108), 'the only chair near (D) I pushed away when the medium began to sway backward and forward, fearing he would knock himself against it.' On the other hand, the chairs A and B were not moved during the whole phenomenon—'we none of us moved from our chairs during the whole time.' " (These chairs were those on either side of the medium, and I advanced the theory that the medium was enabled to place his feet on the rungs of the chairs). . . . "It must be remembered that the attention of the investigators seems to have been almost entirely concentrated on the medium's arms and

[26] *Journal S. P. R.*, Vol. X, pp. 238-40.

upper portion of his body; he, no doubt, attracting attention thereto. . . . From their strained position, observation must have been next to impossible.

"(3) My third hypothesis I admit to be exceedingly improbable, but it is, to my mind, more conceivable than a genuine manifestation of the phenomenon of elongation. It is that the medium employed dummy arms to display against the background of the ceiling, and that some sliding mechanism was attached to his body, which, being elevated, would carry the investigator's hands along with it (his feet remaining on the floor), and thus give the sensation of moving the whole upper part of the medium's body. It will be observed that only the medium's hands and arms were actually seen to be at an unusual distance from the floor; nothing is said of the body being seen in its elevated position, it being merely *inferred* from the sense of touch."

I think that Mr. Podmore's suggestion is more probable than any of my own, however, it being that "the elongation was effected by some simple mechanism, such as steel stilts, concealed in his boots and trousers."[27]

The evidence for this case, however, is distinctly inferior to that in the case of Home, both with regard to quality and quantity. It is hard to see how Home could have produced his own cases of elongation by trickery; the nearest attempt to an explanation that has been offered is that by Mr. Podmore, in a passage following that just quoted. He there says: "That Home used any such concealed apparatus of the kind (just described) is, I think, improbable. The evidence in his case, either from want of detail, length of time between event and record, or the attendant circumstances, such as feebleness of illumination, is so defective that it is easier to attribute the results recorded to illusion, which Home may no doubt have eked out on occasion by such devices as slipping his feet half out of his boots, and standing on tiptoe, or supporting himself on some convenient articles of furniture".

The question of Home's elongation is likely to go unsolved until another medium shall arise who can duplicate the phenomena under the same conditions. If such a medium ever comes to light, it will be time to consider, seriously, this phenomenon of elongation.



The December issue will continue with

"LUMINOUS PHENOMENA"

[27] *Modern Spiritualism*, Vol. II, pp. 261-2.

PART TWO:

Spiritualistic phenomena of the past

LUMINOUS PHENOMENA



Luminous effects of a surprisingly beautiful character were one of the principal features of Moses' séances. He himself did not usually see them, for he was generally entranced during this phenomenon. As is usual with spirit lights, they did not illuminate surrounding objects. They took various forms; sometimes numerous star-like points of light appeared and floated about the room. Sometimes one would remain poised over the table, and flash in response to the alphabet; or took the form of a large diamond, brightly illuminated. A floating mass of luminous vapour would gradually condense and form a globe of golden light in which a spirit hand would be seen. Sometimes globes of light would bounce on the table audibly. The medium was sometimes surrounded by silvery or phosphorescent light, and a halo formed over his head which moved as he moved. [4] The globes of light were usually surrounded by spirit drapery, which the sitters were permitted to feel. Other lights were also handled and found to be hard and cold, like a luminous crystal.

The above quote is referring to the Victorian medium, Stainton Moses, who would be better known at this period under the pseudonym 'M.A. Oxon'.[5]

Pioneer has previously given attention to the Polish medium (producer of "Wax Gloves"[6]), who worked with scientific researchers such as Dr. Geley and Prof. Charles Richet under the pseudonym of Franek Klusky. Dr. Geley gives an account in "Revue Métapsychique" of a séance held in Warsaw on May 15th 1921:

> A moment later, magnificent luminous phenomena; a hand moved slowly about before the sitters. It held in the palm, by a partial bending of the fingers, a body resembling a piece of luminous ice. The whole hand appeared luminous and transparent. One could see the flesh colour. It was admirable. The phenomenon was repeated three times. Then the luminous hand approached a face which it illuminated. It was a handsome male face, but I could not see its details with precision. During all this scene the medium, who was entranced and held by both hands, did not make a movement."

[4] It is recorded that D.D. Home and many other mediums were sometimes illuminated in this way. See D.D. Home, His Life and Mission, p. 247.

[5] For further information on Moses please see Pioneer Vol. 3, No. 3, June 2016: "The College of Psychic Studies – Some background information – Visit to the College of Psychic Studies".

[6] Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 2, April 2018: "Britten Museum & Library "Wax Spirit Hands" booklet — Reviewed by the SPR Houdini & Wax Gloves — Joseph F Rinn".

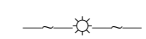
Archibald Campbell Holms' (1861-1954) work, "The Facts of Psychic Science and Philosophy", first published in 1925, reprinted in 1969, from which all the above quotes are taken. Dr. Geley frequently noticed a strong smell of ozone during luminous manifestations, also noticed by other experimenters. The author states:

> "It should be noted that ectoplasm has been observed by many to have a smell resembling ozone. The ordinary spirit lights commonly observed with various mediums are not usually accompanied by any smell; but in exceptional cases, when flame-like displays have occurred, a distinct smell of phosphorus has been noticed. This occurred with Stainton Moses,[7] and with Slade."[8]

Many accounts can be found in our early history; I will quote another from William Crookes F.R.S., an account published in his 1874 book, "Phenomena of Spiritualism":

Luminous Appearances.

> These, being rather faint, generally require the room to be darkened. I need scarcely remind my readers again that, under these circumstances, I have taken proper precautions to avoid being imposed upon by phosphorised oil or other means. Moreover, many of these lights are such as I have tried to imitate artificially, but cannot.
>
> Under the strictest test conditions, I have seen a solid self-luminous body, the size and nearly the shape of a turkey's egg, float noiselessly about the room, at one time higher than any one present could reach standing on tiptoe, and then gently descend to the floor. It was visible for more than ten minutes, and before it faded away it struck the table three times with a sound like that of a hard, solid body. During this time the medium was lying back, apparently insensible, in an easy chair.
>
> I have seen luminous points of light darting about and settling on the heads of different persons; I have had questions answered by the flashing of a bright light a desired number of times in front of my face. I have seen sparks of light rising from the table to the ceiling, and again falling upon the table, striking it with an audible sound. I have had an alphabetic communication given by luminous flashes occurring before me in the air, whilst my hand was moving about amongst them. I have seen a luminous cloud floating upwards to a picture. Under the strictest test conditions, I have more than once had a solid, self-luminous, crystalline body placed in my hand by a hand which did not belong to any person in the room.
>
> *In the light*, I have seen a luminous cloud hover over a heliotrope on a side table, break a sprig off, and carry the sprig to a lady; and on some occasions I have seen a similar luminous cloud visibly condense to the form of a hand and carry small objects about. These, however, more properly belong to the next class of phenomena.[9]



One of the most famous spirit controls in our history would be John King, who, unlike most controls, would work through multiple mediums over many decades. The alleged control had a wife and a daughter, confusingly both called Katie King. The daughter is said to have worked through Florence (Florrie) Cook, producing the first full-form materialisations in this country circa 1873.

Incidentally, it is interesting that in physical phenomena the medium's spirit controls would generally specialise in a certain phenomenon, e.g. slate-writing, but would fail if asked to produce another type —this was noted by Stainton Moses:

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[7] Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, Vol. XI, p. 45.

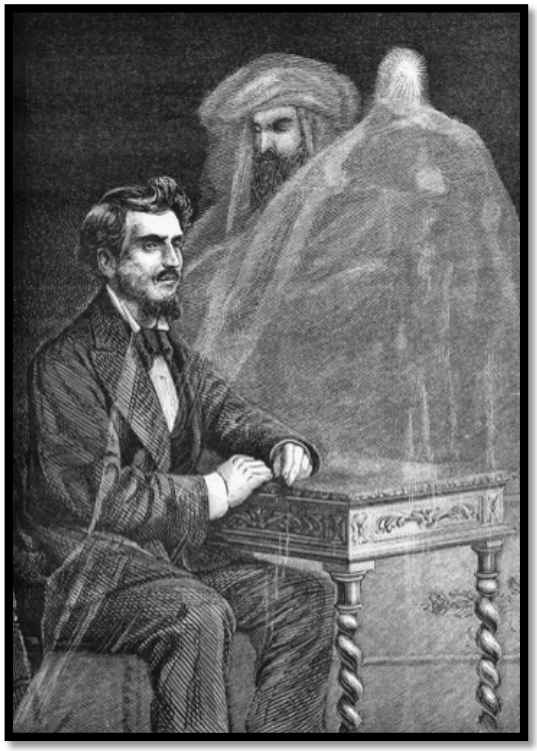
[8] Henry Slade, slate-writing medium: The Spiritual Magazine, 1874, p. 174.

[9] The Appearance of Hands, either Self-Luminous or Visible by Ordinary Light.

> Moses observed that during the period that any particular spirit was in the habit of manifesting a certain type of phenomenon, this was produced in abundance; and that a change of spirit operator was accompanied by a new type of phenomenon, each operator evidently excelling in its own speciality.

This is evident in well-known mediums like Etta Wriedt and Ada Besinnet; their mediumship remained in the same style.[10] Wriedt's speciality was direct voice; she tried hard to produce slate-writing but her controls would give her no assistance and she continually failed.

John King appears to be more multifunctional in the production of phenomena. Moses noted at the beginning of this article: "As is usual with spirit lights, they did not illuminate surrounding objects."



The spirit control John King, when materialised, brought with him a peculiar spirit lamp which illuminated him in the darkened séance room, and it is reported that on occasion the lamp would illuminate the séance-room. It was often handled by the sitters and was usually found to be hard and slightly warm, or soft, like flesh. Often it was covered with soft, lace-like drapery. Its light increased or diminished according to the available psychic force. There are many records describing the doings of this spirit and his curious lamp.[11]

The engraving shows the physical medium Charles Williams with the spirit control John King holding his lamp:

> "Katie King" the elder, as the leader of a band of scientific disembodied minds, we say, most heartily, God bless her! It was she who discovered the mode of concentrating the spirit-light which is now so well known as "John King's" spirit-lamp."

The above quote is taken from a series of articles in Psypioneer, "The Beginnings of Full-Form Materialisations".[12] Stainton Moses recorded some thirty sittings with Charles Williams during the period 1872-1876; some of the earlier recorded sittings with Williams were joint séances with Frank Herne. For the spirit-lamp as observed and described by Stainton Moses, see the above-cited series for more information and references:

> "A great development in this special manifestation has taken place during the past 18 months. When first I saw spirit-lights they were of a smoky, phosphoric nature. In the presence of Herne and Williams Katie would endeavour to illumine her face with light which streamed from her fingers. The result was very much what I could obtain by daubing a plate over with phosphorized oil and rubbing my fingers over it. The features were purely imaginary, and the odour of phosphorus which pervaded the room most real. By degrees this mode of illumination viz by sheaves of phosphoric light emanating from fingers of a hand gave way to something more refined. I remember well being present on the evening (Sep. 22 1872) when the new lamp was first produced. It gave a dull reddish-

[10] Vice-Admiral W. Usborne Moore noted: "Miss Besinnet's phenomena are almost stereotyped… They have changed very little during the last thirteen years …" (Glimpses of the Next State).

[11] "Some Reminiscences" by Alfred Smedley (and others), published London 1900, page 45.

[12] Started in Vol. 6, No. 11, November 2010: all volumes are archived at: http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/

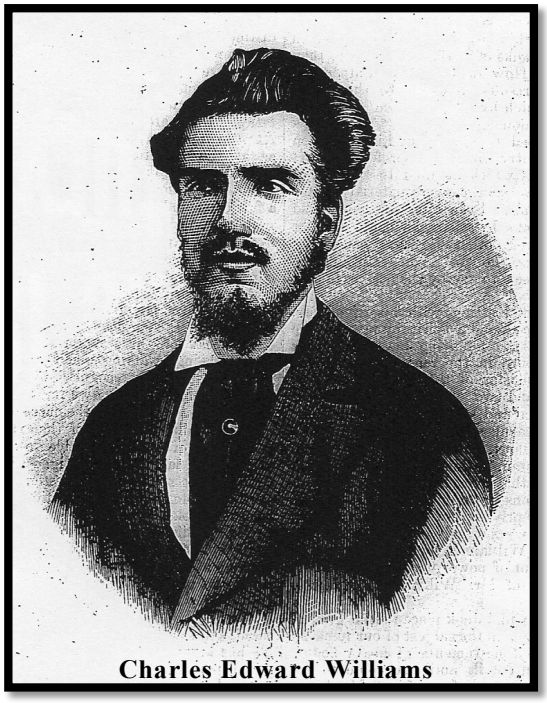
yellow light, very evanescent and very poor, as we think now, but it was then a great triumph. The crystal was apparently an oblong of about 6 in x 3 in and varying in thickness. This form of light has been gradually improved by John King who now uses it until it presents now the appearance of a globe of soft yellow light surrounded by drapery, and varying in size from that of a large turnip down to that of a hen's egg. I have seen it as John King passed it over his face as large as a turnip, and giving out light which filled the Cabinet and was reflected from the mirror at the back of the Cabinet. I have seen it too when apparently no hand held it, hovering about 8 feet from the floor whilst Mrs. Wm. Crookes held Williams in his chair. This séance was in Mr. Crookes' own house. The light on that occasion ascended 6 feet from where the Medium sat, and rapped quite plainly on the table 3 feet from the hand which was held by Mrs. Crookes. This was crucial evidence of the independent action and existence of the light.

"This light varies, as I have said, from a vapoury large phosphorescent light to a clear luminous crystal. The appearance can in some degree be counterfeited by a phial of phosphorized oil enclosed in a handkerchief, but the light so made is of a greyer tint, more ashen in hue, and is not nearly so permanent. Moreover the experience just detailed is crucial as to the independent existence of the light.

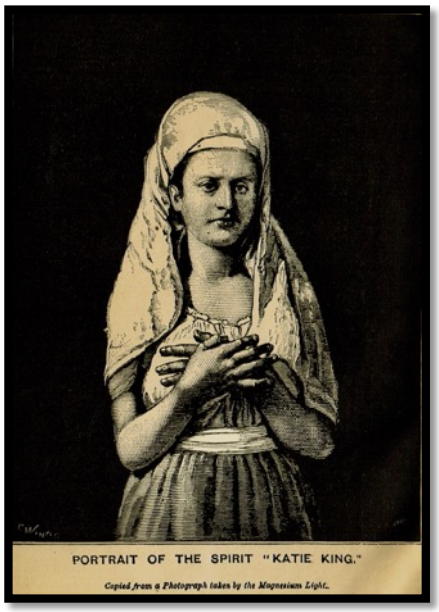
"In presence of Mr. Williams are seen also little round flashing lights purporting to be made by the spirit Katie. They are of a totally different character. Instead of the bottled moonlight appearance, they are brilliant, radiant, like the flashing of a gem in bright light. They are not larger than a walnut and dart about rapidly in mid-air giving one the idea of a large diamond scintillating in a ray of light. I have once observed a similar light on the mantel shelf in the study at Dglas House, but it was quite stationary and remained for half an hour or more like a large gem lit up by a ray of light.

"Katie's little gem-lights are not unlike the little points of light which dart about with Mrs Everitt, and answer questions by their flashes.

"Spirit-lights of great brilliancy are seen with Mrs Jencken [Katie Fox]. They are not unlike the light shewn by John King. Mr. Crookes has tested the independent existence of these lights very satisfactorily."



Charles Edward Williams



Florence (Florrie) Cook - Corner & Katie King Photographs

The image shown of the alleged daughter of the spirit controls John and Katie King is taken from an 1875 book by Epes Sargent, "The Proof Palpable of Immortality; Being an Account of the Materialization of Modern Spiritualism".

I found important references in this book while writing an article for the now defunct Psypioneer on William Crookes' photographs of his séances with the medium Florence (Florrie) Cook - Corner & Katie King, which he investigated. The article was published in Psypioneer, "Four "Katie King" Photographs" in 2012.[13]

The opening paragraph started:

> The photographic images of the alleged spirit Katie King, through the physical mediumship of Florence Cook, taken at 20, Mornington Road London the residence of William Crookes are well known, through numerous books, spiritualistic journals and websites. Published below is the original article that brought four of these photographs to public attention in 1934.

One of the images is published here for convenience. Within the article Crookes' feelings on the materialisations of "Katie King" were noted:



> Mr. Crookes was not convinced of Katie's identity. In a letter to professor Brofferio in 1894, he said:
>
> "All that I am concerned in is that invisible and intelligent beings exist, who say that they are the spirits of dead persons. But proof that they really are the individuals they assume to be, which I require in order to believe it, I have never received, though I am disposed to admit that many of my friends assert they have actually obtained the desired proofs, and I myself have already frequently been many times on the verge of this conviction."

It is noted in the article that "all the forty-four negatives taken by Sir William Crookes, O.M., F.R.S., were destroyed after his death…", which is discussed in the cited article.

However, there are a few photographs of Crookes arm-in-arm with Katie King.[14]

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[13] Vol. 8, No. 7, July 2012: "The Katie King Photographs – Four "Katie King" Photographs – *Psychic Science* – Paul Gaunt comments".

[14] Nandor Fodor, in his *Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science* (Citadel Press, 1966, p. 71), states: "He never allowed the circulation of the photograph in which he stood arm-in-arm with Katie King." Some reports state that none of Crookes' photographs were published in his lifetime. When the above article, along with the publication of the

During the research for the article it is noted:

> It is usually assumed that all photographs of "Katie King" are part of Crookes' private collection. We can note quite clearly the cabinet behind the alleged materialisation, and we can see on the four photographs the sitters appear to be facing away from the cabinet, this is suggestive that the photographs were not taken at Mornington Road as the article states.



Note Crookes' comments on the photographic séances setup:

"My library was used as a dark cabinet. It has folding doors opening into the laboratory; one of these doors was taken off its hinges, and a curtain suspended in its place to enable Katie to pass in and out easily. Those of our friends who were present were seated in the laboratory facing the curtain, and the cameras were placed a little behind them, ready to photograph Katie when she came outside, and to photograph anything also inside the cabinet whenever the curtain was withdrawn for the purpose."

What is not generally known is the fact that Crookes was not the only person to photograph the alleged "Katie King": photographs were taken by the founder editor of "The Spiritualist", William Henry Harrison (1841-1897).

Harrison was one of the most experienced sitters with Florence Cook, covering at least two years during her stages of development to full materialisation, and he was the first to obtain photographs of the alleged materialised figure, "Katie King". In May 1873 Harrison by magnesium light successfully obtained a series of photographic images as the form emerged from the cabinet, walked about the room and conversed with the sitters who sat in a semi-circle in front of the cabinet.

This image on the websites and books generally states (I believe incorrectly): "Photograph was taken by William Crookes with Dr. James M. Gully taking her pulse."!



One of the more frequent sitters with William H. Harrison was indeed Dr. Gully. Information on this image can be noted in the book mentioned at the head of this article by Epes Sargent, which states on July 20 1874:[15]

> "When that photograph was taken, I held her hand for at least two minutes, three several times, for we sat three times for it on one and the same evening; but I was constrained to close my eyes by reason of the intense magnesium light which shone upon me; she desired that none of us gaze at her whilst the lens was directed upon her."

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four Crookes photographs, appeared for the *first* time in April 1934, *Psychic News* also reproduced these by courtesy of *Psychic Science*.

[15] "The well-known published photograph, in which Katie is represented standing with Dr. Gully sitting at her side and holding her hand." (Sargent, p. 54-55)

A further observation has now been made:

The conclusion of one photograph (6) in the Psypioneer article cited was left open:



6, again no research has been carried out on this but does not fit in with Crookes description:

"On entering the cabinet Miss Cook lies down upon the floor, with her head on a pillow, and is soon entranced. During the photographic *séance*, Katie muffled her medium's head up in a shawl to prevent the light falling upon her face. I frequently drew the curtain on one side when Katie was standing near, and it was a common thing for the seven or eight of us in the laboratory to see Miss Cook and Katie at the same time, under the full blaze of the electric light.

We did not on these occasions actually see the face of the medium because of the shawl, but we saw her hands and feet; we saw her move uneasily under the influence of the intense light, and we heard her moan occasionally. I have one photograph of the two together, but Katie is seated in front of Miss Cook's head."

As with the Dr. Gully photograph, it is frequently stated to have been taken by William Crookes but it does not fit in with his above description!

It is clear the image is indeed Florence Cook but she has her head exposed and not on the floor, as stated by Crookes; it may appear the ghostly image could suggest it is pulling away the shawl—but the entranced medium is clearly resting her head on the chair and not with her head on a pillow on the floor. It could possibly suggest the photograph of a séance taken by William Harrison, as Crookes clearly notes: "I have one photograph of the two together, but Katie is seated in front of Miss Cook's head." So it was left as an open question.

It has previously been noted in Pioneer that the Spiritualists' Lyceum Union donated its archives to the Britten Museum & Library, housed at Stansted Hall. Included in this archive is a collection of lantern slides on psychic photography, which are now all scanned. Psychic photography dates to the early 1860s but is referenced around a decade earlier, though no images are known to have survived. I have been researching some of the history on this subject and have put together a Powerpoint to be used at the Arthur Findlay College. During this research I discovered the origin of the image here shown.

This observation shows without doubt that the image was not taken or associated with either Crookes or Harrison: in fact, it brings into consideration another phase of psychic phenomena. The image shown would have been invisible to any observers and to the photographer, as this was produced by psychic photography in March 1872 by the first commercial psychic photographer in the UK, Frederick Hudson.

At this period there were no known reported full-form materialisation mediums in the UK, as it was still in development; in London, in January 1872, Mrs. Elizabeth Guppy (who later became Mrs Volckman)[16] was the first British medium to materialise spirit hands and faces—followed by Frank Herne and Charles Williams taking the young teenager, Florence Cook, under their wing. The following year Florence materialised the full form of Katie King.

It is interesting to note that Katie King the younger was in fact materialising, giving the appearance of solid form not only in this photograph but in at least one other at this time by Hudson. The forms appear solid rather than the appearance of double exposure, as some of Hudson's other images appeared. However, the images were not at this time visible to the human eye but through the process of what became known as psychic photography early in Hudson's work the faces of the ghost images were mostly unseen.

Shortly after Hudson in June 1872, John Beattie's experimental circle began to produce psychic photography but not in the form of human spirits like Hudson and previously Mumler.

Beattie said that the luminescent substances were

"taken up by invisible intelligent beings and molded into shapes, like clay in the hand of the artist"



Left: John Beattie



John Beattie continued in the next issue …

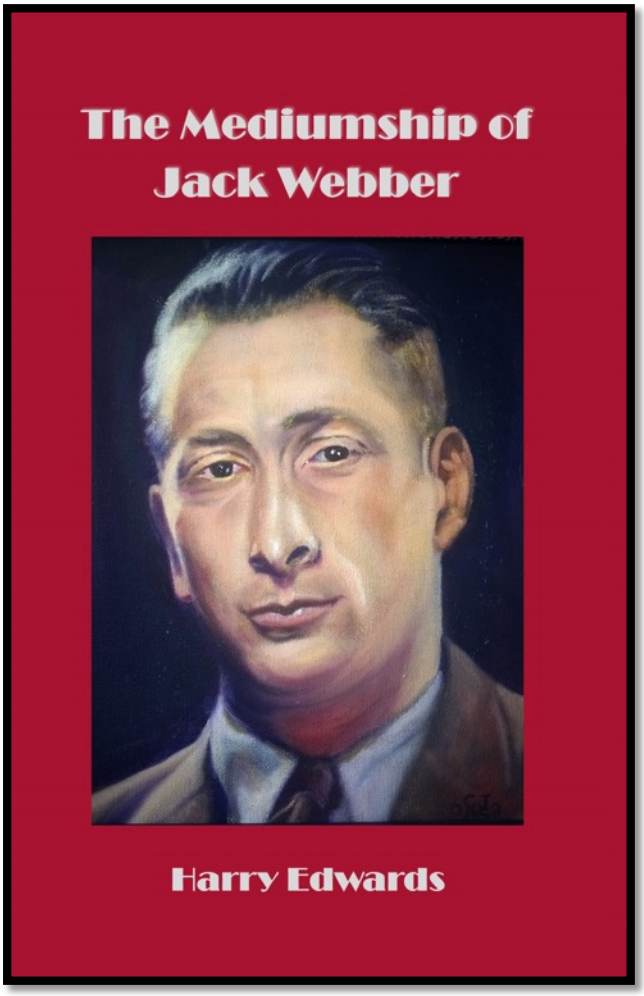
[16] Volckman was the first, a seasoned experienced researcher, to grab a spirit form. This took place at the Cooks residence at Hackney during a séance on December 9th 1873—Volckman grabbed Katie King. See Psypioneer Vol. 6, No. 7, July 2010: "William Volckman".

The Mediumship of Jack Webber:

Featured in the last issue of Pioneer were a few articles on John Boaden Webber (1907-1940), better known as Jack Webber. I received some feedback on the Webber article from Ann Harrison.

Ann wrote:

> "Dear Paul
>
> Aren't Spirit wonderful?
>
> Just as I am about to issue a new edition of "The Mediumship of Jack Webber" by Harry Edwards, with the permission of the Harry Edwards Healing Sanctuary, who hold the copyright for this book until 2046, you publish a long article about his mediumship in the SNU Pioneer.
>
> We (being Denzil Fairbairn and myself) were rather dismayed to see the inclusion of the information that the book was available for free as a pdf on the web, as this will deny revenue to the HEHS, who do such good work in sending healing throughout the world. All royalties from sales of the new book, which will be available as a paperback and an Ebook, are going to the Centre to help in their work.
>
> I do hope that you can include this information in your next edition.



> The book will be available from early January through Amazon worldwide and through my website.[17] It will be available through mainstream bookshops to special order too (ISBN 978-1-908421-33-3) and at the Arthur Findlay Bookshop.
>
> I am happy to say that the photographs have been rescanned from the originals, thanks to Denzil, and are now placed at the relevant places in the book instead of all at the end as previously. He hopes to shortly have his own book about the mediumship of his uncle Jack Webber in print too.
>
> Thank you for your help
> Ann Harrison
>
> Saturday Night Press Publications."

[17] SNPP: Saturday Night Press Publications: http://www.snppbooks.com

DIRECT - INDEPENDENT VOICE PHENOMENA

Could this be simulated by ventriloquism?

Direct - Independent voice phenomena are recorded in the beginning of Modern Spiritualism. The voices are allegedly produced at a distance away from the medium by a temporary building of an ectoplasmic larynx, where the spirit voice reproduction was generally heard through a trumpet, but this is not always the case, e.g. as in the case of Leslie Flint.

Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3, June 2016:



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

The voices are quite distinct from that of the mediums, although often the reports state that the style and mannerisms of the communicating spirit are more evidential, as the voices in the early stages are not always easily recognised.

There are numerous striking reports on this rare form of physical mediumship, for example John Campbell Sloan (1869-1951), whose name became synonymous with James Arthur Findlay, whom he met on September 20th 1918. A rare report on this voice medium, "A Scotch Materializing and Voice Medium", can be found in Psypioneer.[22] Further valuable information can be found in this publication: "Direct Voice Mediumship", "Arthur Conan Doyle and the Independent Direct Voice", and "Independent Voice Development with Mrs. Osborne Leonard".[23]

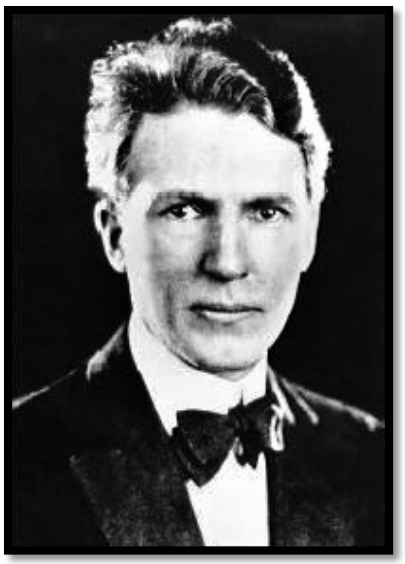
The above Pioneer reference also includes "Behind the scenes at Estelle Roberts' Voice Seances" by Maurice Barbanell.

However, there are some skeptical avenues of thought which considered ventriloquism as a possible way of creating the voices which emanated from the trumpet, etc.

Psychical researcher and author Hereward Carrington (1880-1958) ably tackled this suggestion, "Ventriloquism, Considered as A Possible Explanation of 'Independent Voice' Phenomena", in his 1930 book, "The Story of Psychic Science", which is published below:

[22] Vol. 8, No. 12, December 2012: John Campbell Sloan (1869-1951) – Paul J. Gaunt – A Scotch Materializing and Voice Medium – Mrs Hewat McKenzie.

[23] Vol. 10, No. 1, January 2014; Vol. 10, No. 7, July 2014; Vol. 12, No. 2, March/April 2016.



VENTRILOQUISM, CONSIDERED AS A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION OF 'INDEPENDENT VOICE' PHENOMENA

The impression seems to be fairly prevalent that 'ventriloquism' may account for the so-called 'independent voices' often heard at trumpet séances; in fact such an explanation has frequently been advanced by skeptical investigators, in an attempt to dispose of the possible authenticity of such manifestations. In view of the striking evidence which has recently been obtained, in connection with the 'Margery' mediumship,[24] it may be of interest to examine this supposition at some length, in order to see whether or not any such explanation may be advanced by way of accounting for the facts.

Roughly speaking, there are two types of ventriloquism: *near* ventriloquism, and natural or *distant* ventriloquism. In the former, the voice apparently proceeds from the mouth of a dummy or lay-figure, which the performer holds upon his knee, and, while producing the ventriloquial effects, he causes the mouth of the figure to move in imitation of the sounds produced—usually by means of the thumb of the hand holding the figure erect. The audience instinctively watches the mouth of the figure, and the voice seems to proceed from it—the illusion being maintained by the studied immobility of the lips of the ventriloquist himself. In the latter case (distant ventriloquism) no figure is visible, but a conversation is carried on with some child or grown person who is in a box, upstairs, on the roof, etc. Imitations may also be given of various animals, or of a saw, planing, tearing linen, drawing soda, and so forth. In all such instances, the ventriloquist acts out the part, in order to add to the illusion.

Ventriloquism is an art which can be learned, and depends very largely upon certain physiological controls, which insure the desired sound-effects. A number of these I have described at length in my little book *Side Show and Animal Tricks* (1913),—since reprinted in *The Boys' Book of Magic*. Two essential factors must be noted: First, the lips of the performer must be as far as possible without movement; secondly, the sound produced must be precisely the sound which would emanate from the location whence it is supposed to issue. To insure this the ventriloquist listens to the voice of some real person in the position desired, and then reproduces this as accurately as possible. The illusion is enhanced by the acting of the performer, and by distracting the attention of the audience to the spot indicated, and away from himself.

In other words, the ventriloquist reproduces the voice precisely as it *would* sound to his audience, were it really to issue from the spot whence it is supposed to come; and adds to the illusion in every way possible—such as pointing, looking, etc., in that direction himself; or, in the case of 'near' ventriloquism, by moving the jaw of the lay-figure which is supposed to do the talking.

All this works very well so long as the audience is at some distance from the performer; but the nearer the audience the less perfect the illusion! At very near range, it is impossible for a ventriloquist to produce the illusion of distant sounds or voices; he must then depend upon 'near' ventriloquism, and the nearer the listener's ear to the mouth of the performer the less perfect the illusion, until, at quite close range, the illusion

[24] 'Margery' mediumship: Carrington is referring to Mina Crandon, a Canadian physical medium.

vanishes altogether, and the sounds are correctly located, as issuing from the ventriloquist's mouth, and not from that of the lay-figure.

This is merely due to the fact that, contrary to popular belief, there is no such thing as 'throwing the voice' across the room, or to any distant location in space. The prevalent conception seems to be that the voice can be 'thrown'—like a stone—and that the 'stone' will speak, or appear to speak, from its present position. This is a complete fallacy, as every practical ventriloquist will testify. The voice merely *seems* to issue from that spot because the performer distracts the attention of his audience to it, and imitates the exact sound which would be heard if it actually did so. The imagination does the rest. But there is no such thing as 'throwing the voice' across space, in the sense popularly supposed. Mr. Charles H. Olin, a practical ventriloquist, in his book upon the subject, explicitly states that:

'A large part of the otherwise intelligent public still labours under the delusion that the ventriloquist is endowed by nature with the power of "throwing his voice" wherever he pleases, and causing it mysteriously to return to him; and that it is as easy to ventriloquize in the midst of a crowd or in the street as it is from a theatre stage or in a large hall, where the audience is some distance from the performer. . . . If the commonly accepted theory of the vocal bomb were correct, it would undoubtedly be as easy to ventriloquize in one place as in another; but as a matter-of-fact, there is nothing peculiar about the formation of the throats of the professors of this art—even of the most adept—to distinguish them from the rest of humanity; and as for actual voice-throwing—there is no such thing' (pp. 11-12).

All this has a distinct bearing upon the alleged 'independent voices' produced by mediums, through a trumpet or otherwise. For, in such cases, all acting, distraction of attention, etc., is necessarily eliminated, while the investigators are usually quite close to the medium. In complete darkness, the customary illusions and methods could not possibly be employed. In their absence, a large percentage of the delusory effect would at once vanish. The medium might produce an exact imitation of a voice, as it would sound some feet away, but at such close range the illusion would be completely lost, and the voice would be located by the listeners at its real point of origin. In other words, inasmuch as 'throwing the voice' to a distant part of the room, in the commonly accepted sense of the term, is quite impossible, the illusion of its being there would at once disappear, and hence ventriloquism, in this sense, is quite incapable of explaining the 'independent voices' heard, e.g. at Margery's séances.

It is true that our senses are all subject to error, and that sounds are often difficult to locate exactly, but it is not nearly as difficult as many persons imagine. Years ago, Dr. Hyslop and I tried a number of experiments of this kind, and discovered that it is usually fairly easy to locate a sound, provided that it is not in the median plane—that is, exactly midway between the ears. Mr. Bird and Dr. Crandon have obtained the same results in informal experiments. This is true both in the dark and in the light. And it is certainly true that no person of even average keenness of perception would locate a sound behind him while it really emanated from in front of him. So that, if the investigator were standing close beside the medium, there is no known ventriloquial effect by means of which the medium could make a sound which would appear to issue from a point in space behind the investigator—as happened, *e.g.* at the Margery séance of May I9, 1924, at which Mr. Bird and myself were present, the medium's mouth being completely closed by Mr. Bird's hand.

All of which, of course, does not prove that the independent voices produced at Margery's séances are genuine. I am not at present discussing that point. All that I have endeavoured to do is to examine the theoretical possibility that such voices might have been produced by means of ventriloquism, and I think we may confidently conclude that such an explanation in no wise serves to elucidate or explain them.

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In conclusion, the article published below is an example of Leslie Flint's voice mediumship during WWII. The image of Flint shown at the beginning of the article is taken from that published by "Psychic News", August 3rd 1940:

"Dead" Air Hero Gives Perfect Proof of His Survival

FULL NAME AND ADDRESS TOLD AT SEANCE

FLIGHT-LIEUTENANT PETER KITE, who was killed when his machine crashed in the Norwegian offensive in April, has succeeded in transmitting perfect proof of his survival.

At a direct-voice seance at which he was unknown to all but one of the sitters—he met him years ago but knew nothing of his recent activities—he told his full name, gave the correct address of his parents and transmitted information which his mother confirms is "in every way accurate."

Kite communicated at a seance with Leslie Flint. the direct-voice medium, on Monday of last week. He was introduced by Micky, Flint's Cockney guide, who announced, "There's a chap here out of the Air Force who wants to get into touch with his parents. He's very excited. I don't know if he will manage; I'll see what I can do."

Then the dozen sitters heard the excited voice of the "dead" airman speaking to them. No trumpet is used at Flint's seances; the spirit voices speak out of the air. "Hello, hello, hello!" he repeated. "My name's Peter. I want to get into touch with my mother. Do please help me, somebody. I was just 20. I am their only son.

"NOW I'M ALL RIGHT"

"I've been to see them, and they don't know I'm there. It's awful! Tell them I'm all right and tell them I'm not dead. Tell. Mother I came down in a crash, but now I'm all right. I want them to know.

"I was Flight-Lieutenant. Promise me you'll tell Mum and Dad. Tell them I like the enlargement from the snapshot. Mother's very worried; it's making her ill."

From the information given, no one in the circle could identify the boy. W. J. West, one of the sitters, promised the spirit that he would try to contact his parents if he could give sufficient information to enable them to be traced. "Try to give us your full name and address," he said, "and I promise that, if it is at all possible, I will get into touch with them."

THREE CHRISTIAN NAMES

"Oh, thank you so much," exclaimed the "dead" boy. "I had three Christian names—Peter William Handford Kite." To make sure he had transmitted his name correctly, he spelt his surname letter by letter, K-I-T-E. "I lived at 85, Upland Way, Grange Park," he added.

Then Kite materialised—there have been attempts at materialisation for several weeks at this series of Monday sittings, which are of an experimental nature—and advanced

towards one of the sitters, a man named Turner. The spirit touched Turner's knees and took hold of his arm, as if trying to shake him.

"I know you." he said. "You're Mr. Turner. I was a patient of yours. You took my teeth out!"

Although Turner had been attending these seances for several weeks, none of the sitters knew he was a dentist. He said he remembered Peter coming to him for treatment some years before, but he did not know he had joined the R.A.F. and had not heard of his "death."

"It's Peter," went on the spirit, still talking to the dentist. "Tell Mother, please, I'm not dead. She is worrying; tell her not to. Tell her I'm all right."

He repeated that he liked the enlargement, as though that message had some significance, and added: "Tell her to give my regards to Edward—she will understand. I'll be very upset indeed if you don't tell them. Tell them to come and talk with me. I want them to be happy. Don't forget, please. Thank you."

West promised that he would try to contact the boy's parents the next day and, with a final "Thank you," the spirit went.

On Tuesday, West went to Grange Park, North London, and at last succeeded in locating the address the "dead" airman had given.

EVERYTHING CONFIRMED

The woman who answered the door admitted that she was Mrs. Kite and that her son, Peter, had recently been killed in an air crash. But when she was told a message from her son had been received at a seance the night before, she, knowing nothing of Spiritualism, did not understand.

But West read to her from his notes what the "dead" boy had said and she acknowledged point after point as being correct. The only slight discrepancy was that her son's third christian name had been given at the seance as "Handford" whereas it was really Handsford. She knew Edward, she said, and showed West the enlargement of which Peter had spoken.

MOTHER'S LETTER

Mrs. Kite asked whether she might have a copy of what her son had said. When it was sent to her, she replied: "I wish to thank you for sending me the transcription of your notes and also for your visit to me last Tuesday.

"I must apologise to you for the way in which I received you at first, which was due to my ignorance and fear of the supernatural, but want you now to realise how much I appreciate your desire to help me. My husband is also much impressed with all that you told me.

"At first, as you know, I was very sceptical, and still am much bewildered, but must admit a feeling of serenity and comfort after your visit, which I have not experienced during many recent weeks.

"My husband and I acknowledge that the facts of the communications, some of which you could not possibly have been cognisant of are in every way accurate.

“We are indebted to you and Mr. Turner for the fulfilment of your obligation to our son, and the fresh hope you have given to us.”

* * *

At this same seance, there was a conversation between a spirit and a sitter in Dutch, a language of which Flint is ignorant. Micky, giving additional evidence, said to the man:

“Your wife is here and she has Peter with her. Peter was her dog: it was a Pekinese and it had something the matter with its eyes. You have a lock of hair in a locket. It is not her hair, but the dog’s! She says it was buried at the bottom of the garden and she had a flower bed put round it, in memory.”

All this was accepted by the sitter as correct. It was evidence, he said, which was unknown to anyone in this country except himself.



Leslie Flint (1911-1994)

Taken from the same book is a rather amusing memory from Ernest Oaten with the direct-voice medium John Sloan, whose name is generally closely associated with J. Arthur Findlay; see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1, August 2013: "John Sloan – James Arthur Findlay". The image of Mr and Mrs John Sloan is taken from the article cited.

CORONA, CORONA!



THOUSANDS of people will be familiar with the name of John Sloan, of Glasgow, a most versatile medium, who is the central figure of that fine book by J. Arthur Findlay, *On the Edge of the Etheric*.

I was privileged to have several sittings with John, and cherish happy memories of a direct conversation I had on one occasion with Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, O.M.

The trumpet was at the other end of a large circle of some twenty sitters when, immediately behind me, I heard a voice calling my name. It proved to be the famous Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace. He spoke to me concerning my public work, and when questioned showed a complete familiarity with correspondence which had passed between us when he lived at Wimborne.

The seance ended, we adjourned to another room while Mrs. Sloan made some coffee. Some of the sitters had departed, but a few of us still remained and sat round the fire chatting. When coffee was served William Jeffries remarked, "There is only one thing needed to complete a pleasant evening." "What's that?" asked Galloway. "A good cigar!' In a few seconds Sloan was under control and the voice of "Whitey" said, "Just dim the lights and wait a minute or two, and I will see what I can do."

In a few minutes there dropped at the feet of Mr. Jeffries a cigar, with a glowing lighted end. "There you are, Jeffries," said "Whitey," and he picked it up, wiped the end with his handkerchief, put it in his mouth and began to puff.

"Where did you get it, Whitey?" said I. And the reply sent us into fits of laughter. "A fellow was walking along George Square smoking it, and I took it from his mouth and brought it here. He is still looking for it."

We were, of course, unable to verify that statement, though the house was only a few hundred yards from George Square. But I have often found myself smiling at the discomfiture of a man who lost a cigar from his mouth and looked for it in vain.

MEDIUMS HANDLE FIRE

Recently, Pioneer has featured various early psychic phenomena, for example the "Elongation and Shortening of Medium" (Vol. 5, No. 5), "Luminous Appearances" (Vol. 5, No. 6) and in the last issue John Beattie's psychic structures. Below is an article taken from the front pages of the "Two Worlds", February 7th, 1936, which gives an excellent overview of the phenomenon of holding hot coals. I know of only a few mediums who were able to demonstrate this, one being James J. Morse and another Daniel D. Home, who is featured with Samuel Carter Hall (1800-1889) and his wife Ann Maria, both well-known respected Spiritualists; he was chairman of the British National Association of Spiritualists (BNAS) and in his working life he was an editor, reporter, etc.

REMARKABLE TESTIMONY

The recent reports of fire-walking by Mr. Kuda Bux is a reminder that the handling of fire has been a characteristic of psychic phenomena throughout the history of Spiritualism. The Link Association of Home Circles reports a case this week from Johannesburg, in which a medium (Mr. Chard) took hold of a red-hot iron bar and twisted and bent it into a U shape. The medium was lifted up bodily in the air and placed on a chair. A second iron was brought in, and the heat and glow was enough to clearly show all the sitters in the room. The medium then licked the hot iron bar with his tongue, after which a foam of white substance emerged from his mouth. It is hoped that further particulars will be available.

Probably the best authenticated cases of the handling of fire are connected with the great medium, D. D. Home. In over a dozen cases the phenomena were under the observation of skilled observers. Despite all the attacks which have been made upon Home there has never been a single case where the validity of his mediumship has been seriously questioned.

One of the most remarkable cases is that recorded by Mrs. S. C. Hall in a letter to Lord Dunraven. There were nine sitters present. Mrs. Hall says:



"Mr. Home went into a trance. He got up, walked about the room in his usual manner, went to the fire-place, half knelt on the fender stool, took up the poker and stirred the fire (which was like a red-hot furnace) so as to increase the heat, held his hands over the fire for some time, and finally drew out of the fire with his hands a huge lump of live, burning coal, so large that he held it in both hands as he came from the fireplace in the large room into the small room, where, seated round the table, we were all watching his movements. Mr. Hall was seated nearly opposite to where I sat, and I saw Mr. Home, after standing for about half a minute at the back of Mr. Hall's chair, deliberately place the lump of burning coal on his head. I have often wondered that I was not frightened; but I was not, I had perfect faith that he would not be injured.

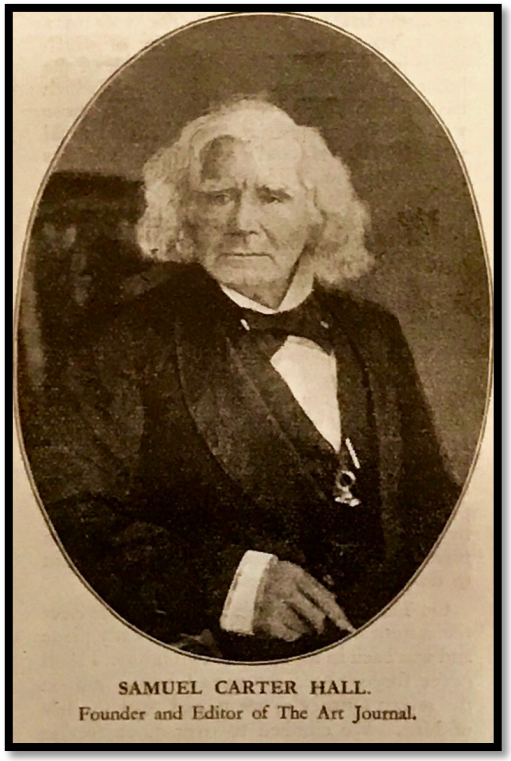
Someone said, 'Is it not hot?' Mr. Hall answered, 'Warm, but not hot.' Mr. Home had moved a little away but returned, still in a trance; he smiled, and seemed quite pleased; and then proceeded to draw up Mr. Hall's white hair over the red coal. Mr. Home drew the hair into a sort of pyramid, the coal, still red, showing beneath the hair. Then after, I think, four or five minutes, Mr. Home pushed the hair back, and taking the coal off Mr. Hall's head he said (in the peculiar low voice in which, when in a trance, he always speaks), addressing Mrs. Y., 'Will you have it?' She drew back; and I heard him murmur, 'Little faith, little faith.

"Two or three attempted to touch it, but it burned their fingers. I said, 'Daniel, bring it to me; I do not fear to take it.' It was not red all over, now, as when Mr. Home put it on Mr. Hall's head, but it was still red in parts. Mr. Home came and knelt by my side; I put out my right hand, but he murmured, 'No, not that; the other hand.' He then placed it in my left hand, where it remained more than a minute, I felt it, as my husband had said, 'warm,' yet, when I stooped down to examine the coal, my face felt the heat so much that I was obliged to withdraw it. After that Mrs. Y. took it, and said she felt no inconvenience. When Mr. Hall brushed his hair that night he found a quantity of cinder dust."

Lord Lindsay (afterwards Lord Crawford and Balcarres F.R.S.), in his evidence before the Dialectical Society's Committee,[8] said—

"I have frequently seen Home, when in a trance, go to the fire and take out large, red-hot coals and carry them about in his hands, put them inside his shirt, etc. Eight time I, myself have held a red-hot coal in my hands, without injury, when it scorched my face on raising my hand. Once I wished to see if they really would burn, and I said so, and touched a coal (held by Home) with the middle finger of my right hand, and I got a blister as large a sixpence. I instantly asked him to give me the coal, and I held the part that burnt me in the middle of my hand for three or four minutes, without the least inconvenience.

A few weeks ago I was at a seance with eight others. Of these, seven held a red-hot coal without pain, and the two others could not bear the approach of it; of the seven, four were ladies."



SAMUEL CARTER HALL.
Founder and Editor of The Art Journal.

Hall published for private circulation "The Use of Spiritualism" in 1876; this is available for a free download, which contains more on D. D. Home's mediumship



[8] The London Dialectical Society created a committee 'to investigate the Phenomena alleged to be Spiritual Manifestations and to report thereon', which was appointed on January 26th, 1869. Their findings were published: London Dialectical Society, "Report on Spiritualism", London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1871. Also by J. Burns, London 1873, slightly shortened.

In the last issue of Pioneer, in the opening article, "Visit to the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain", Mr Thomas Everitt was featured as one of their early Presidents and passing reference was made to his wife as a well-known non-professional medium. The Everitts were first acquainted with Spiritualism in 1857. In November 1867 an audible spirit-voice was first obtained through the mediumship of Mrs Everitt, who was thrown into a trance-sleep for the first time, and the spirit of John Watt first made himself known. Mrs Everitt was probably the first direct-voice medium in this country. Published below is an article taken from the "Two Worlds", May 22nd, 1936, "an interesting account with another of her controls, 'Znippy'."[9] [It should be noted that the editor, Ernest Oaten, has spelt "Everett" incorrectly: it should read "Everitt".]



SPIRITS SPEAK ON THE TELEPHONE

I HAVE just been reading Dr. Edwin Bowers' new book, *Spiritualism's Challenge* (National Library Press, New York), in which he relates an incident which occurred in May, 1935, in one of the sittings with Frank Decker, the well-known American medium. At this séance 'materialised form of "Patsy," Frank Decker's guide, put through telephone call, himself lifting the receiver and calling the number, and a conversation was sustained for some minutes. Dr. Bowers says, "The phenomenon is unique," a conclusion with which we are inclined to agree.

It is perhaps singular that only a fortnight ago I was relating, in London, a case in which the direct voice (not a materialised form) used the telephone over forty years ago.

Mrs. Everett, of London, was probably the greatest medium for the direct voice that this country has ever produced. It was my luck to meet her on one occasion early in the nineties at Cardiff, where she was staying at the house of Mrs. Cooper. It was while we were sitting at tea (not a seance) that the voice of "Znippy" was heard talking to the assembled company.

The telephone was quite a new instrument then; there were certainly not a score of instruments in the town, but one possessed by Mr. Cooper, who ran one of the leading music establishments in the city. Mr. Cooper asked "Znippy" if he could speak over the phone, and, ringing up a number, Cooper put the call through. We all then retired to that part of the room farthest from the phone, whilst "Znippy" held an animated conversation with a friend at the other end of the line.

In those days the telephone was a very imperfect instrument, and one had to speak pretty close to the mouthpiece in order to be heard. 'This demonstration created a remarkable impression upon me at the time. There certainly was no one within ten feet of the instrument, yet the message went through clear and distinct, and in the most normal manner.

[9] In the previous article, "Mediums Handle Fire": a report of Mrs Everitt's mediumship can be found in Samuel Carter Hall's book, *"The Use of Spiritualism"*, referred to at the end of the article.

Mr. and Mrs. Everett were amongst the founders of Spiritualism in London in the early days, and having been convinced of the facts of Spiritualism, and developed remarkable mediumship, they travelled the length and breadth of the land, chiefly without fee or reward, to spread abroad the tidings which had helped and blessed their lives.

There seems of late to be a recurrence of some of the physical phenomena which characterised Spiritualism in the early years, and we hope and believe that before long the phenomena, which was so convincing in those early days, will be repeated in even greater quantity.

It seems strange that the first outbursts of Spiritualistic phenomena were characterised by many remarkable phases of the physical types of phenomena. These came to an almost abrupt ending about the end of the ’seventies. Probably the application of crude and often cruel forms of testing and controlling mediums had something to do with it. Greater attention, however, was paid to mental types of evidence, enabling us to explore the bearing of subconscious processes and telepathy in relation to evidence.

In the last few years however the pendulum has been swinging again, and in the light of past experience we are in a better position to assess their value.





Harry Price at the age of nineteen, from a painting in oils by John Dumayne.

HARRY PRICE

1881 - 1948

Harry Price was a psychical researcher; it would be fair to say, generally speaking, that he was—not popular in the Spiritualist Movement—a debunker and an exposer of fraudulent mediums; some would consider Price the British equivalent of Harry Houdini. This would be an unfair assumption: Price did in fact endorse some valuable Spiritualistic and psychic phenomena during his researches, unlike Houdini. See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 2: "Did Harry Houdini ever believe in Spiritualism?"

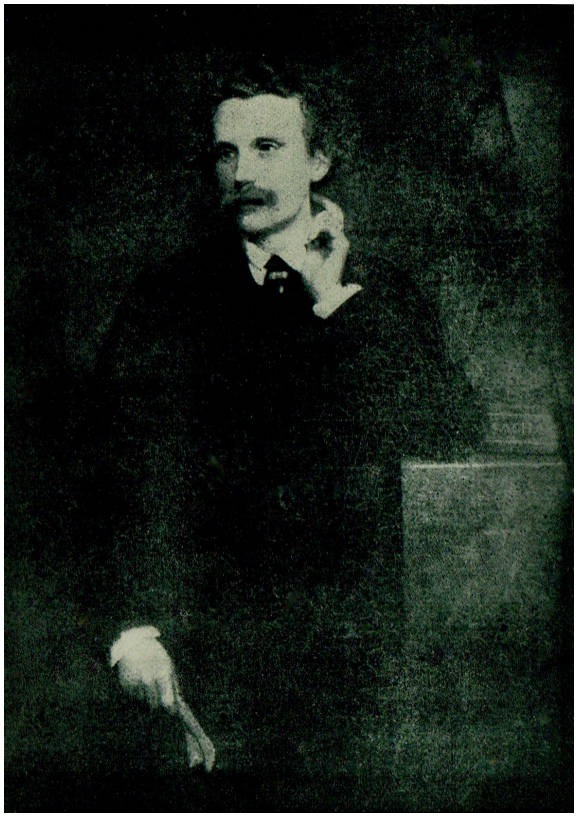
An example of this is published below in Jean Burton's "Heyday of a Wizard: Daniel Home the Medium", published in 1948, for which Harry Price, just prior to his death, wrote the foreword:

It was with great pleasure that I accepted the invitation to introduce this latest and most colourful story of Daniel Dunglas Home's life and achievements. For the layman it is the best biography extant, and Miss Jean Burton is to be congratulated upon writing a racy, impartial, accurate, and most readable record of a great personality and a great physical medium.

I have always regretted that I was born many years too late for me to test the alleged—and much debated—phenomena of Home. But even in my early youth I was attracted to the man and his miracles and began collecting all the books, articles, and letters I could find concerning this strange psychic. Always I asked myself, "Was he genuine?"

Was he genuine? There is a vast literature dealing with Home, and in my own library I have scores of items describing the man and his phenomena, his life, his queer personality, his egotism—and his gentleness. But—and this is significant—I possess not one word about any valid 'exposure' of his methods or that he was ever caught cheating at his séances. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility that Home did 'help out' occasionally. But he was never exposed.

The very fact that such an extensive literature concerning Home is available is, I think, *prima facie* evidence of the man's genuineness. Had Home been merely a charlatan, interest in his person and performances would have petered out long since. In my collection of such things I have literally hundreds of books and pamphlets exposing mediums and explaining their tricks—tricks which, to the uninitiated, appear far more startling and impressive than anything Home ever did. But the fact that they were tricks, and that their exponents were tricksters, meant that the 'mediums' involved lasted a very short time only, and quickly faded from public memory. How many of the lay public have ever even heard of such physical mediums as William Eglinton, 'Dr' Francis Ward Monck, Charles H. Foster, F. F. Craddock, and a score of other charlatans? These men were more or less contemporaries of Home; all were exposed and their tricks duplicated. It is noteworthy that Home's most striking phenomena have never been duplicated, under the same conditions, by normal means.



I have said that Home was never exposed. But there have been stories of exposures, all of them untrue and unsubstantiated. The most persistent of these is a yarn about a séance held at the Tuileries during the Second Empire, in the spring of 1857.[1] Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie were present. It was stated—some time afterwards—that at one of these Tuileries séances, Home was detected removing one of his feet from its shoe and touching with it the august person of the Emperor—the implication being that the medium had prehensile toes.[2]

For nearly ninety years this story has gone the rounds—with variations and embellishments. Several different dates are mentioned and many different places have been given as the scene of the dénouement—but usually it is the Tuileries. Details are conspicuous by their absence, and no evidence for the exposure worthy of the name has ever been published. And not a word about the alleged incident is printed in Princess Metternich's Souvenirs,[3] in which she gives such a graphic word picture of her adventures with Home. If there had been a word of truth in the story at least she, of all persons, would have recorded it. Though she accepted the phenomena, she was sceptical at heart, and would not have suppressed any evidence for fraud. She was an intimate friend of the Empress and would have heard all about any 'exposure' at Court. But she is silent.

In 1934 it came to the knowledge of Dr Eugene Osty, Director of the Institut Métapsychique, Paris, that M. Marcel Le Roy Dupré, a distinguished Parisian who had been a friend of the Empress Eugénie, had approached this lady on the very question which we are discussing. So Dr Osty wrote to M. Dupré, asking him to put in writing the details of the Empress's answer as to the truth or otherwise of the statement that on one occasion Home cheated.

In a letter dated November 26, 1934, M. Dupré gives Dr Osty the result of his interview with the Empress, whom he saw at Cap Martin:

> I no longer remember whether, without a direct question, I led the interview around to the subject, or whether the Empress mentioned it spontaneously, nor whether the gist of the matter, which I have retained, was enlarged upon. It is more than fifteen years since that day! But I remember that *she affirmed the falsity of the widespread rumour* that Home, in a séance at the Tuileries, succeeded in putting his foot, first drawn from his shoe, under the table into the Emperor's hand according to

[1] Wikipedia: The Tuileries Palace (French: *Palais des Tuileries*, IPA: [palɛ de tɥilʁi]) was a royal and imperial palace in Paris which stood on the right bank of the River Seine. It was the usual Parisian residence of most French monarchs, from Henry IV to Napoleon III, until it was burned by the Paris Commune in 1871.

[2] Pioneer: Prehensile feet are the lower limbs which possess prehensility, the ability to grasp objects like a hand, commonly observed in monkeys, who similarly have prehensile tails.

[3] Pauline, Princess Metternich, *Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse*, 1845-1863 (Paris); Eng. trans.: *The Days that are No More* (London, 1921).

some, on his knee according to others. The Empress seemed even a little shocked that such an audacious and gross lack of respect for a reigning Sovereign could be supposed possible; and, moreover, for so many unlikely reasons.

I was led to believe, further, that this invention was not immediately contemporaneous with the séance. If it were true it would have spread rapidly. Now, my father told me that considerably later, at the request of my mother, who was interested in these phenomena, then hardly known and scarcely examined, he went to look for Home in Paris in order to bring him to see her. He did not succeed, as Home was, I think, just leaving France. But an anecdote about any subterfuge would naturally have prevented my father from taking this step. A minimum presumption!

[Signed] MARCEL LE ROY DUPRÉ [4]

So now we have first-hand evidence from the Empress Eugénie herself that Home was not caught cheating at any Tuileries séance. As Miss Burton points out, there were many people in Paris willing—even anxious—to slander the great Daniel in an effort to drive him from Court and capital.

At no period was Home without active enemies.

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There are indeed a few stories surrounding Home's (pronounced Hume) alleged imposture during this period; an example is published in "The First Psychic", by Peter Lamont, 2005, who tells the story of a séance in Biarritz which came under the watchful eye of Dr. Barthez, who it is said become concerned that the Empress was under Home's influence. The physician *was confident that Daniel was 'a performer of tricks', but he did not know how the tricks were done*.

The doctor was persistent in his quest to show that Home was a fraud:

As for the nature of the subterfuge, Barthez explained: The matter is simple enough. Mr Home has thin slippers, easily drawn on and off; he has also, I fancy, cuts in his socks, which leave his toes free. At the proper moment he throws off a slipper, and with his toes tugs at a dress here and there, rings a handbell, gives a rap on this side or that, and the thing once done quickly slips his foot back into its slipper again. This', Barthez went on, was not mere speculation, but 'was seen by M. Morio, who drew up a full signed and written statement, with all the details necessary to establish the genuineness of his discovery'. Alas, this first statement by a witness telling us how Daniel accomplished his feats never survived, …[5]

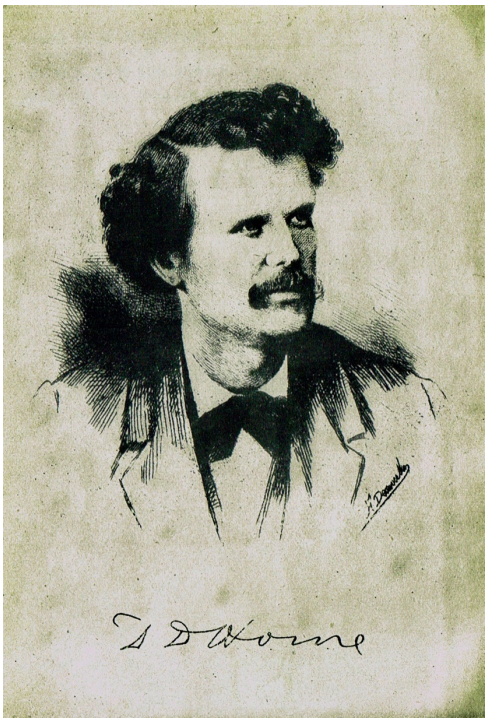
The story is told in Chapter 6, "Diagnosis in Biarritz", but the attempt held little substance to show conclusive evidence that Home was indeed a trickster. During the above period Home was still recovering from the suspension of his mediumship; on the evening of February 10th 1856, as Home himself records, "the spirits told me that my power would leave me for a year." He was also in poor health. Home had many who would like to see him exposed and it appears that all the allegations were of a similar nature concerning his feet.

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[4] For the full text of this letter, see Osty's "D, D, Home. New Light on the 'Exposure at the Tuileries' ", *Journal of the American S.P.R.* (New York), March and April 1936.

[5] Pages 91/92.

To close on the allegations against Daniel Home, the account published below is taken from "The Newer Spiritualism", by Frank Podmore, published in 1910, pages 45/46:



Robert Browning was convinced that Home was an impostor, and gave characteristic expression to his conviction. But there is no direct evidence that he ever proved that Home cheated, though he formed a decided opinion, after witnessing a single performance, "that the whole display of hands, spirit utterances, &c., was a cheat and imposture." [6]

The only direct evidence of imposture which I have come across is in a letter from Mr. Merrifield, who wrote in August, 1855, an account, from which the following extract is taken, of a sitting held with Home the previous month. New moon occurred on July 14, 1855, and, as the moon had already set, the date of the sitting would probably be not later than the 18th, a time when the last faint traces of daylight would still be lingering in the sky even at eleven p.m. There had been a sitting earlier in the evening, at which the usual phenomena—movements of table, playing of accordion, and plucking of dresses—had occurred:

" . . . Just as we were on the point of taking our leave, the medium professed his willingness to give us another sitting. Accordingly, we took our places at the side of the table, the medium occupying the extreme right, and a constant associate of his sitting opposite to him. I sat nearly half-way between them, and therefore facing the windows. The table was circular, and the semicircle nearest the window was unoccupied. The lights were removed, and very soon the operations began. It was about eleven o'clock; the moon had set, but the night was starlight, and we could well see the outline of the windows and distinguish, though not with accuracy of outline, the form of any large object intervening before them. The medium sat as low as possible in his low seat.

His hands and arms were under the table. He talked freely, encouraging conversation, and seeming uneasy when it flagged. After a few preliminary raps somebody exclaimed that the 'spirit hand' had appeared, and the next moment an object, resembling a child's hand with a long, wide sleeve attached to it, appeared before the light. This occurred several times. The object appeared mainly at one or other of two separate distances from the medium.

One of these distances was just that of his foot, the other that of his outstretched hand; and when the object receded or approached, I noticed that the medium's body or shoulder sank or rose in his chair accordingly. This was pretty conclusive to myself and the friend who accompanied me; but afterwards, upon the invitation of one of the dupes present, the 'spirit hand' rose so high that we saw the whole connection between the medium's shoulder and arm, and the 'spirit hand' dressed out on the end of his own.'' [7]

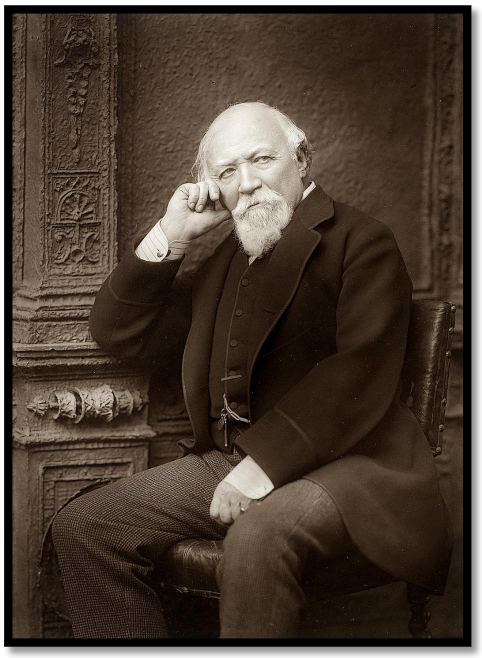
[6] See letter from Robert Browning, published in *The Times* of November 28, 1902.
This is an error by Podmore, as Robert Browning died in 1889; the letter appears to have been written by his son, also called Robert. It appears that after the séance Browning wrote an angry letter to *The Times*, in which he said that the whole display of hands, spirit utterances, etc. was a cheat and imposture [Wikipedia].

[7] Journal, S.P.R., May 1903, pp. 77,78.

No doubt Mr. Merrifield saw what really took place. But his account in itself carries no more weight than that of the rest of the spectators, who “saw” spirit hands. It is valuable, however, as showing that Home did not succeed in hoodwinking all his sitters.

—~—☼—~—

Incidentally, Robert Browning was an English poet and playwright who believed Spiritualism to be a fraud and focused on Daniel Home. However, maybe one motive was that his wife Elizabeth was convinced Home was genuine, which proved to be a constant source of argument with her husband.



Browning wrote a long poem, “Mr. Sludge The Medium”, which is a fierce attack on Spiritualism. The setting of the poem is Boston and a Yankee medium called Sludge, who confesses his duplicity. Browning is almost certainly referring to Daniel Home as the medium, Mr. Sludge.

It is published in a collection of works by Robert Browning, “Dramatis Personae”, in 1864 and is available on the internet; it begins:

Now, don't, sir! Don't expose me!
Just this once! This was the first and only time, I'll swear,—
Look at me,—see, I kneel,—the only time,
I swear, I ever cheated,—yes, by the soul
Of Her who hears—(your sainted mother, sir!)
All, except this last accident, was truth—
This little kind of slip!—and even this,
It was your own wine, sir, the good champagne,
(I took it for Catawba, you 're so kind)
Which put the folly in my head!

—~—☼—~—

FRANEK KLUSKI



Franek Kluski, sometimes referred to as the "King of Mediums", was born in Warsaw in 1873. His profession was banking and journalism; he was also a poet. His mediumship was active from 1918 to 1925, taking a break due to the Polish/ Russian war in 1920. He gave up mediumship due to poor health, a heart condition caused by being shot in the chest, apparently in a duel around 1900. Kluski was a married family man; he was not a professional medium and accepted no fee. He died in January 1943 of tuberculosis and was buried in Warsaw.

Kluski has previously been featured in Pioneer with the remarkable production of 'wax gloves' for Dr Gustave Geley in the early 1920s; please see for further details Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 2, April 2018: "Britten Museum & Library "Wax Spirit Hands" booklet", reviewed by the SPR.

However, some Spiritualistic phenomena are not always as easily associated, or even accepted, within the Spiritualist movement, but are invariably linked by its critics. However, in saying that, some well-known Spiritualists like Emma Hardinge Britten and Arthur Conan Doyle believed in, and in some cases experienced, for example, 'elementals' first-hand. A good example of this is reported in the old Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 12, December 2009: "Spirits of the Mines – Emma Hardinge Britten".

Demonstrations of clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc. have often related messages from our loved family pets, etc.; there are also reports of animals allegedly materialising at séances, for example at Helen Duncan séances, where dogs, cats, birds, etc. returned to their previous owners.

At the earlier experimental séances with Kluski, a large creature would be reported to materialise more like a modern horror story in the séance room! A creature neither human or animal – a *Pithecanthropus;* some recorded seances imply that the creature was at times *violent and rough*. A lion or similar animal and large birds of prey would be some of the materialised apparitions over the course of the séances.

Serious investigation was given to this rare Spiritualistic phenomenon and it was investigated by well-known investigators, as will be noted in the ensuing information. Kluski was a powerful psychic medium, but unlike most materialisation mediums he often remained conscious during the phenomena. He was most willing to submit to rigorous investigations, often for long intervals:

> Thus he easily recuperates from the drain on his vital forces. When, after an interval of rest, he agrees to sit again, he knows that his pent-up psychic energies will produce startling manifestations.

The 1919-1920 images below are sometimes incorrectly credited to Dr Gustave Geley (1868-1924) and were published by Geley in his "Clairvoyance and Materialisation: A Record of Experiments". The English translation was published posthumously in 1927. Dr Geley died as a result of an air crash, leaving Warsaw for Paris on 15th July 1924. He had been conducting more experiments with Franek Kluski at Warsaw and his last two sittings were on 3rd and 11th July (published in *Revue Métapsychique*, Jan.-Feb. 1925). Prior to these more séances were

conducted; the quote that follows applies to a séance held on June 20th, 1924, possibly the first in the final set; *Psychic Science* notes:

> This glove and all those obtained during the séances were in a little bag which Dr. Geley was holding in his hand at the moment of this death. The aeroplane's crash broke the moulds into tiny bits.

—~—☼—~—

Below is taken from pages 263-265:

17. Experiments of the polish S.P.R. with Franek Kluski

During 1919 and 1920 the Polish S.P.R. made a series of remarkable experiments with Mr. Kluski, and the Society has kindly permitted me to publish parts of their Proceedings *in extenso* [12] with the photographs of the materialised forms.

Having taken no part, directly or indirectly, in these experiments, I can only publish these as documents which throw light on the subject. I desire only to give my readers some exact information on the modalities of Mr. Kluski's powerful mediumship.

I render my cordial thanks to the Society, to Mr. Franck Kluski, and to Colonel Okolowicz, who directed the experiments and has edited the Proceedings. I also thank my friend, Count Potocki, who has so kindly undertaken to translate them.

These experiments were undertaken with the special intention of photographing materialised forms. The purpose was but partially realised, but interesting records have been secured, and the sittings were nearly always characterised by important phenomena. All were conducted under identical conditions.

They were held in Mr. Kluski's study, a large room on the fifth floor, measuring about 22 feet by 16 feet. There is only one door and one window. The furniture consists of a table with a typewriter and a red electric lamp, small bureaux containing his papers and correspondence, a bookcase, some chairs, stools, and a sofa. There were in it no draperies, muslins, or white materials of any kind. Before each sitting the room was carefully searched, the window was closed by shutters and a thick curtain, and the door was bolted from within,

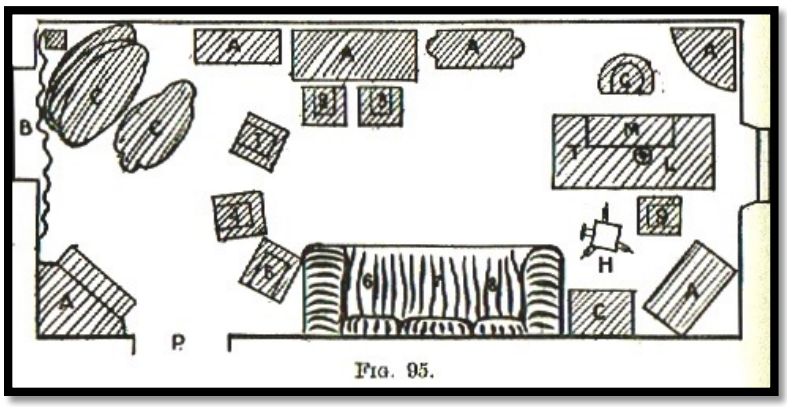


Fig. 95.

The experimenters were grouped as shown in Fig. 95, the medium being seated on a plain chair, and both of his hands were held. The room was lit by the small red lamp on the table, permitting satisfactory vision of the materialised forms. Near this table was a camera, and a little behind it one of the experimenters (No. 9) sat to make the magnesium flash.

[12] These, being somewhat redundant, are slightly condensed in translation.

The séances were conducted by night; they were very long, sometimes lasting the whole night, with intervals of rest.

Many human and animal forms manifested, only a few of which were photographed, the reason being that consent of the materialised forms was always asked for prior to making the flash. Many of these entities seemed to dread the flash and would not consent to it.

Development of the plates was done at once in the room itself. The camera was an ordinary one taking plates 13 centimetres by 18 centimetres. The photographs were taken by Lieutenant Dluzynski and Colonel Okolowicz.

It is to be noted that Mr. Kluski was usually conscious and observed the phenomena, but had to maintain entire mental passivity, failing which the forms were resorbed in him. The records were written up immediately after the séances, and signed by all present.

Given the restricted space, I will publish the first recorded experiment but will add other images from the succeeding experiments with quoted notes:

Experiment of August 30, 1919

Present: The medium, Mr. Kluski; controllers, Mme. L. Sokolow, Mr. S. German, Colonel Okolowicz, Mlle. Hertner, Mme. Okolowicz; photographer, Lieutenant Dluzynski.

First Phase.—Beginning at 10.45 p.m. Deviation of the compass, 10°. As no materialised forms presented themselves, the sitting was broken off at 11.30 p.m.

Second Phase.—Sitting resumed at fifteen minutes past twelve. Luminous points round the medium, crackling noises, and steps in the room. The medium asked that when the materialised entity were ready he should give the signal for photography by four distinct raps.

Several apparitions were seen at the same time. The first to be clearly seen was one which had appeared at previous sittings. It was a creature as large as an adult man, very hairy, with a mane and a bushy beard, resembling an animal or very primitive man; did not speak, but made hoarse noises, clicked his tongue, and ground his teeth. When called, he approached, allowed his fur to be stroked, touched the hands of the sitters, and scratched them lightly with claws rather than nails. This was an improvement on previous sittings, when he was violent and rough. He obeyed the voice of the medium, doing no harm to the sitters. He constantly tried to lick their hands and faces, much to their annoyance. He obeyed the orders of the medium, whether spoken or mental.

The next was the materialisation of a man who called himself Charles, approached Colonel Okolowicz, and greeted him by three pats on his hands. He asked to communicate by raps, said he had died thirteen years before, but would not let himself be photographed, saying that he could not do this for the medium's sake. Mr. Kluski having said that this was untrue, we heard slaps, and Mr. Kluski said that he was struck on the head, on his back, and on his hands. We asked Charles about the hairy creature, but Charles replied that he knew nothing about it.

There followed in succession two apparitions of women, features very clear, with an indication of the bust. The first was recognised as "Rheri," an Indian woman from Calcutta, seen in previous séances, with whom we communicated in English.

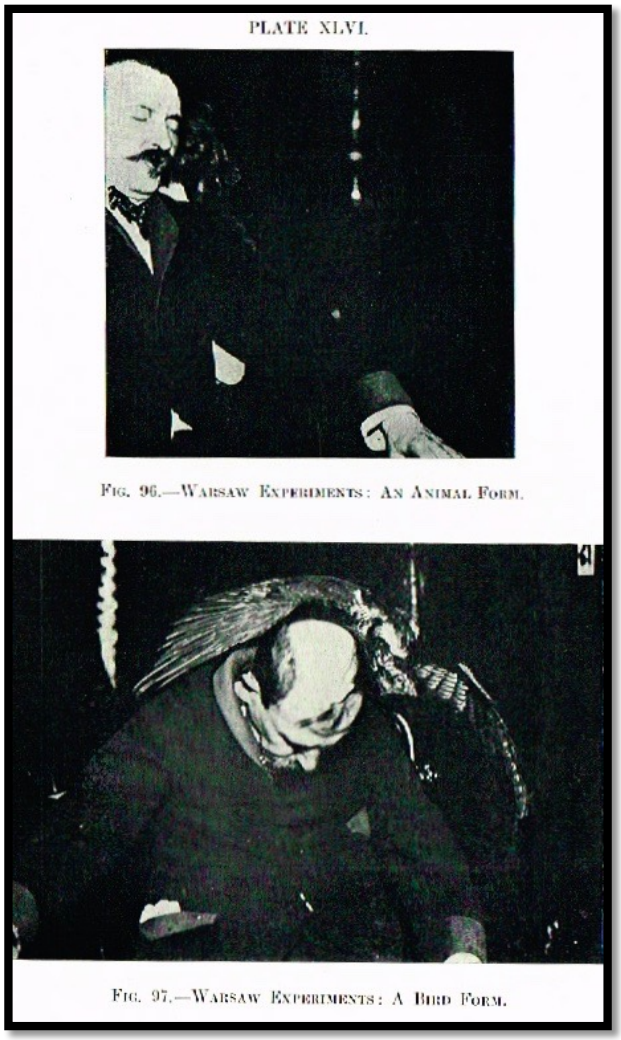


FIG. 96.—WARSAW EXPERIMENTS: AN ANIMAL FORM.

FIG. 97.—WARSAW EXPERIMENTS: A BIRD FORM.

Then there were four clear raps, and the red light on the table went out without being touched. The flash was made, and the lamp rekindled of itself, untouched (Plate XLVI., Fig. 96). After the flash cracklings were heard and some of the furniture was moved. A small table and a wooden column holding candelabra were moved over the heads of the medium and of Colonel Okolowicz into the circle, and the sofa was pushed up against the chair on which Colonel Okolowicz was sitting.

Third Phase.—Resumed at 4 a.m. for photography. The medium asked us to sing, to concentrate the thoughts of the sitters, and again requested four raps. We sang, accordingly, Mme. Konopnicka's hymn and three soldiers' songs. Lights round the medium. At 4.15 a.m. the four raps came, and the flash gave Plate XLVI., Fig. 97.

The medium, being very tired, asked that the sitting be suspended.

(Signed by all present.)

—☼—

Dr. Geley notes: *"However strange these materialisations of animals may seem, their reality is not in doubt. We have been able verify them in recent experiments made at the Paris Institute."*

Fig. 98: The séance exhibited a minute after the lights were put out: "luminous gleams appeared and condensed into a face with phosphorescent teeth". The "ape-man" materialised with similar actions above cited, four raps were asked for, when heard the red lamp went out and relit as before. By the flash light all saw the white form shown in the photo.



FIG. 98.—WARSAW EXPERIMENTS, SEPTEMBER 3, 1919.

Fig. 99: During this séance three paraffin/wax moulds were produced, the "ape-man" was again present, a luminous screen was roughly snatched, thrown into the air and remained floating near the ceiling for two minutes, luminous side down. Four raps and Col. Okolowicz made the flash and then developed.

Fig. 100: More paraffin moulds the observers could clearly see the outlines of the hands formed in the tank (middle of the room) by the red light. Lights concentrated around Kluski about two yards above him forming a triangle of small bright stars, different sizes. At the same moment two moulds were placed on the table—the "type writer on the table, fully illuminated by the red light, began to write." During this phenomenon, the persons holding Kluski's hands stated the mediums hands "twitched during the writing."

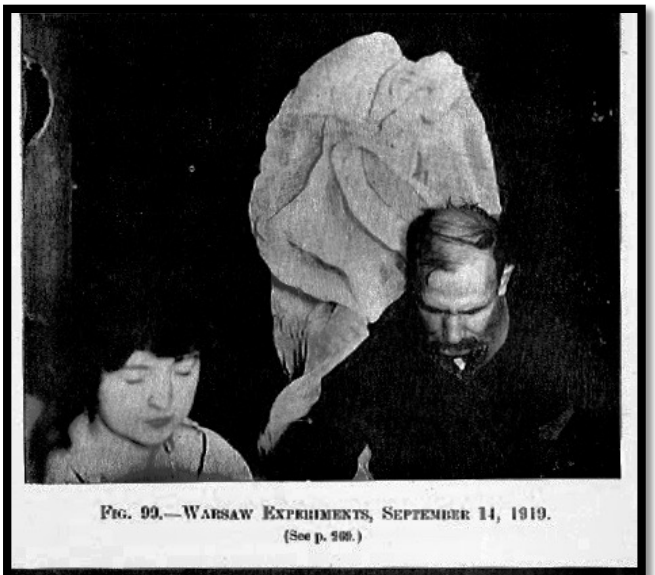


Fig. 99.—Warsaw Experiments, September 14, 1919.
(See p. 269.)

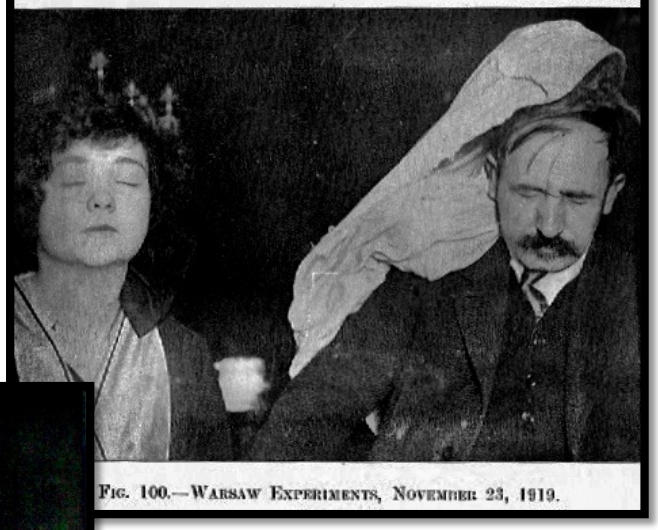


Fig. 100.—Warsaw Experiments, November 23, 1919.



Fig. 101.—Warsaw Experiments, December 25, 1919.
(See p. 270.)



Fig. 102.—Warsaw Experiments, June 15, 1920.

The sitting resumed at midnight, hands linked. "Powerful luminous effects, phosphorescent nebulæ, as a large luminous sphere floating in the air not far from the medium." Indistinct whispering voice, and the ape-man, usual four raps and the photograph taken.

Fig.101: Two cameras were used simultaneously, medium awake and well disposed. Large and small lights seen in twenty minutes the four raps heard—photographs developed on the spot.

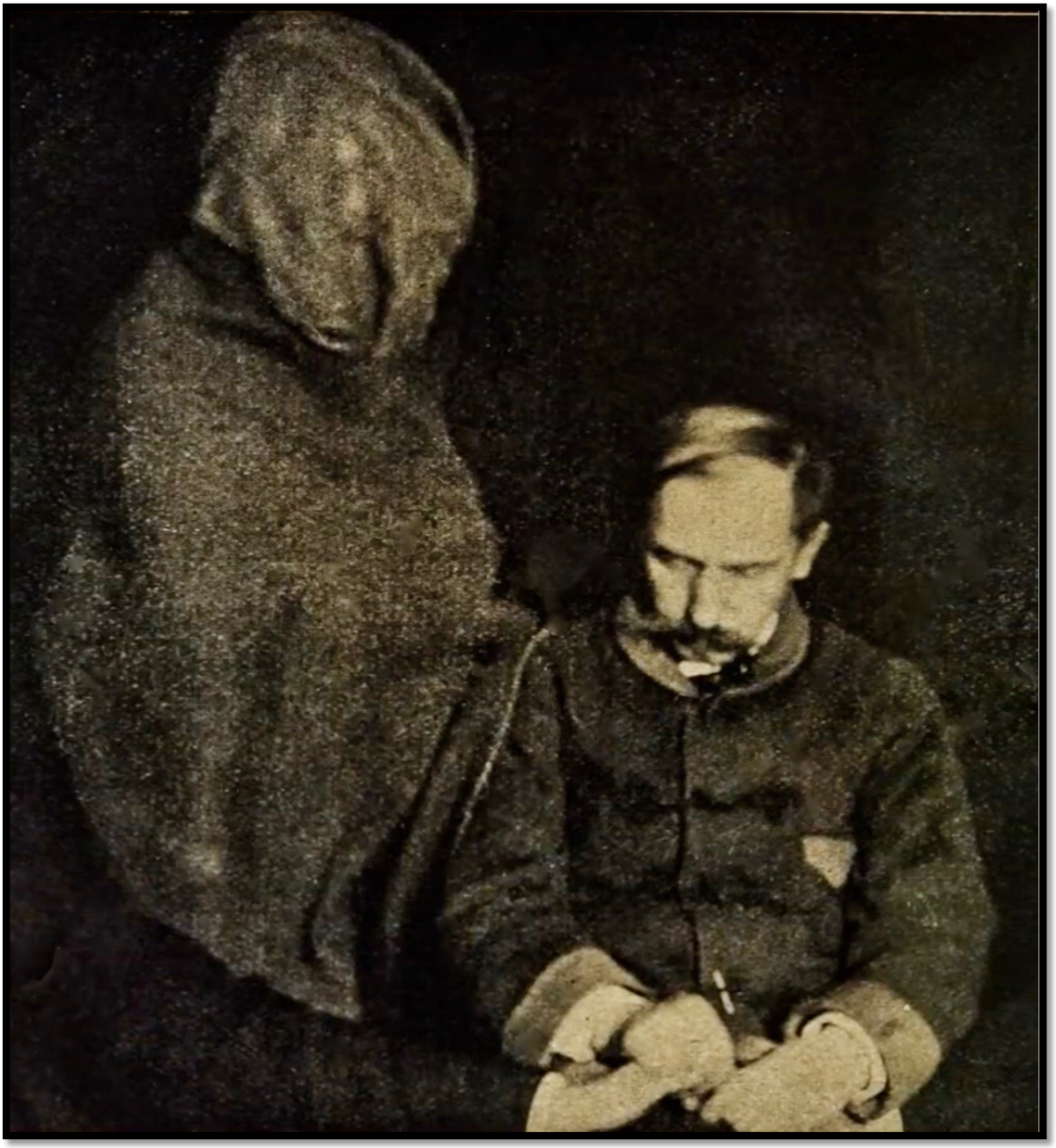
Fig. 102: "*Present*: Mr. Franek Kluski; controllers, Mr. Iskowski, Mr. Niemojewski, Mlle. Wanda Kluska; photographer, Colonel Okolowicz.

"The medium, very well disposed, chatted with the sitters and asked that the materialised entity should let

himself be photographed without a veil. Four raps, and the photograph was taken on a plate 9 centimetres by 12 centimetres. After development the plate was put into water and shut up in a cupboard in the room. On the morrow it was found to have been mysteriously scratched as shown (Plate XLIX., Fig. 102).

"Some other photographs were obtained at later séances, which will form the subject of a special publication.[13]

(*Signed*)
For the Polish Society of Psychical Research." [14]



[13] The image shown above I am afraid I have no reference.

[14] Please note that apart from Fig. 102 I have summarised the information given by the Polish SPR.

Below is an overview of Franek Kluski's mediumship taken from "These Mysterious People", by Nandor Fodor, published in 1934, chapter VI, pages 61-67:

STRANGE BEASTS FROM THE BEYOND

Story of Franek Kluski

THE familiars against whom Moses warred, who loom uncannily in witch trials and old tales of mystery, have been rehabilitated, and tamed, under the name of "controls" by Psychical Research, The ghost world, however, does not always respect the discipline of science, and occasionally investigators are visited by terrors of the dark which would chill the spine of the most hardened adventurer.

There are instances on record in which the visitants, who appear to be born into temporary existence through the agency of a materializing medium, were not human beings. They were the "beasts that perish"; animals whose presence inspired fear, To Franek Kluski, a Pole, whom the late Dr. Gustave Geley, Director of the Institut Metapsychique International of Paris, called the King of Mediums, we owe the most incredible experiences of this kind which scientists ever had the good fortune to share.

For the consideration of those who would accuse them of temporary insanity there are flashlight photographs, which demand an explanation. The best of these pictures (which is reproduced in Dr. Geley's classical *Clairvoyance and Materialization* [15]) was taken in 1919 in Warsaw. A bird, described by Prof. Pawlowski, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as a hawk or buzzard, was heard to stretch its wings with a whirring 'sound, accompanied by blasts of wind. It "flew round, beating its wings against the walls and the ceiling; when it finally settled on the shoulder of the medium it was photographed with a magnesium flash, as the camera was accidentally focussed on the medium before, and was ready".

There was no possibility, we are assured, of introducing that bird surreptitiously into the room or hiding it after the manifestation. It appeared and vanished in the way of human phantoms.

There was another, more dangerous customer in charge of a completely luminous old man, Prof. Pawlowski describes the man (an Afghan native who called himself Hirkill) as a column of light. He illuminated all the sitters and even the more distant objects of the room. The light appeared to be focussed in his hands and in the region of his heart.

"Accompanying him always was a rapacious beast, the size of a very big dog, of a tawny colour, with slender neck, mouth full of large teeth, eyes which glowed in the darkness like a cat's, and which reminded the company of a maneless lion, It was occasionally wild in its behaviour, especially if persons were afraid of it, and neither the human not the animal apparition was much welcomed by the sitters, The lion, as we may call him, liked to lick the sitters with a moist and prickly tongue, and gave forth the odour of a great feline, and even after the séance the sitters, and especially the medium, were impregnated with this acrid scent as if they had made a long stay in a menagerie among wild beasts"[16]

[15] pp. 266-267.

[16] Psychic Science, April, 1926.

The acrid scent was very pronounced with the weirdest of all these apparitions—the Pithecanthropus, which showed itself several times, "One of us," writes Dr. Geley, "at the séance of November 20th, 1920, felt its large shaggy head press hard on his right shoulder and against his cheek. The head was covered with thick, coarse hair; a smell came from it like that of a deer or a wet dog. When one of the sitters put out his hand the Pithecanthropus seized it and licked it slowly three times. Its tongue was large and soft. At other times we all felt our legs touched by what seemed to be frolicsome dogs."

According to Col. Norbert Ocholowicz, "this ape was of such great strength that it could easily move a heavy book-case, filled with books, through the room, carry a sofa over the heads of the sitters, or lift the heaviest persons with their chairs into the air to the height of a tall person. Though the ape's behaviour sometimes caused fear, and indicated a low level of intelligence, it was never malignant. Indeed, it often expressed goodwill, gentleness and readiness to obey... It was seen for the last time at the séance of December 26th, 1922, in the same form as in 1919, and making the same sounds of smacking and scratching."

Of another small animal, reminding the sitters of a weasel, the following description was quoted by Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, widow of the founder of the British College of Psychic Science:

"It used to run quickly over the table on to the sitters' shoulders, stopping every moment and smelling their hands and faces with a small, cold nose; sometimes, as if frightened, it jumped from the table and rambled through the whole room, turning over small objects, and shuffling papers lying on the table and writing-desk. It appeared at six or seven séances, and was last seen in June, 1923."

Kluski's animals are unique in species but not as phenomena. Two other Polish contemporaries, Burgik and Guzyk, demonstrated similar apparitions. Prof, Richet, the world-famous physiologist 'of the Sorbonne, writes of a séance with Burgik: [17]

"My trouser leg was strongly pulled, and a strange ill-defined form that seemed to have herd paws like of a dog or small monkey climbed on knee, I. could feel its weight very light, and something like the muzzle of an animal (?) touched my cheek. It was moist and made a grunting noise like a thirsty dog."

Other investigators with other mediums have also testified to such amazing adventures. Gambier Bolton, Fellow of the Zoological Society, writes in his *Ghosts in Solid Form:*

"Materialization of both beasts and birds sometimes appeared during our experiments, the largest and most startling being that of a seal which appeared on one occasion when Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley was present.

"We suddenly heard a remarkable voice calling out some absurd remarks in loud tones, finishing off with a shrill whistle.

"Why, that must be our old parrot,' said the lady of the house. 'He lived in this room for many years, and would constantly repeat those very words."

"A small wild animal from India which had been dead for three years or more, and had never been seen or heard of by the Sensitive, and was known only to one sitter,

[17] *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, London, 1923.

suddenly ran out from the spot where the Sensitive was sitting, breathing heavily and in a state of deep trance, the little creature uttering exactly the same cry which it had always used as a sign of pleasure during its earth life. It had shown itself altogether on or about ten different occasions, staying in the room for more than two minutes at a time and then disappearing as suddenly as it had arrived the scene, but on this occasion the lady who had owned it during its life called it to her by its pet name, and then it proceeded to climb slowly up on to her lap.

Resting there quietly for about half a minute it then attempted to return, but in doing so caught one of its legs in the lace with which the lady's skirt was covered. It struggled violently, and at last got itself free, but not until it had torn the lace for nearly three inches. At the conclusion of the experiment a medical man reported that there were five green-coloured hairs hanging in the torn lace, which had evidently become detached from the little animal's legs during its struggles. The lady at once identified the colour and the texture of the hairs, and this was confirmed by the other sitter—himself a naturalist—who had frequently seen and handled the animal during its earth life. The five hairs were carefully collected, placed in tissue paper, and then shut up in a light-tight and damp-proof box. After a few days they commenced to dwindle in size, and finally disappeared entirely."

To return to our Poles, Burgik and Guzyk had questionable reputations. They were professional mediums. Kluski, on the other hand, is a distinguished professional man, a poet and writer. His real name has not been made known.[18] In him powers of "physical" mediumship co-exist with remarkable intellectual psychic gifts; which is a rare combination. Strange presentiments, visions of distant events, and the facility of seeing phantoms, were his endowment from early childhood, but his "physical" powers were only accidentally discovered in a sitting with Guzyk in 1919. Their manifestation annoyed him, but his curiosity was aroused and he consented to experiments, Like Mme. d'Esperance, he preserved consciousness during the phenomena of materialization, and could give invaluable subjective accounts of his own sensations to men of science, whom he was always very willing to oblige. There was no facet in his strange gifts which did not lend itself to the fullest and most rigorous scientific examination. An instance of his luminous phenomena,[19] as recorded by Dr. Geley, is the following:

"A large luminous trail like a nebulous comet, and about half a metre long, formed behind Kluski about a metre above his head and seemingly about the same distance behind him. This nebula was constituted of tiny bright grains broadcast, among which there were some specially brilliant points. This nebula oscillated quickly from right to left and left to right, and rose and fell. It lasted about a minute, disappeared and reappeared several times. After the sitting I found that the medium, who had been naked for an hour, was very warm. He was perspiring on the back and at the armpits; he was much exhausted."

At the Institut Métapsychique of Paris there are eloquent proofs of Kluski's supernormal powers on view. They include plaster casts of human hands with fingers bent and joined. The mould is fine and delicate, and the texture of the skin perfect. But whose skin? That question cannot be answered. For the hands which alternately dipped into buckets filled with hot paraffin and cold water ended at the wrist. They had no visible owner. When the paraffin shell thickened the hand faded away, vanished, dematerialized and left a perfect glove behind. The operation only took three minutes. Normally, it would

[18] Pioneer: Teofil Modrzejewski.

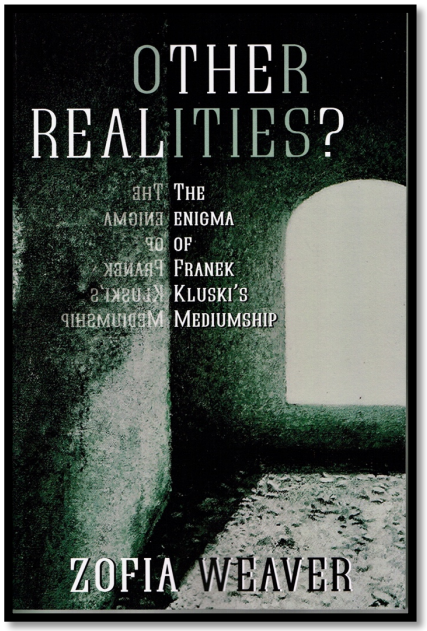
[19] See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 6, December 2018: "Part Two: Spiritualistic Phenomena of the Past – Luminous Phenomena".

take twenty minutes to produce a paraffin glove. But the hand, with drawing from it, would burst he shell at the joints if the fingers were bent, and at the wrist.

The Kluski gloves defied normal human production. They showed blue spots, traces of cholesterin which Dr. Geley, unknown to all, mixed with the paraffin to have further evidence that the gloves were made on the spot.

The excellence of Kluski's phenomena is due to his economy in the use of his mysterious power. Not being a professional medium, he only sits for those he cares for, and at comparatively long intervals. Thus he easily recuperates from the drain on his vital forces. When, after an interval of rest, he agrees to sit again, he knows that his pent-up psychic energies will produce startling manifestations.

Further recommended reading is:



OTHER REALITIES?

The Enigma of Franek Kluski's Mediumship, by Zofia Weaver

Reviewed by Tom Ruffles of the Society for Psychical Research

MRS ANNIE MELLON

Materialisation medium



Miss Annie Fairlamb married James Barr Mellon. The name Mrs Mellon as a materialisation medium would fill to full volume, becoming one of the most successful physical mediums. Around the turn of the twentieth century Annie was widowed, then marrying Henry Gleave on November 30th, 1903.

Annie was known for the materialised spirit not returning to the cabinet but standing in the centre of the circle and gradually dematerialising; Annie herself would sometimes sit outside the cabinet in full view of the sitters during her séances.

In Light, May 28th, 1904, then as Mrs Gleave, Annie writes her 'Personal Experiences'; at this time she had completed over three decades as a physical medium and this is a short quote from her memoirs:

> Mrs. Gleave—formerly Mrs. Mellon—addressed the following communication to the friends assembled at the gathering of the Union of London Spiritualists on the 18th inst: -
>
> My experiences as a psychic or spirit medium would more than fill a large volume; but I will content myself with referring to a few instances only, which I hope will be deemed of sufficient interest to be worth recording. My initiation into our movement dates as far back as the autumn of 1871, when I was but a child. Messrs. Herne and Williams, noted mediums at that time, were on a professional visit to Newcastle. I was fortunate enough to be invited to one of their séances, which proved to be a red-letter day in my life, and I have recounted over and over again the marvellous manifestations which occurred on that never-to-be-forgotten occasion. I was indeed so fascinated that I could not rest till I had seen more. Therefore, with this object in view, I became a member of a developing class, and from the very commencement exhibited signs of mediumship. Some of the sitters who sat with me then are still to the fore, being members of our society (namely, the Newcastle-on-Tyne Spiritual Evidence Society), of which I have the honour to be a life member and a member of the executive. Others have passed on to the higher life.

Annie had two main controls, Cissy and Geordie. In the New Year physical mediumship will be a regular feature, starting with publishing more on Annie Mellon. Below is taken from the "Medium and Daybreak", October 23rd, 1891, front page:

MRS. MELLON'S MATERIALISATIONS

REMARKABLE SPIRIT MATERIALISATIONS, Held at the house of Mr. Braham, Manchester.

Sunday evening, October 11, 1891, through the mediumship of Mrs. Mellon.

There were twenty-two ladies and gentlemen present, of the highest respectability and intelligence, and possessing sufficient mental accumen to detect any effort at simulating phenomena, had such a thing been attempted.

The cabinet was formed by stretching a cord across one corner of the room; over it hung a curtain, which parted in the centre, allowing only just sufficient room for a cane-seated chair. The light was a gas jet with a red glass chimney of the argand-burner type, and sufficient light to see the time from a watch in any part of the room.



After a careful inspection of the room and cabinet, and all were seated, the medium entered the cabinet. A hymn was then sung, and during the singing of the second verse spirit lights were seen, and as soon as the hymn was finished a little black spirit girl ("Cissy") materialised outside the curtain, and said, "How are you all people?" She asked the chairman (Mr. Tomlinson) to be introduced to the company.

On a small table standing near were two boxes of sweets; she came forward, took a sweet, and tried to eat it; afterwards taking up the box she came across to Mrs. Braham, putting several sweets into her hand, saying, "You have a cough." Some of the company asked for some; she turned round and threw the remainder among them. Then she returned to the centre of the cabinet, and gradually dematerialised till there was but a small speck of white remaining on the floor. She then commenced to rematerialize herself in full view of the sitters, saying, at the same time, "Can you see me?" and she showed her black feet and ankles. We also saw her face and white teeth, which she called our attention to, and appeared quite proud of them. She then retired into the cabinet.

Spirit-lights were again seen, and a form known as "Geordie," a fully materialised male spirit, came out; and going to the table, on which stood a musical box, wound it up. He then turned so as to be plainly seen, and said, in a deep voice, "I am pleased to meet you; the conditions are very good here." This spirit appeared to be about five feet eight or nine inches high, with dark beard streaked with gray, and had a graceful and gentlemanly bearing. He passed in and out of the cabinet, replying to numerous

questions. He then came to the side where Mrs. Braham sat, and said to her, “Put your hand out, please; I have found a tack” (this was dropped by Mr, Braham's brother when tacking up the curtain, and be forgot to pick it up, but remembered the fact as soon as he heard the spirit say he had found it). The musical box having ran down was again wound up quite vigorously by “Geordie,” and afterwards he returned to the cabinet.

A hymn was again sung, “There are angels hovering around,” when a hand was seen high up outside and above the curtain as if stretched out to greet the friends. “Geordie” again came out, and asked Mrs. Braham if he might be allowed the honour of kissing her hand, which of course was granted. His lips were warm, and his beard soft to the touch; he remarking at the same time, “I am proud to have the honour,” and also expressing to the friends present his pleasure at having such harmonious and good conditions. He then wrote his name, at the request of Mr. Tomlinson, on a sheet of paper in a bold legible hand.

“Geordie” returned to the curtain, when a second spirit was seen partially materialised; and as he faded out of sight “Cissy” reappeared, moving her dress or spirit-drapery about, and commenced dancing. We could all plainly hear the patter and see the little black feet; there was also a perceptible vibration of the floor, which was undoubtedly caused by something more than a shadow. She then said, “Do you see my medium?” at the same time throwing open the curtains, so that all could see inside the cabinet.

The medium was in a deep trance at the time; “Cissy” seated herself on one knee, plainly showing herself and her white dress in contrast to the medium’s black one, which she had on at the time. “Cissy” got up and seated herself on the other knee of the medium, saying, “Now see me bofe.” *The two were plainly seen together* at the same time. “Cissy” came outside, whilst the medium was distinctly heard inside breathing heavily, the spirit saying, “Do you hear her.”

A female spirit-form appeared, and was recognised by Miss Brown as her sister.

Two other female spirit-forms were seen for a short time, but were not recognised, and did not stay long. After they had disappeared “Cissy” again came, and said, “Me can’t do any more; good night all,” and dematerialised between the open curtains, the medium being clearly seen at the same time. This ended a very successful seance.



Annie Mellon and “Geordie”

A long list of names of those who attended followed, which I have omitted owing to space, but it is available to any reader if required. The article published below followed with an earlier account of the then Miss Fairlamb; we can note at the introduction of the séance their reference made to William Crookes' experiments with Daniel D. Home, where a Mr J.M. Robertson criticised Crookes' experiments, accusing Home of cheating. This rather interesting accusation is published at the end of this issue.

WAX MOULDS OF SPIRIT-HANDS

Dear Mr. Burns,—I have read with much pleasure your masterly reply to J. M. Robertson's criticism of Professor Crookes's experiments with Mr. Home, and fully endorse your just comments with reference to the lame excuse of want of space. The fact is patent, your crushing counterblast was too perfect and complete. It was indeed refreshing to read it. As a lover of truth and fair play, I do not object to honest robust criticism; it is wholesome and healthy; without it there would be nothing but stagnation, no progress. We can understand the motives actuating men in political warfare, and however regrettable it may be, however dangerously misleading to the unthinking multitude, the fact still remains, for do we not witness almost daily to what depths of base misrepresentations men can reach in their ambition and lust for power and place, but when we find men in the position of Mr. Robertson resorting to such tactics in criticising, the researches of an eminent scientist like Professor Crookes, it is simply incomprehensible. If permissible through the medium of your Journal, I will submit for Mr. Robertson's information an experiment under conditions I think he will not easily wriggle out of.

Some sixteen years ago, my friend, Mr, W. Armstrong, of Cross Houses, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and myself were deeply interested in the wonderful spiritual phenomena taking place through the mediumship of Miss Fairlamb (Mrs. Mellon), and we commenced a series of experiments with the lady to see if we could obtain through her mediumship moulds in paraffine wax of hands or feet of materialised spirits. Our apparatus was simple, consisting of two ordinary foot-baths, one containing the molten paraffine wax kept in the liquid state by floating on the top of hot water, the other about half-full of cold water. Before describing the conditions under which this experiment was carried out, I will just say that Miss Fairlamb was on the day of the experiment the guest of lady friend of mine, and in my company and under my observation for several hours, and never out of sight of my friend or myself until we wished her good night at the end of the experimental seance. After tea we had to walk a distance of about two-and-a-half miles before reaching the place where the experiment took place.

On our arrival there, we found Mr. Armstrong had completed his arrangement, and with other five gentlemen was waiting our arrival. The room in which this experimental seance was held was about 15ft. by 12ft., as near as I can remember, and approached from the landing of the staircase through another small room used as an ante-room. The cabinet was formed by green woollen curtains, suspended from a semi-circular rod of iron, fixed to the side-wall of the room, as near the centre as possible. The curtains were drawn back, close to the wall, showing nothing but the bare wall and the rod on which the curtains were suspended. The furniture of the room consisted of a common deal table and some windsor chairs; the table for convenience was placed in a corner of the room, and the chairs placed in position round the cabinet. Mr. Armstrong with my assistance then placed the foot-baths containing the molten wax and cold water within the radius of the cabinet, at the extreme end of it, Mr. Armstrong now locked the outer as well the seance-room doors, to prevent the possibility of ingress to the room. After every one present expressed their satisfaction with the arrangements, the curtains were drawn round the cabinet by Mr. Armstrong.

All was now ready, and Miss Fairlamb was requested to take her place in the cabinet, but this she positively refused to do. She said she was willing to sit outside the cabinet, but inside she would not go. Her reason was this: she told me she was certain that if she entered the cabinet, and anything in the shape of phenomena occurred, one of the gentlemen present would declare it a trick, and not genuine spiritual phenomena, so we had to give way, and at once took our seats round the cabinet, Miss Fairlamb sitting immediately opposite the centre of the cabinet, with a clear space of about 3ft. between it and the chair on which she was seated. She was immediately controlled, and the controlling spirit requested me to bring my chair close to the medium, to take hold of both her hands, and also place my feet upon those of the medium. This latter I strongly objected to do. I said 1 was willing for the medium to place her feet upon mine, but could not think of placing mine upon those of the medium, However, the control would not give way, and I was compelled to comply under protest against those conditions. I was further commanded on no account to lose my hold upon the medium. Another gentleman, a complete stranger to Miss Fairlamb, was then requested to bring his chair and sit next to me, and hold me as he pleased, and so place himself that he could see that I faithfully carried out the conditions imposed upon me.

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

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

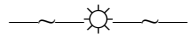
Now let me ask Mr. Robertson to explain by what power or agency the two baths were removed from where Mr. Armstrong and myself had placed them, under the observation of the whole company present? or how did the magazine so mysteriously get into the cabinet? or from whence did the moulds come? for I most solemnly vouch they were not placed there by any mortal present. I wonder how Mr. Robertson can explain away these facts, and under such conditions as they occurred. A gentleman proficient in electric science and an inventor (if I mistake not he is now residing in London), was present at that experimental seance, and afterwards took a plaster cast of one of the moulds, and can vouch for the correctness of this record of what took place, under conditions hardly ever heard of, or applied before. There was not only a clear space of three feet between the cabinet and the medium, which was clearly under observation by all present, and in a good light, but she was placed in such a position, and under conditions that made it impossible for any one present to doubt the genuineness of the phenomena.

The gentleman who had made the cast of the hand, at the first opportunity submitted it for inspection and comparison with that of the corresponding hand of Miss Fairlamb. There was not the slightest comparison whatever. The cast was clearly of a different mould and shape. Upon it could be plainly seen the beautiful and delicate tracery of the skin. It was a most beautiful and perfect cast, and must have been executed with great skill and the utmost care, as the mould was remarkably thin, and required delicate handling. There were eight persons (one lady and seven gentlemen) besides the medium, witnesses of what I have stated occurred at that—to me—ever memorable séance.

I have no interest whatever in giving this record of one out of many experiments instituted and superintended with the greatest care and patience by my old and valued friend, Mr. Armstrong, only in defence of truth. Truth to some minds is evidently stranger than fiction, and because it is so, and beyond their grasp, in their conceited egotism conclude that all men are knaves and fools but themselves, and utterly incapable to form a correct estimate of the evidences of their senses.—Believe me, dear Mr. Burns, faithfully yours,

THOMAS ASHTON.

28, Heaton Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Oct. 19, 1891.

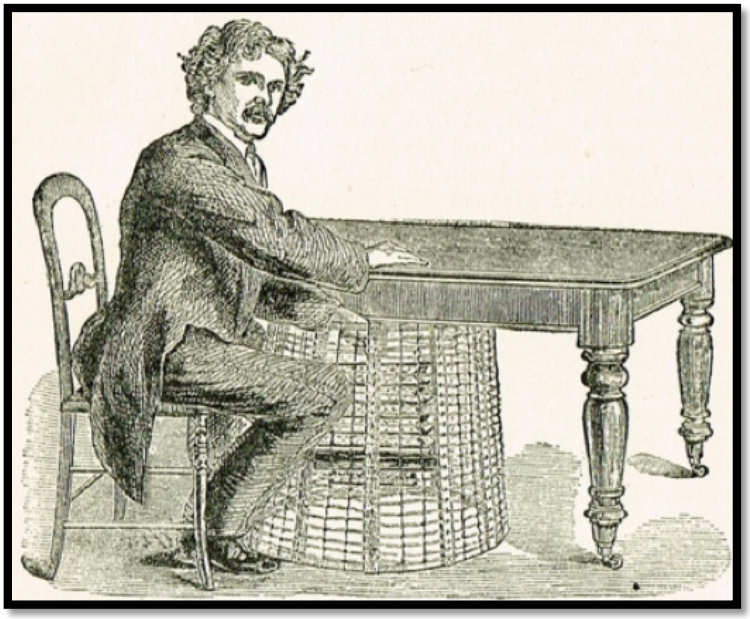


Mr J.M. Robertson's criticism of William Crookes'

Continued as noted previously in the Mellon articles: Mr J.M. Robertson's criticism of William Crookes' experiments, accusing D.D. Home of cheating—responded to by the paper's founder editor, James Burns.

These experiments of Homes' accordion playing under Crookes' laboratory conditions have previously been touched upon in Pioneer Vol. 5, No. 3, June 2018:

> I am referring to Daniel Home (pronounced *Hume)* undergoing experiments with William Crookes in 1871 with an accordion. Crookes had purchased a new one. Home had neither handled nor seen the instrument before the experiments. The accordion was placed in a cage and under a table; the illustration from Crookes' report clearly shows Home's position.[19] Home took the accordion between his thumb and middle finger at the *opposite end* to the instrument keys.



Shortly after the experiment began the researchers could see the accordion waving about in a curious manner; then sounds came from it and several notes were played in succession. The researchers could clearly view the phenomena; one actually going under the table reported that the accordion was expanding and contracting while Home's 'hand was quite still, his right hand on the top of the table.'

For many years it was not generally realised that this was a common demonstration by Home; please see Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. May 2014: "The Accordion Playing of D. D. Home – Herbert Thurston, S. J.":

> "… one would be led to suppose that the accordion phenomena had only been produced in the séances with Sir W. Crookes in 1871. In point of fact they were constantly exhibited by Home during a period of nearly twenty years, and they have been described in detail …"

Sometimes the critics' explanation appears more extraordinary than the phenomenon itself!

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[19] "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism", by Sir William Crookes, published by James Burns, 1874. This is available online as a free PDF download.

REPLY TO "A SPIRITUALISTIC FARCE"

To the Editor of the *National Reformer* Sir,—I am the person who held a two nights' debate on "Spiritualism" with Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, in the Hall of Science, on Dec. 16 and 17, 1872. A verbatim report of that debate was published in the succeeding issues of the *National Reformer*; if the columns of that weekly be equally liberal to-day, this answer to an article entitled "A Spiritualistic Farce," signed "John M. Robertson" (N.R., Sept 20, 1891) will also appear in the *National Reformer*. In what follows I will allude to the author of that article as "the writer."



Not unfrequently when a great drama is enacted in a leading London theatre, it is burlesqued, or the theme is turned into "a farce," in some other house, devoted to that lighter form of entertainment. This is good-humouredly done, and is generally recognised as a compliment to the play on which it is founded. From this point of view, one can enjoy the ingenuity with which the writer twists and turns the various features of Mr. Crookes's experiments, making them appear in quite a different light from that in which the author intended them to appear. But it is a question whether the caption, "A Spiritualistic Farce," is in keeping with the nature of the performance, seeing that it is the work of a Secularist, and appears in the organ of that party: I therefore beg to suggest that "A Secularistic Farce" would be much more appropriate. For indeed there was nothing "Spiritualistic" about Mr. Crookes's experiments.

In his opening chapter, which immediately precedes the report "farced," Mr. Crookes criticises the methods of the Spiritualists most severely, accepts none of their results, appears to regard the whole question as unopened, and proceeds to commence the examination as if no one had ever touched it. And the task which he set himself, was not to *prove* Spiritualism, but, be it remembered, to establish the existence of a "new force," which for convenience he denominated "psychic force." He declared that his intention was to examine a department of a nature that had been overlooked by men of science; his experiments must therefore be regarded as researches in "natural philosophy," or "materialism" if more commendable; with the view that truth should be followed wherever it might lead, and in support of no hypothesis or theory whatever. Though Mr. Crookes's researches as a whole are denominated "the phenomena of Spiritualism," because of the results to which they finally led, yet there is no "Spiritualism" whatever in the experiments examined; that is, from Mr. Crookes's point of view as an experimenter at that stage. It is not notions or names to which importance must be attached, but facts. Mr. Crookes may not call himself a "Spiritualist" to-day, but his facts stand on their own merits.

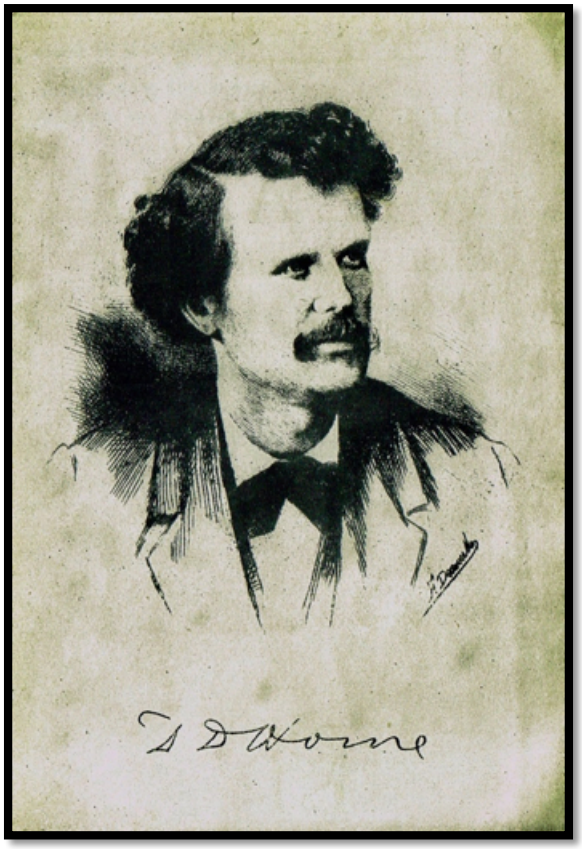
The writer endeavours to cast a slur on Mr. Home's character, as if that was of the slightest importance in the inquiry, the conditions of which were such that Mr. Home could not have influenced the result in the least, if he had been the most untrustworthy on earth. But it may be noted in passing that Mr. Home's phenomena were testified to by hundreds of persons of good standing, so that the nature of those facts does rest alone on the conclusive experiments made by Mr. Crookes, which simply corroborate the observations of innumerable other experimenters; many of them, like Mr. Crookes himself, leading men of science.

The writer stultifies himself on the threshold of his task. He first states that Mr. Crookes had seen these phenomena several times, and then he constructed a cage, to be placed close under a table, for the purpose of testing the results in a precautionary manner; but the writer finds fault with these precautions, which were instituted to obviate fault-finding. If Mr. Crookes had not used the cage and table, captious readers might have objected that the experiments were done so openly that there were no means supplied to prevent Mr. Home from assisting the manifestations with his legs or other hand. The cage was so high that when placed under the table, it had to be drawn out a little way to enable Mr. Home's wrist to pass into the cage to hold the accordion by the lower end. In the sum total we have both methods tried: the phenomena had first been scientifically observed without table or cage, as many other experimenters elsewhere had observed them, and then with table and cage as stated by Mr. Crookes. The claim of the writer that the table and cage favoured trickery falls to the ground, for the same results were obtained on other occasions in the way the writer suggests, that is, without table or cage, which were simple appliances to hem in the experiment beyond the power of Mr. Home to tamper with it had he been so inclined.

Next it is objected to that Mr. Crookes uses the phrase "somewhat curious manner" when describing the "waving about" of the accordion in the cage while Mr. Home held it by the lower end. The writer wishes to make it appear that Mr. Home, "by a very slight muscular action of his fingers," could "cause the lower part of the accordion" (the key-end, farthest from Mr. Home's hand) "to wave about." But the language criticised, "somewhat curious manner," answers this objection, for had the movements been of the kind insinuated, there would have been nothing "curious" about them. A similar futile objection is raised a to the statement that the accordion was seen to "expand and contract," "without saying *how*." Simply "expand and contract"! The bellows were seen to expand and contract again. Could anything be plainer? The "*how?"* Ay, there's the rub!

The writer overlooks one of Mr. Crookes's experiments which "contracts" these objections completely. It must be remembered that after having tried these experiments repeatedly without the cage and table, they were witnessed several times on the occasion in question. On the last of these experiments Mr. Crookes writes: "Whilst this tune was being played, I grasped Mr, Home's arm, below the elbow, and gently slid my hand down it until I touched the top of the accordion. He was not moving a muscle." Why did the writer ignore this statement, which completely settles the question once and for all that Mr. Home used no "muscular action of the fingers" whatever while the experiments were going on?

He then discusses the phenomenon of the accordion continuing to play in the cage after Mr. Home's hand had been withdrawn, and when there was "no person touching it." He thinks he is "entitled" to the "explanation" that the accordion was swung from a thread and a tack, and that "no mention is made of any attempt by the investigators to ascertain whether or not the accordion had been hung by a thread." This thread objection has not even a tack to hang by. The whole of the arrangements were such as



to prevent any objection raised that Mr. Home could tamper in any way with the experiments. The investigators had no interests to serve in testifying to these facts; they were not Spiritualists; they were physicists, endeavouring to demonstrate the operation of a "new force in nature." They did not take Mr. Home into their confidence in any particular. Mr. Crookes himself bought a new accordion on purpose; the apparatus was designed and arranged in the absence of Mr. Home. He knew nothing as to the nature of the tests until he met the investigators in that laboratory. Mr. Home changed his dress before he began the experiments, that he might have no machinery about him.

Then in the laboratory or other room used, the bottom end of the accordion was placed in his hand; the instrument was passed into the cage; his other hand was in view all the time; several pairs of critical eyes were watching his every movement. I ask, then, how could he possibly hold the bottom of an accordion in the left hand, under the edge of a table-top, and at the same time, with that same hand, drive a tack into the under-side of a table-top, and affix a thread to the instrument which he was holding? The supposition is so absurd that Mr. Crookes had no necessity to refer to it, seeing that all the arrangements were such as to render a thing of the kind quite impossible. It must also be remembered that the accordion was repeatedly withdrawn from, and again placed, under the table, which would have interfered with any thread arrangement. There is no use in talking about "legerdemain" in connection with these experiments, for no performer of that kind would attempt his "skill" under similar conditions. Even if the tack with thread attached had been got into position, and fastened to the accordion, it would not have accounted for the phenomena, such as moving of the keys: besides, "thread" is a visible substance, and the experimenters were not blind, and too "perspicacious" to be fooled to the top of the writer's bent.

The writer has next to extinguish the playing of the accordion, which performance on his part is of a piece with the rest of his task. He regards it as "extremely difficult to fix with accuracy the locality of the source of sounds," and to bear out this opinion he quotes experiments with persons blindfolded, who differed in their judgment, as to the source of sounds. But there is no parallel between the cases. Mr Crookes and his experimenters were not blindfolded nor were they blind, and the experiments were conducted in a good light. The accordion was seen playing, the keys were seen in motion as the sounds were emitted. Under such conditions there is nothing more certain than "to fix with accuracy the locality of the source of sounds." This can be proved at any time by getting within two feet of a person playing any musical instrument; it can be certified on the street, where music is being played every day. If mankind were incapable of thus fixing "the source of sounds" there would be no certainty of any experimental fact; for if the sense of hearing is thus faulty, what must be said of the other senses. To argue thus is to undermine Secularism hopelessly. The writer so far loses his senses as to be driven to the conclusion that any accordion may seem to play a great many ways except by its usual and only way of playing; in other words, any thing is true except that which is evidently and undeniably a fact! Before the writer took up

his pen, it does not seem that he took "a single precaution against this notorious form of hallucination." He actually has the folly to suggest that Mr. Crookes and his party were "hallucinated," and did not know when they heard and saw an accordion actually play under their noses; and he seems to maintain that his supposition is to be entertained before their actual experiences. The writer's "hallucination" is very peculiar indeed: instead of its imagining the existence of a thing which does not exist, it takes the opposite course, and endeavours to "hallucinate" the facts out of existence.

The writer's objections become weaker as he proceeds, till they have to lean against one another for mutual support. He wants to know whether the accordion "floated" when it played with no hand near it, and whether it "continued to expand and contract."

This is answered by the statement that the floating and action of the accordion were observed in connection with sounds made, while the instrument was seen in the act of making them. He makes a mistake when he raises the objection that Mr. Crookes "could not really have seen what Mr. Home took hold of" when he put his hand back into the cage. The writer evidently forgets that Mr. Crookes not only saw but felt, for he put his hand down Mr. Home's arm till he touched the accordion, and felt that Mr. Home "was not moving a muscle," and at the same time the instrument was in full action. Other observers knelt down, looked under the table, and through the open work of the cage saw the position of Mr. Home's hand and the action of the instrument at various times. Mr. Home was so completely at the discretion of the experimenters that the nature of the proceedings was liable to be observed in all aspects at any moment, and such observation were repeatedly resorted to. One of the writer's "confused" objections is to confound "the force at work" with the "action of the keys"; the whole tendency of the report is to show that the action of the instrument was quite normal, but that the "force" producing the action was inscrutable.

It may be noticed that though Dr. Huggins in his testimony says he did not see Mr. Home's hand when holding the instrument in the cage, yet other observers, differently placed, did see Mr. Home's hand, some being on their knee on the floor observing it through the cage, and Mr. Crookes states that he felt Mr. Home's hand during a most crucial experiment, as described above. It must likewise be noticed that while Mr. Home's hands were both on the table, and the accordion was floating about in the cage with not visible support, Dr. Huggins subscribes to all the facts recorded by Mr. Crookes in an unreserved manner; only he did not see Mr. Home's hand when in the cage because of the position in which he sat at the table. Dr. Huggins does not invalidate Mr. Crookes's statement in any one particular.

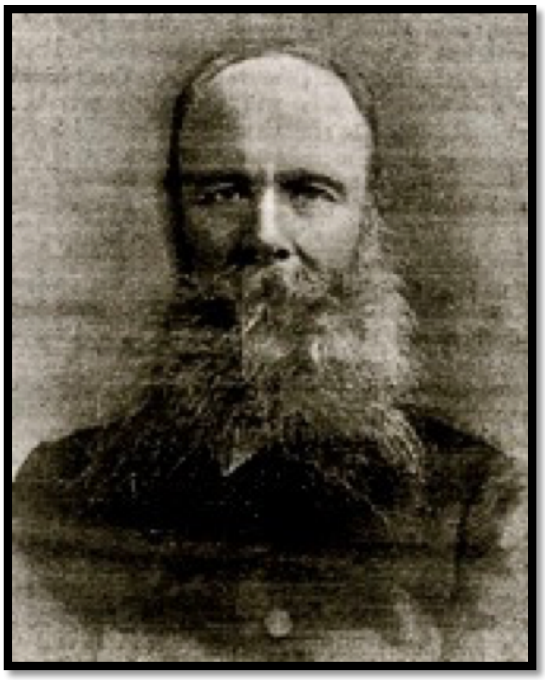
The writer closes in a fit of deep dissatisfactions with his own performance. He thinks Mr. Home may have used "mouth accordion," right in the face of so many sharp observers in a full light! Or the music might proceed "from some machine about his person." Yes, it is "very like a whale" indeed! But the "whale" has not the whole field to himself; the "weasel" and the "camel" strive hard to win distinction. The writer further hazards the insinuation that Mr. Home "got another accordion payed near at hand." Impossible! How? Mr. Home came to the house accompanied by Mr. Crookes, who went to his lodgings for him; no accomplice could therefore enter the house, and if in the house such an assistant could not have been in the apartment where the experiments took place, otherwise he would have been seen as well as heard. If Mr. Home could have rendered a musician invisible while playing an accordion within a yard of a part of intelligent sceptical men, he would have been a far greater wonder than in his modest roll of spirit-medium. The investigators were fully satisfied that the sounds were emitted by the accordion before their eyes, and at the time when the action

of the instrument was in accordance with the sounds heard. The objection to "a violin or a cornet" being used in these experiments is, that they are not so conveniently operated; but the facts are just as conclusive in the one case as they would be in the others. As a matter of fact, the piano is most frequently used in similar experiments, as its keys are easily operated by pressure by the force; but in such a test case there would be the objection that it might contain hidden mechanism, and being large it cannot be so well observed, handled and isolated. Indeed no instrument so readily testifies to its action as the accordion, in the self-contained way in which its operations co-ordinate with the sounds it produces.

I have now shown the futility of the whole of the objections raised, and now the laboured efforts to disparage the scientific accuracy and ability of Mr. Crookes fall to the ground; he clearly stated the facts that did occur, and did not discuss the thousand and one improbabilities which could not occur. It is a personal attack on that imminent scientist from first to last; a forced attempt to suppress the real facts and invent others to do duty instead. I have been a Free-thinker for forty years, and I deeply regret to see so-called Free-thought in such a decaying condition that its propaganda has to resort to suppression of truth and gratuitous inventions to attain its ends, and endeavour to damage the reputation of the boldest and freest thinkers of the age.—

I am, your obedient servant, J. BURNS.

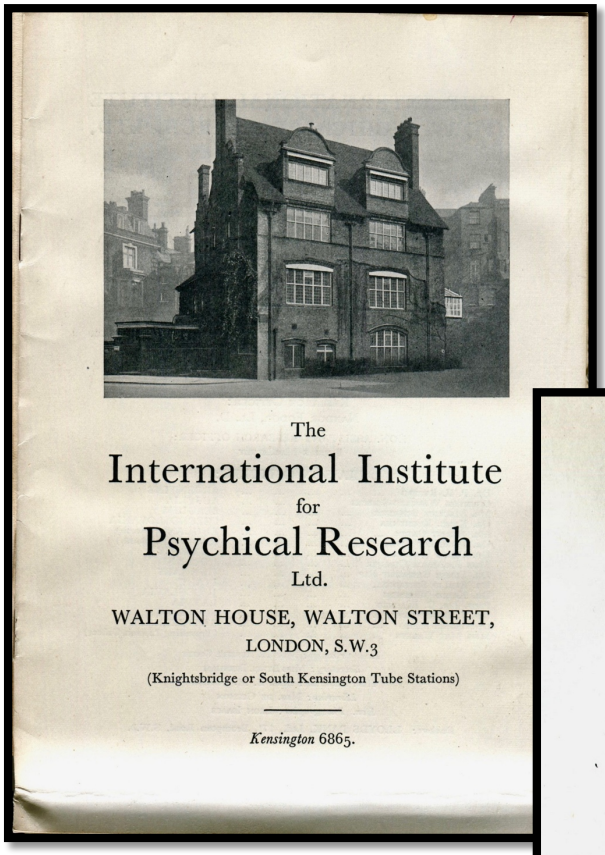
15, Southampton Row, W.C., Sept. 27, 1891.



JAMES BURNS

1835 – 1894

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH



The
International Institute
for
Psychical Research
Ltd.
WALTON HOUSE, WALTON STREET,
LONDON, S.W.3
(Knightsbridge or South Kensington Tube Stations)

Kensington 6865.

The International Institute for Psychical Research was formed in 1934 for the purpose of investigating psychic phenomena on strictly scientific lines; it enrolled a number of distinguished scientists both in an active and in a consultative capacity. For further information please see "International Institute for Psychical Investigation", by Leslie Price, Psypioneer, Vol. 1, No. 17, September 2005.[10]

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH, LTD.

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No President has been elected in place of the late Sir Grafton Elliot Smith, F.R.S., M.A., etc. who was the Institute's first President.

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Later, on January 1st 1939, the "International Institute for Psychical Research" amalgamated with the "British College of Psychic Science", founded in 1920 by Mr Hewat McKenzie, changing their name to "International Institute for Psychic Investigation". In addition, it took over the BCPS journal, which continued, retaining its name, "'Psychic Science' Quarterly Transactions of the International Institute for Psychic Investigation", with Mrs Hewat McKenzie as editor, Barbara McKenzie being the widow of Hewat McKenzie.[11]

It appears that with the outbreak of war the organisation had a difficult time; its library and records are said to have been lost or destroyed by bombing and the IIPI collapsed in 1947.

[10] I note that the title is incorrect and should read at this point: "International Institute for Psychical Research" (not "Investigation").

[11] For further information see Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 2, February 2011: "Whatever happened to the British College? - *Psychic Science*" "The International Institute for Psychic Investigation (IIPI)".

The article below was written by Arthur Findlay, showing him as a sympathetic researcher; it was published by "Psychic News", January 9th, 1937, pages 7 and 8:



THE CASE FOR REAL PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

By ARTHUR FINDLAY, who is chairman of the International Institute for Psychical Research.

WHAT is the right attitude for Spiritualists to adopt towards psychical research?

All Spiritualists who have reached definite conclusions as to the truth of what Spiritualism stands for have been, and perhaps still are, psychical researchers. There is no reason why a Spiritualist cannot be a psychical researcher or why a psychical researcher cannot be a Spiritualist.

I would define a psychical researcher as one who seeks for evidence of a supernormal nature in a thorough businesslike, scientific manner. In his investigations he tries entirely to eliminate sentiment and emotion and obtain evidence which cannot be disputed.

World's Greatest Force

Most people who obtain evidence do not approach the matter in this matter-of-fact way and often get evidence, satisfactory to themselves, under the strain of emotion caused by the "death" of someone they loved. When the psychical researcher approaches the subject he eliminates emotion entirely and thus is at a disadvantage, so far as receiving definite evidence of Survival is concerned.

Love is the greatest attractive force in the world, and it is not difficult to understand how much more easily a "dead" husband can return to the wife he loves and give her evidence of his survival than for this evidence to be obtained when the emotions, and when the affection, are eliminated.

For that reason those who have lost their dearest can generally obtain evidence of Survival, completely convincing to themselves, which is denied the psychical researcher. Such people, having thus obtained this evidence, naturally see no object in the scientific methods adopted by psychical research.

Yet, in my opinion, psychic phenomena must be approached from these two angles, which I might term the scientific and the emotional.

I freely admit that much which went on under the name of psychical research in the past was crude and foolish. In so far as what is called physical phenomena is concerned, I have never believed in the tying up of mediums, or other similar attempts, to eliminate fraud.

Defeated Their Ends

So as to eliminate fraud psychical researchers of the past have defeated their own ends, and in their anxiety to obtain genuine results they have inhibited the very phenomena they were so anxious to produce. Again, so many psychical researchers treated mediums as if they were a species apart, who were to be continually watched for the slightest sign of trickery. This attitude has likewise inhibited phenomena.

We now know that the mind plays such a part in the phenomena that the last thing a psychical researcher should do is to make the medium feel that he or she is suspected of being watched. Though this attitude towards mediums has been too general in the past, yet there have been notable exceptions.

Past Investigations

I can recall to mind the supernormal phenomena obtained by Sir Oliver Lodge, Alfred Russel Wallace, Sir William Crookes, Sir William Barrett and Dr. Crawford, of Belfast, so far as the British Isles are concerned, Lombroso, Richet, Bozzano and Schrenck-Notzing abroad. In Canada, one calls to minds the wonderful phenomena obtained in Winnipeg at Dr. Glen Hamilton's seances, which were carried on under strictly scientific conditions.

These and many others lend a glory to the name of psychical research, and have helped to raise Spiritualism from being considered a superstition to the rank of a science. It is doubtful if this would ever have come about had these, and other investigators, not carried out their investigations under strictly scientific conditions, entirely free from emotion.

So much for the past. What of the present and future?

A good deal has lately been discovered with regard to photographing in the dark. The day has now passed when the medium need be treated in any way different from an ordinary human being. There is no need to shackle him or tie him to his chair or bolt the chair to the ground. There is no need now to cover him with luminous paint, or, at a direct voice seance, the trumpets with luminous bands.

It is now possible to photograph in the dark what occurs in the seance room by means of cinematograph cameras, operated by infrared light, so that after the seance is over everything that has occurred can be reproduced on the screen, just as quickly or as slowly as is desired.

This, of course, is an expensive method, requiring expensive equipment and expensive films, but it is well worth the money. After the séance is over and the film is developed, the psychical researchers then adopt the attitude of critics of what they see on the screen, and, if the pictures reveal that anything doubtful has occurred during the seance, it is carefully noted. Thus, the conclusion can be arrived at without difficulty as to whether the phenomena are produced normally or supernormally. So much for the dark seance.

As, however, much supernormal phenomena occur in the daylight infra-red and ultra-violet light, which help the researcher so much in the dark, are of no use to him in daylight seances. Here, other methods are adopted, in the field of what is called mental phenomena.

Checking Mental Phenomena

Mental phenomena are produced when the medium is on a state of trance, or is hearing clairaudiently, or is seeing clairvoyantly. What is spoken by the medium is all-important. The psychical researcher tabulates carefully what is said, makes certain that it was impossible for the medium to have known it normally, and lastly that the information given is accurate. Each one, of course, can do his alone, but it only satisfies the person concerned.

If you wish, in any way, to influence the general public with the weight of evidence, it is only possible to do so when they can be made to realise that everything said was taken down correctly at the time, that investigations have proved that the medium could not have known normally what was said, and lastly that what was said was correct.

Thus only can the outside public be convinced of the reality of these supernormal messages, as due weight is given to the evidence when it is realised that it has been obtained by people who specialise in the subject.

But this is not all that the psychical researcher can now do. Doctors have very delicate instruments which immediately register the state of the body in health and in sickness. Doctors have so much data to go upon that, by means of vibrations, they can now tell the state of health and even the disease by means of the vibrations from the human body which are picked up by these instruments. Blood tests, and other means, are also used by the medical profession to determine the state of the human body.

So much for the normal individual. But what happens when these scientific methods are adopted towards a medium when in trance, or when supernormal phenomena are occurring in his presence? From the records now obtained by the International Institute for Psychical Research, we find that when a medium is in trance all normal records are broken, and the instruments employed show a range of vibrations which never occur in a normal person.



NANDOR FODOR, LL.D.
Research Officer of The International Institute for Psychical Research

This method of investigation is only a beginning and the results are being tabulated. But we are not yet able to express definite conclusions. What seems evident, however, is that the trance condition has a very decided effect on the human body, and I am hopeful that when these investigations are concluded it will be possible to draw conclusions about trance which it was impossible to do in the old days before these instruments were invented.

Changes In Temperature

During a seance our instruments have also recorded changes in temperature to a supernormal degree, and we also know that both the medium and the sitters alter in weight to a supernormal extent. All this is being carefully tabulated and recorded by Dr. Nandor Fodor, a very capable research officer of the International Institute for Psychical Research.

After months of preparation and thought, we recently succeeded, at the International Institute, in securing a cinematograph film of the movement of an object without visible contact.

In this instance, we secured a continuous picture of a carnation being taken out of a vase, standing in the middle of the floor, and carried some feet up into the air, and then falling down some distance on the side of the vase away from the medium.

This film has just been taken and is now the subject of microscopic study on the part of the research officer and his assistants. It will be enlarged to such an extent that any trickery used to cause the movement will be discovered, if such were the cause.

By such methods we should someday be able to arrive at a better understanding of what many believe takes place at so many seances, at which the sitters are unable to see with their own eyes because the phenomena take place either in the dark or in a very dim light.

Now, however, we have a camera which can see in the dark by means of infra-red light. It requires little imagination on the part of anybody to realise how infra-red photography must prove the genuineness of psychical phenomena or, on the other hand, that it is all due to fraud.

Now that we can record what takes place in the dark, what has been mysterious will become clear, and what has been doubtful will become certain. Thus the International Institute is steadily, day by day, accumulating results which are available to members, and I cannot foresee the day when its work will be finished.

The supernormal side of men and women has, until recently, never received any scientific consideration. If, as I believe, Man is a trinity and the physical is only a portion of his make-up, where can the end be?

Within the last 200 years, the physical part of him has received consideration, but the etheric and mental parts have received little or no consideration at all. These may be found, and I believe they will be found, to be just as important, if not more important, than the physical part.

Psychical research is just in its infancy and, like everything in its infancy, has to withstand criticism. But infants grow up to be men and women. So also will this new science some day take its place with the other recognised sciences.

The International Institute has never had any difficulty in obtaining mediums because mediums are treated by all the officials of the Institute which kindness and respect. If we find a medium defrauding, as unfortunately we have done, then his or her services are dispensed with and that is the end of the matter.

No publicity is given to the discovery. We do not glory in exposing mediums. We are only too sorry when we discover fraud. We are building up this science on genuine phenomena, not on fraudulent phenomena, and when fraud is discovered, it just means that so much time has been wasted, which would otherwise have been applied to the investigation of genuine phenomena.

Some of the best mediums in this country have sat for investigation in the seance room of the International Institute, and are still sitting. I shall not mention them all by name, but only two who have given their services for work of a special nature, namely Miss Naomi Bacon and Mrs. Garrett. The services of these two women have been particularly helpful in connection with our investigation of haunted houses.

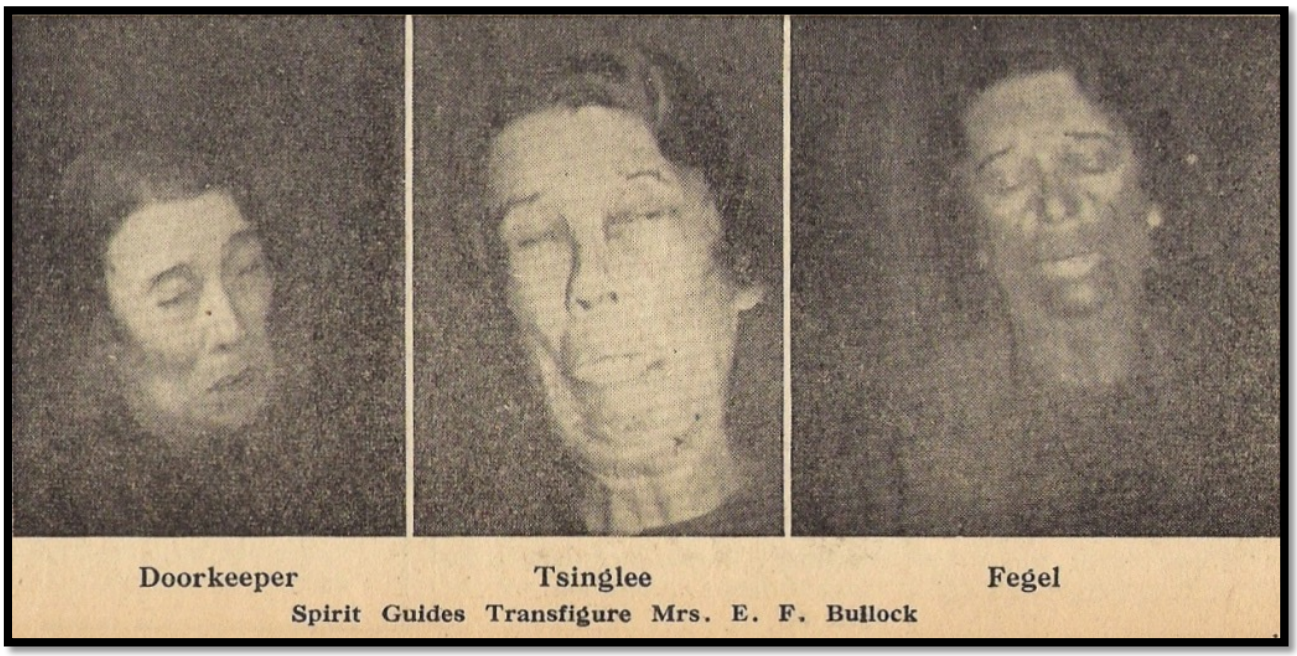
Our work has never been hampered through lack of mediums. I am glad to think that, once mediums have experienced the methods we adopt, they are not afraid of returning to the Institute and helping onward our work of tabulating, recording and investigating psychic phenomena, the better shall we be able to determine the place of Man in the universe, and the meaning of existence.

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To have all the records lost of the cinematograph camera, which is noted to be operated by infrared light, so that after the seance is over everything that has occurred can be reproduced on the screen, is naturally a great loss to research and to the subjects they investigated; for example, there is reference that Helen Duncan attended.

However, we do have transfiguration reports. Leon Isaacs was Honorary Photographer to the International Institute for Psychical Research and he was responsible for some of the first infra-red film of séance happenings. For this, Isaacs invented and manufactured all his own apparatus. It was at the International Institute that Isaacs photographed the transfiguration medium, Mrs Elizabeth F. Bullock, with the Research Officer, Nandor Fodor; however, the reports on transfiguration are of interest and are published in Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 6, June 2012.

This set of photographs was published in the "Two Worlds", April 15, 1950, "Spirit Guides, Past and Present, of Mediums, Healers and Speaker". There is no indication as to their origin but quite probably these were taken by Leon Isaacs.



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EUSAPIA PALLADINO

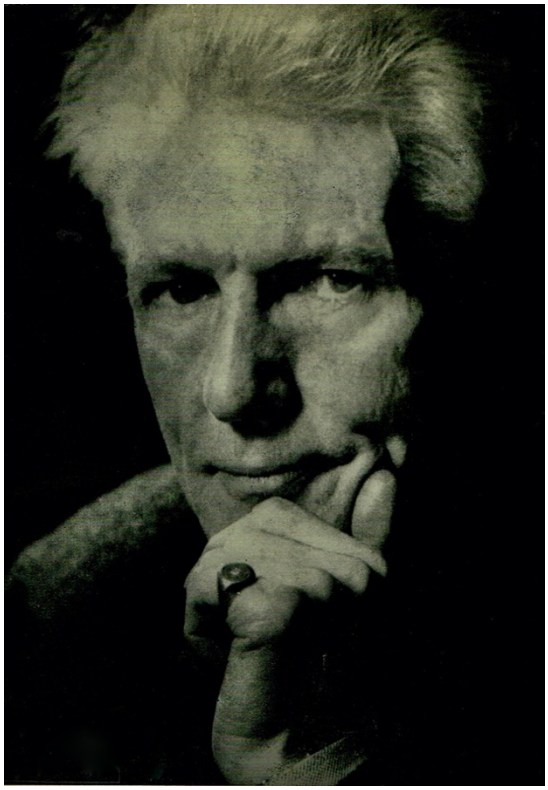


Eusapia Palladino (1854-1918) was an Italian physical medium, who it was claimed levitated tables, along with other related Spiritualistic phenomena. She communicated with the dead via the historic spirit control/guide "John King".[7]

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

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

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

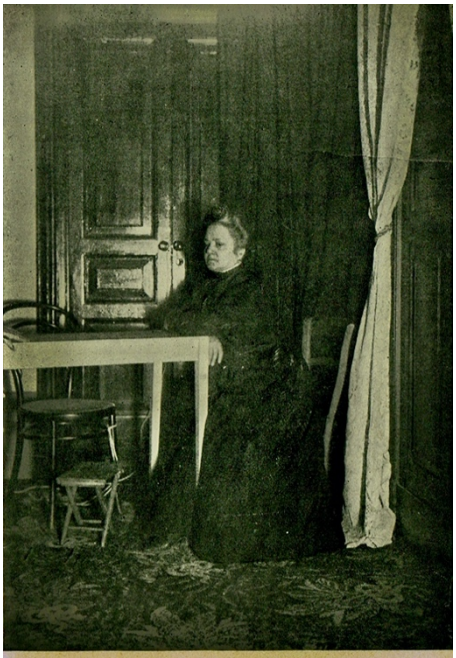


OUTSTANDING AS AMONG the most vivid and extraordinary experiences of my life, I must count my séances with the remarkable Neapolitan medium, Eusapia Palladino. Illiterate, hardly able to sign her own name, she nevertheless possessed powers of a unique character, powers which for many years baffled the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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



A TABLE LEVITATION.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Not good, Eusapia."'

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

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

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

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

"Now, if you are all very good tonight, Lombroso may materialize!'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Bear in mind that all this was done while both hands of the medium were held visibly upon the table by two separate controllers, who were ascertaining at the time that they were really holding the hands of the medium, and not dummy hands, and tracing her arms to the shoulders to make sure that these members really belonged to her! The untying process, as I have said, took some considerable time—ample time for them to observe and verify all that was going on.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



EINER NIELSEN

(1894–1965)

Physical — Materialisation Medium



Like many mediums, his mediumistic abilities started as a very young child, clearly remembering his visions when he was ten years old. Nielsen was sixteen years old when he came into contact with Spiritualism, and it happened in this way:

"Engineer Stochel had heard that Senior Caretaker Nielsen's son could see spirits. As he was very much interested in Spiritualism he called on my parents, and started a small group to which Mr. and Mrs. Stochel, my father and mother and I belonged.

"During the first year we had but table seances, i.e., we sat around a small three-legged table and uttered the letters of the alphabet whilst the table swayed at every letter which we used, stopping at the one desired. In that manner we got messages from the spirit world.

"My guardian spirit, Sister Agnete, manifested herself at these seances. I have seen her clairvoyantly several times. She is of medium height, has black hair, parted in the middle, brown eyes, bent nose, and a charming mouth; always she dressed in white.

"The spirit doctor, Brother Monarc, came also. He announced straightaway that he was connected with the circle as a friend and healer. He remains with me still, and has given to thousands of people instructions regarding their diseases, as a result of which almost all have regained their health.

"Another friend who visited these seances and has followed me all the time is Sister Rose. We asked her once why she came, and had the answer that serving the earth plane provided her the opportunities to progress: she was very happy if she, at the same time, was allowed to communicate God's love to us."

Nielsen's public work began at the end of 1911 at Copenhagen Spiritual Mission. With about seventy people present, he gave a trance address. The Spiritual Mission opened several branches in Hillerod, Helsingor and Frederikssund under the leadership of Alfred Nielsen (no relation). Einer Nielsen worked as a trance medium within the Spiritual Mission and its branches, with a break for military service. On his return his mediumship incorporated materialisation, spending several years at the Mission.

Nielsen notes:

"THE first time Mica demonstrated was probably in 1913 or 1914, and soon afterwards the materialisation seances began. He told me then that this power would last several years, and he has kept his promise.

"Who is Mica? He has told me that his last incarnation happened 400 years B.C., and that he was then a priest in an Indian cult. At that time he was working as a specially-incarnated leader for the benefit of this cause. In the Holy of Holies of a great temple, into which priests only had admission, a woman who was a medium was confined for life. She was not allowed to live with other people for fear that worldly contacts might damage her wonderful powers. Ever since then, Mica has served as a

priest in the spirit world, and the work he now performs through my mediumship is but a small part of the huge mission with which he has been entrusted.

"Since Mica appeared in my life he has had a great influence over me. Many times I have wished to be free from seances, but when he bade me continue I had to obey him as a child. In all my struggles he has stood faithfully by my side, but he never advised me regarding the way I was earning my living or about seance arrangements, leaving me to select sitters, etc. He guided me only in spiritual matters, and usually did so in a positive manner."

In the winter of 1915 Nielsen was arrested under suspicion of fraud after he had given two séances to members of the Society for Psychic Research; the first séance was apparently a success but in the second no materialisations manifested. In both séances, according to Nielsen,

"I was undressed and clad in other cloths. My hands were tied to a cord which was fastened to a hook in the wall: and from there the cord went to a Mr. O. who had to control me"

After the séance he was accused of *intended cheating*, where they produce a piece of white material—he admitted it was his but was an apport from another séance which he claimed he brought to exhibit after the séance. He had left it in his coat pocket in the hall prior to his séance restriction during the séance. Nielsen was arrested a couple of weeks later and spent several days in prison.



All the above information and quotes are from Einer Nielsen's book, "Solid Proofs of Survival", first published in 1950 by the Psychic Book Club; this is available as a free download. I will end with a 1931 report from the "Icelandic Society for Psychic Research", pages 70/71:

"*Einer Nielsen's Seances in Iceland* 1931.

"The account of the President of the Icelandic Society for Psychic Research, Mr. Einer H. Kvaran,

"Reykjavik, February 26th, 1931.

"I am sending you an extract from the records which the late Minister, Kristinn Danielsson kept of the seances Mr. Einer Nielsen held here in Reykjavik at the request of some gentlemen interested in psychic research. The chief purpose was to get materialisations. In all, fifteen seances were held from January 13th to February 10th. The materialised apparitions came out of the cabinet in red light at eleven seances, and some were visible at two other seances. The apparitions appeared at the sitting from eight to forty times. Of those six were at once recognised as friends or relatives of the sitters. Most of them appeared several times, among them Prof. Haraldur Nielsson, who came most often. At eight seances the sitters saw more than one apparition at the same time. At seven seances they saw the medium together with one or two materialised entities. At three sittings they heard more than one voice talk at the same time inside the cabinet. At three seances the sitters saw a materialised entity dematerialise itself outside the cabinet.

"Several times the entities approached the sitters, embraced and kissed them. Sometimes they sang together with the sitters outside the cabinet. Their draperies were different, some of them lying in rich folds. The most splendid draperies were made perhaps of about 20 yards of material. The forms of the entities varied very much, too, some being tall, others slender and short.



"The number of the sitters at the seances was twenty, of whom five composed the permanent group whilst the others varied. At the two first seances, which were test seances, there were only twelve sitters. Besides materialisations, telekinesis phenomena appeared at eight seances. An aluminium trumpet was levitated, sometimes up to the roof, and through the trumpet we heard voices at six sittings. During these manifestations the medium sat outside the cabinet, and the sitters next to him kept hold of his hands. Later on, we saw in full daylight several telekinesis phenomena apart from the regular seances, in the undersigned's home, where Mr. Nielsen stayed, and also in other homes where he was a guest. In addition we sometimes obtained very good tests of identification through Mr. Nielsen's clairvoyance and clairaudience.

"As you may understand, according to our opinion, Mr. Nielsen's visit to Iceland was very wonderful. We are very grateful to him, and we hope sincerely that he will have an opportunity to come again. There are many people here who could not get admittance to the seances, as Mr. Nielsen could not extend his stay in Iceland.

"Einer H. Kvaran."

Editor's note:



The question is: was he genuine? I have never researched Einer Nielsen before but I was familiar with his name; the word 'fraud' is quite highly associated with this name on the various websites. It was only while sitting in the Britten Museum & Library that my eye caught "Solid Proofs of Survival" by Einer Nielsen.

Reading the various reports in the book, it reminded me of the similarities to Helen Duncan regarding his full-form materialisations, i.e. medium and materialisation seen together, forms recognised by family, large, small, men, women, voice, identifying features, etc. The reports are mostly dated and the name/names are given in the book but to get a more balanced view the negative reports need to be seen. It seems that

Nielsen was quite compliant with the needs of researchers, séances were in good light, and he agreed to photographs with both white flash and, I believe, infra-red. It should be noted that photographs taken at séances are generally staged, from the point of view that permission is required by the medium or their control as to when to release the shutter.

It is referenced that the Norwegian investigators suspected Nielsen to be a fraud and investigated him in 1922. The committee from the Kristiania University discovered that his ectoplasm was fake.[11] In addition. in 1932, Johs Carstensen, the leader of Nielsen's Spiritualist circle, wrote a pamphlet which exposed his tricks.[12] Nielsen does not make any reference in his book to his circle leader, Johs Carstensen, but does comment on some alleged exposures against him.

In a paper titled "Danish Spiritualism 1853-2011" by Jesper Vaczy Kragh, PhD, Associate Professor, Medical Museion, University of Copenhagen, Denmark we find a little more information:

> Scientific investigations of spiritualist mediums were conducted by the Danish Society for Psychical Research in the period from 1920 to 1950. The society's inquiries into spiritualist manifestations included the two famous Danish mediums Einer Nielsen (1883-1965) and Anna Melloni Rasmussen (1898-1983), both of whom had received the attention of scientists in other European countries.
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> On 26 August 1921, the first international conference on psychical research was opened in Denmark. In the course of the conference, international psychical researchers were invited to materialization séances with Einer Nielsen. After these sittings many of the participants told the press that they had been greatly impressed by Nielsen's ectoplasm phenomena. Due to favourable reports and the press attention, the Danish Society for Psychical Research decided to investigate Einer Nielsen's phenomena. The enquiry was carried out by three of the society's members, who subsequently published a positive report recognizing Nielsen's abilities. However, few were convinced by the report and a new investigation was set up in 1922 by a committee from the Kristiania University in Norway. The Norwegian researchers could not confirm the Danish results and accused Nielsen of being a fraud. The Norwegian disclosure, which was widely covered by the Danish press, was a serious setback for the spiritualists as well as the Danish Society for Psychical Research.

[11] Kragh, Jesper Vaczy, *Danish Spiritualism, 1853–2012*. In Christopher M. Moreman's *The Spiritualist Movement: Speaking with the Dead in America and Around the World*. *Volume 1: American Origins and Global Proliferation*. Universitetskomiteen, Mediet Einer Nielsen, kontrolundersøkelser av universitetskomiteen i Kristiania (Kristiania 1922). Anonymous. *Rapport fra den av Norsk Selskab for Psykisk Forskning nedsatte Kontrolkomité*. Norsk Tidsskrift for Psykisk Forskning 1 (1921–1922).

[12] Carstensen, Johs, (1932). *Spiritismens Princip og Fejlgreb. Specielt: Afsløring af Mediet Einer Nielsen*. Brandmose's Forlag.

However, after 1932 there appear to be no more exposures which I have found to date, and in fact not much other information on Einer Nielsen, good or bad, except various photographic images with little information. This may appear a little strange, as he would work for over another two decades, albeit Wikipedia notes:

> Nielsen continued to work as a medium until his death but was never considered credible again by people outside his small circle of influence.

This may well be the case but on balance none of the surface reports give any indication of what was specifically exposed or alleged, under what conditions and so forth—equally, there are some strong positive reports, for example as quoted above from the President of the Icelandic Society for Psychic Research.

The photographs above are random photographs; unfortunately all the images are of poor quality, taken from mostly old journals. The images below are matched, as the article description states, taken from "Two Worlds", April 16th 1955. I have noted "after 1932 there appear no more exposures which I have found to date"; the images below are, I believe, all post 1932:

CAMERA SHOWS STAGES OF MATERIALISATION



The remarkable qualities of ectoplasm, the basis of all materialisations and direct-voice phenomena, is illustrated in these outstanding seance pictures.

They were all taken with Einer Nielson of Copenhagen, whose powers of materialisation have been witnessed by hundreds of people in all walks of life in Scandinavia. He is still giving seances.

Though small quantities of ectoplasm are drawn from the sitters, in the main the operators abstract it from the medium.

Adding unknown factors to make it solid, its culmination is shown in the first photograph where the materialised figure of Knud, one of the medium's child controls, is clearly seen at the opening of the curtains which form the cabinet.

This usually consists of a curtained-off recess used by the spirit operators to condense he power they utilise before the materialisation form.

The medium in trance can be clearly seen above the materialised figure of the child.

The second picture was taken at a well-lighted seance. An arc lamp is suspended at the top of the cabinet with its light shining on the medium. Ectoplasm is seen to pour from his mouth. It is usually withdrawn from all the orifices.

What happens in the cabinet is illustrated by the remaining two pictures (shown below) showing some of the stages of materialisation.

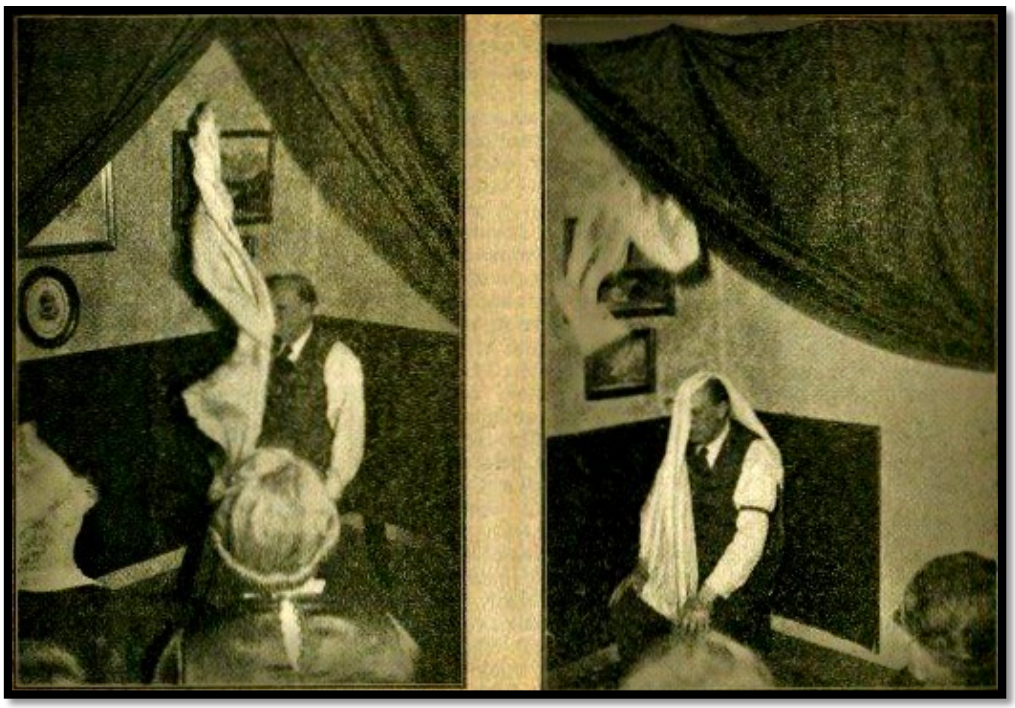


In the first it has been abstracted from the medium, forming itself into a swathe-like appearance, sufficiently rigid to maintain itself as it moves up the wall to beyond a picture.

In the second photograph a different technique has been employed. The ectoplasm is in two distinct and separate forms.

One portion, almost like a curtain, is draped round the medium from his knees, over part of his face, and falls behind his back. The second portion has floated away and partially obscures one of the pictures on the wall.

Ectoplasm has been described as a halfway house between matter and spirit. It has been handled and examined by front-rank scientists who have experimented with it for years and chemical analysed it. Its chemical properties are almost identical with the chemical constituents of the human body.



SEANCE PHOTOS SUPPLY PERFECT ANSWER

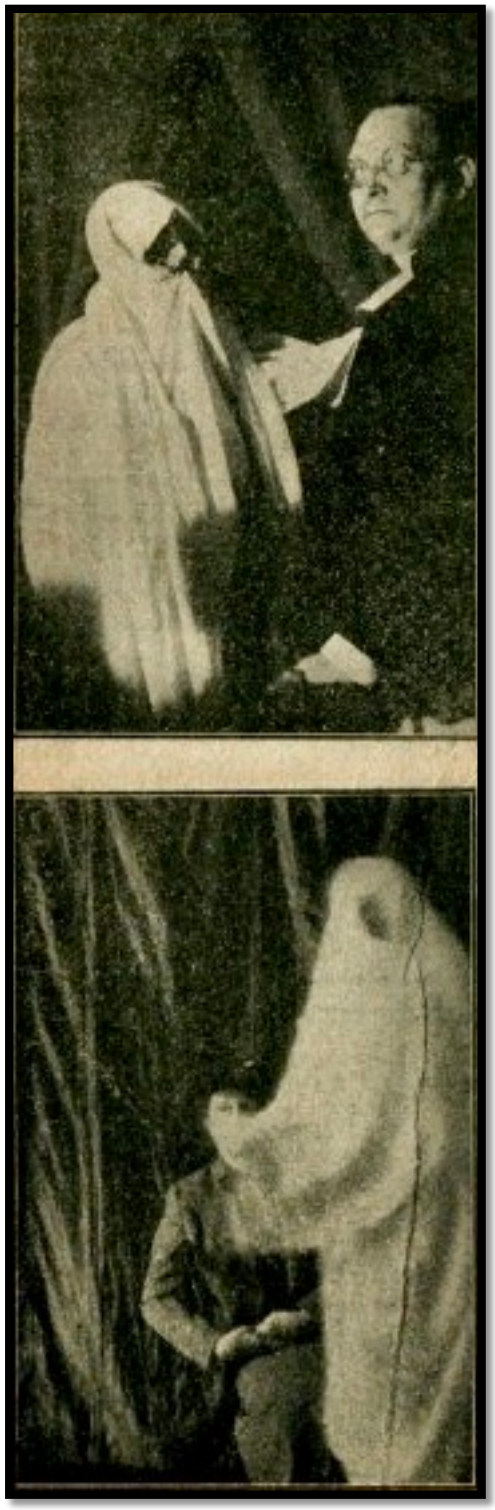
This section is taken from "Two Worlds", April 9th 1955:

The man who materialised and was easily identified is Archbishop Nathan Soderblom of Sweden. His appearance was a "birthday present" to Pastor Martin Liljeblad, through whose automatic writing gift he communicated a theological treatise. The Archbishop posed for this picture on Liljeblad's birthday.



The "dead" archbishop, as he materialised at a seance.

Not only was his face recognised by the pastor and others, but Liljeblad says that the hands we exactly they were before his death. The Archbishop was well-known, outside Sweden as a leader of an inter-denominational religious organisation. Liljeblad's advocacy of Spiritualism in Sweden — he published ten books many pamphlets on our subject besides speaking all over his country—led to him being forced to ask for "leave of absence" from his church for three years.



Here Liljeblad is greeted by a spirit form whose materialised hand touches the pastor on his shoulder. The spirit face is not completely visible because of the ectoplasmic draping over the head, which shields most of the features.

This is a very rare picture because it was taken in full daylight. The materialised figure has almost concealed the whole of his face. The ectoplasm with which he is garbed is mostly solid, but it becomes transparent in that portion which is close to the sitter's head and chest, which can be seen through It. Out of 225 pictures taken in daylight, only five showed any worthwhile result.



This remarkably photograph, the most famous of all Nielsen's seance pictures, shows Queen Astrid as she materialised at a seance in Denmark. Queen Astrid, wife of King Leopold of Belgians, was killed in a car crash at Lucerne, Switzerland, in 1935. Her subsequent appearances at Neilsen's Copenhagen seances — she was a Swedish princess before her marriage—were often witnessed.

The photograph was taken by Liljeblad, who wrote a book testifying to the authenticity of the Queen's materialisation in defiance of the Church authorities. As a result he was sentenced to two month's suspension from the Church without salary.

A score of sitters were present when this photograph was taken. The seance was held in red light, Liljeblad used three cameras, taking his pictures simultaneously with a white flash.

All the sitters saw Queen Astrid pose for the picture. And they all saw the materialisation and the medium together.

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The séance took place at Copenhagen, Demark, I believe, on May 31st 1938; Queen Astrid was killed in a car crash a few years earlier, on May 29th 1935.

The editor of "Two Worlds" at this period was Crestern Roskelly, who resided in the editor's chair from 1952 to circa 1957, when Maurice Barbanell took over as editor, then also editor of Psychic News, and continued with both publications until his death on July 17th 1981, aged 79.



Little is known about Crestern Roskelly; this statement is printed above:

Ectoplasm has been described as a halfway house between matter and spirit. It has been handled and examined by front-rank scientists who have experimented with it for years and chemical analysed it. Its chemical properties are almost identical with the chemical constituents of the human body.

This is indeed a bold statement, which is completely unreferenced; one may understandably wonder who all these scientists are and their conclusions, *identical with the chemical constituents of the human body*.

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Announcement

Leslie Price, who is a sub-editor of Pioneer, along with Charles Coulston, advised me at the beginning of this year that he is stepping down owing to other commitments.

Without doubt Leslie is one of the foremost historians in this country on psychical research, theosophy and Spiritualism. I first came into contact with Leslie around 1999, when I started to research the SNU Principles; I had no computer at this time. I sent a letter to Leslie, as I saw an advert for his online newsletter, Psychic Pioneer, which ran from 1999 to 2001. All these issues today are available in the Britten Museum & Library at the Arthur Findlay College.

This resulted in my involvement with Leslie in pursuit to make public original researched materials of psychic pioneers; in May 2004 Leslie was founder editor of Psypioneer, covering a wide range of Spiritualistic material. A year later I took ownership of the journal and Leslie continued as contributor and sub-editor; in 2016 I retired as proprietor and editor to concentrate on my work at the Arthur Findlay College and the SNU Pioneer, which began in 2013.[13]

Leslie was once again a great support for me and continued to sub-edit Pioneer from 2013.

Leslie has been inspirational to me over the last two decades for his continued valuable support and his fine knowledge, which has taught me so much about psychic pioneers. Thank you.



Leslie Price & Paul Gaunt

[13] Leslie decided not to continue with Psypioneer but it is used in almost every Pioneer as referenced materials.

Trumpet flashlight photography experiment, where the well-known spirit photographer William (Billy) Hope, who died in 1933, spoke, giving instructions for the experiment. This took place in the private circle of John Ashworth. The reported experiment was with six sitters; this included J. Arthur Findlay and his wife. The following was published in the Two Worlds, January 7th, 1938:

Trumpet Levitation Photographed

Success of Glasgow Circle

THIS PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ENTRANCED MEDIUM AND LEVITATED TRUMPET WAS TAKEN BY FLASHLIGHT

Sir,—I herewith enclose a photo taken with photo-flash-light bulb, under the following circumstances, at John Ashworth's circle, Glasgow, on Sunday evening, December 26th, 1937.



Mr. Ashworth was in the cabinet under trance conditions, and the room was illuminated with a red light; during that time several fully materialised forms came out from the cabinet into the centre of the room, and spoke to those present in the circle, then a good clear strong voice, known to Mr. Ashworth's sitters as "Dr. Murphy," the control for the materialisations, spoke to me in the following manner

"I see, sir, you have brought your camera. We would be very pleased to try an experiment with your assistance. Now, pay careful attention: you will set up your camera trained on the front of the cabinet, wherein the medium sits; when you have done so I will instruct you again.

I replied, after doing so, that I was ready. He (the control) then said: "You will put out your red light and do not put in the red light until told to do so. There is a little man known to you (Billy Hope), he will give you further instructions, but before doing so we will bring the medium to the front of the cabinet and the sitters present will link hands, and those nearest to the medium will take hold of his hands,"

This was done.

"Now, keep singing."

When we stopped singing, Billy Hope spoke out quite loud and clear and addressed met thus: —

When we say the words, ‘Are you ready, Cummings?’ at the word ‘ready’ you will take the photo. Are you ready?

I switched on the flashlight, gave it three seconds, and then out, and we now know the result of the experiment.

The trumpet is high up at the front of the curtained cabinet; you can see the medium, and that his hands have been held as instructed; there were present at the time only six sitters (not including the medium).

In this experiment, we did not know what was going to take place, and after waiting a little while the medium was taken back into the cabinet. I was then told to put up the red light and the circle was continued in the usual way for about 20 minutes, then brought to a close.

Hope this little experiment will be of interest to your readers.

Sitters present: Mr. Findlay, Mrs. Findlay, Mrs. Murray, James Pyne, Mrs. Ashworth, Alex, Cumming.

I have shown this letter to Mr. Ashworth, and received his consent to send it on to you, Mr. Editor.

ALEXANDER CUMMING.

December 29, 1937:

A QUESTION OF FRAUD!

Throughout our history physical phenomena have been a debatable issue within the movement from its earliest days, even though the Spiritualist movement was largely founded on physical phenomena.

By the end of the 1880s much discredit had been placed on the dark séances. With many exposures, some of course were well-deserved and rightly exposed; some were self-exposed by the medium themselves! Others were merely alleged, etc. Its process and its history are indeed complex but in some instances of alleged fraud we may hold some of the answers. Many of the exposures were almost always by Spiritualists themselves; this can also be said of the Spiritualist press over the ensuing decades. But sometimes an alleged exposure cannot be as clear-cut as it may appear on the surface, as there may be other underlining issues, misrepresentation, jealousy and a real possibility of unconscious fraud.[18]

It is often claimed that physical mediums are sometimes badly injured, with some claims of actual death as a result of a spirit form, ectoplasm, etc. being grabbed. There are numerous accounts, but there appears to be no firm documented material, medical evidence, etc. of such injuries.

As noted: *Its process and its history are indeed complex but in some instances of alleged fraud we may hold some of the answers*: over the next few issues Pioneer will look through the history of some of these alleged cases of fraud, looking at both sides if possible. Some will be without doubt fraud, others perhaps *wrongly* alleged — others due possibly to the complex psychological process of physical phenomena.

Harry Boddington, along with his brother Richard, was involved within the SNU, more so Richard, a former Vice-President of the Union, elected to the Council in 1907. In 1928 Maurice Barbanell became a member of the SNU Council, taking over from the veteran Richard Boddington as London Area Representative.

The article below is by Harry Boddington and is picked up in the Two Worlds issue of September 9th, 1939 under the editorship of Ernest Oaten; it appears that the debating issues mentioned in the article were ongoing for clarification:

In the 1930s a group was formed by Harold Chibbett called "The Probe", which had a newsletter by the same name—hence Boddington's names: 'Probitis' and 'Probites'. "The Probe" investigated various occult fields, Spiritualism, psychical research, etc.

Another name which appears in the below article is that of Mrs Wakely, who was the President of Walthamstow National Spiritualist Church and a member of "The Probe".

[18] Conscious or unconscious fraud? Do mediums consciously premeditate fraud or is the fraud carried out unconsciously by *low* mischievous spirits? Some will argue that the medium premeditated the fraud and is therefore conscious and responsible for their actions, whilst others would say that due 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 states: "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." See Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 2, February 2012.

Harry Boddington replies to his critics, and discusses "an extraordinary disease called 'Probitis'"

Fraud



THE extraordinary disease called "Probitis" attacks all psychical researchers at some time or another. It is due to the fact that dwellers in a three-dimensional world find it quite impossible to accept the idea that a four-dimensional world interpenetrates it and that people conditioned to a four-dimensional world can, by very delicate mental and physical adjustments, produce results inexplicable to those living on the three-dimensional plane.

Add to this the fact that in this world everybody is on the look-out for "easy money" and is suspicious of everybody who attains that end by producing apparently incredible happenings, and that we are entirely ignorant of the dynamic effect of thought upon the elements around us, and you at once perceive the basis of the disease that continually drives genuine physical mediumship out of existence.

An Answer

Even when Spiritualists understand some phases of psychic phenomena they seem utterly incapable of grasping the fact that all psychic phenomena are mental at base and can therefore be unset by *other* mentalities.

First I must deal with my opponent, Mrs. Wakely seems to have adopted the role of representative for the Probites. As soon as she heard I had an answer to her theories she prevented her members hearing the other side of the question by cancelling my date. I note that she has this week added another victim at Kensington to her credit. Again the "flash-and-grab" process was utilised, but instead of grasping draperies they discovered a medium holding a trumpet to her mouth. Associated with Mrs. Wakely is a lady of theosophic tendencies who assured me that "all physical mediums were frauds."

Get two sitters obsessed with this mental outlook and their effect upon the delicate conditions of a seance room needs no further comment. They discover fraud wherever they go. No matter whether it is physical or mental phenomena that is being examined, the medium quite definitely passes under their control.

Mental Interference

Mrs, Duncan's spirit guide, "Albert,'' once gave the sitters a striking demonstration of their power over the entranced medium. One of their number was selected to *mentally* ask the medium to come and place her hands upon his shoulders, The medium could not possibly know who was selected, but as soon as the mental request was made the medium promptly left the cabinet and came and put her hands upon him

Mr. Oaten assures me that he has known of people who deliberately practise mental interference with seance room phenomena.

The only difference between these premeditated mental interferences and that of the Probite mind is that the former act consciously and the Probites ignorantly. The effect is the same.

In combating fraud we must not fail to note the main difficulties under which all trance mediums labour: 1, the unconscious medium is liable to suggestion from spirits both in and out of the body; 2, to seize an unconscious man and charge him with fraud means ignoring the very factors which constitute the basis of his mediumship; 3, subconscious action also produces fraudulent effects if the intense desire of the medium for success, or the urgent need for money worries him while sinking into trance, Many other motives conduce to the same end.

The offence of the Probites is that they destroy the "pearl of great price" in their vain effort to check the medium's money making.

I do not condone fraud, no matter whether produced consciously or subconsciously. It indicates a weakness somewhere, but that weakness is just as often in the mental atmosphere created by sitters as in the medium. Get the economic conditions altered and the main reason for fraud in every apartment of life will cease. That is why I want to see Spiritualists making it a definite plank in their propaganda platform.

My book on "Materialisations" cited one death and many injuries inflicted by the Probite method of testing mediums. Mrs Wakely suggests that my arguments are theoretical only. The book easily disproves that suggestion. In the first chapter on "The Mechanism of Mind," I prove the definite action of the mind upon inanimate objects. How much more powerfully operative must it be upon the quiescent brain of a medium?

My case against the Probites is that they ignorantly misuse the powers of hypnotism and telepathy. Harmonious seances succeed because of the trust and harmony present. In this condition the medium's brain responds to spirit action only.

The Walthamstow Probites are in a difficult position. I am sorry for them, but it should not blind them to the consequences of vindictive attacks.

Mrs. Wakely wrote to Harry Brown that he was the "one and only medium her society had ever seen or was ever likely to see." Their pet medium now denies that his phenomena are "psychic" in any way. Since throwing over trance states—which presumably include hypnotic control by Mrs. Bell—he successfully produces psychic phenomena on the music hall stage In imitation of Kuda Bux, with his eyes so completely bandaged that it is impossible for him to see anything, he rides bicycles, plays cards and billiards, reads sealed letters and does other incredible things previously attributed to spirit aid. It seems to have annoyed them. I want to whisper a word of consolation to them. What Harry Brown is now doing could, I believe, be achieved by any well-developed physical medium who travels along Yoga lines of development after being sensitised by spirit operators over a long period of time.

If Probites want to stamp out fraud it is useless attacking *unconscious instruments*. They must first kill *unconscious trance mediumship*. This in its turn would be incredible folly, for from this class the most definite tests and spirit teaching are obtained. The way out of the difficulty is to teach trance mediums how to co-operate—in good light—with their spirit guides. Harry Brown is merely indicating a way.

HARRY BODDINGTON,
London Psychic Educational Centre.

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The following issue of Two Worlds naturally brought a response from Mrs Wakely and "The Probe".

Mrs E Wakely's response:

Sir,—Logic teaches us that we must have our premises correct. If the premises on which Mr. Boddington builds his case for materialisation are as incorrect as those in his article on "Fraud" in last week's issue of *The Two Worlds*, then one doubts the wisdom of his attempt to write a book on the subject.

I did not cancel Mr. Boddington's date. The Secretary of the church, acting at the *unanimous* vote of the Church Committee, did this. It was felt that in view of the fact that Mr. Boddington was publicly supporting Clive Holmes, it was unwise to permit his presence on the platform of a church which is out to do its best to raise the standard of Spiritualism. As several members of the Church Council (not all members of "The Probe") had witnessed the so-called phenomena of Clive Holmes, and had positive proof of his fraudulent practices, it was felt that no opportunity of talking on such a subject should be given to one whose observations were apparently not sufficiently careful to detect the presence of the fraud we had witnessed.[19]

Mr. Boddington was given a chance to appear on our platform on a weekday, when the very members he seems so convinced *want* to hear him would have a chance of voicing their own opinions, but, so far, he has not availed himself of the opportunity.

On no account, however, will he—at least while the present Council is in power—be allowed to speak on a Sunday evening, when only his side of the question can be voiced and heard. I have no one of theosophic tendencies associated with me, nor yet anyone who is likely to have assured Mr. Boddington that "all physical mediums are frauds." May we ask Mr. Boddington to give the *name* of the medium who was killed through being tested by any method. *We want facts*. As he claims to know how exposures should *not* be done, will he please tell me how they should be carried out.

In no exposure with which I have been connected has the so-called medium suffered any injury, and in every case ample proof of fraud has been visible to all sitters.

As Mr. Oaten pointed out in his recent article, exposures are not published until sufficient evidence has been previously gathered. The same applies to the actual exposures with which I have been concerned. As long as people of Mr. Boddington's calibre are alive to provide excuses for these ghouls in human form, just so long will Spiritualism cease to make the progress it deserves.

Not having read Mr, Boddington's book, I have yet to learn what he considers proof. Unfortunately for Spiritualism, commercialisation and vested interests are not solely confined to fraudulent mediums.

Mrs. E. WAKELY,
President,
Walthamstow S. Church.

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[19] **NOT RESPONSIBLE**: Sir,—As Vice-President of Walthamstow Spiritualist Church, I would like to point out that Mr. Harry. Boddington's bookings were cancelled by the Church Council. We were notified of the matter he was to speak on, and we did not think this desirable for a Sunday service. Mrs. Wakely was not, responsible. LEONARD C. BOOTH, Vice-President, Walthamstow Church.

Response from "The Probe":

NO CONNECTION

Sir,—The article, entitled "Fraud," by Harry Boddington, contained in last week's issue of *The Two Worlds*, may have conveyed the impression to your readers that "The Probe" is actively concerned in the controversy between Mr. Boddington and the members of the Walthamstow Church.

This is not so, and Mr. Boddington should seek information regarding "The Probe's" organisation from authoritative quarters before assuming that every exposure is necessarily the work of "The Probe."

"The Probe" is concerned chiefly with *bona fide* research, and resents the loose use of the terms "probitis" and "probites" in connection with the exposure of fraudulent mediums, which contain the implication that "The Probe" exists solely for that purpose.

It is time that responsible Spiritualists such as Harry Boddington realised that psychic researchers are not ignorant fools, and that co-operation in the investigation of psychic phenomena is much more likely to be of use to the Spiritualist. Movement than abuse and unprovoked attack.

Per pro "The Probe,"
H. S. W. CHIBBETT, Hon. Sec.

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A Church Council member adds: [20]

Sir,—My name has been brought into Mr. Harry Boddington's vituperative explosions, all because our local Church Council cancelled his dates. My wife and I must, according to him, face a charge of condoning fraud or else we must read his book !

Straight speaking is now required. Constant misstatements of fact and misrepresentations are made by Mr. Boddington.

Being a member of the Walthamstow Church Council, a member of the Probe, and a friend of many years' standing of Mr. Harry Brown, whore remarkable mediumistic development my wife and I were privileged to watch, I am in a position to reply to Mr, Boddington.

I challenge Mr, Boddington to produce one tittle of evidence of Mr. Brown's confession of fraud, or prove that he ever stated that his mediumship was not genuine.

I challenge Mr. Boddington to produce one letter from Mrs Wakeley asking him not to use Holmes' name.[21]

[…]

Now as to the Probe, with whose name he tries to make such capital. What does he know of this organisation? Because they once successfully exposed a fraudulent medium, he feels he has the right to use his questionable wit at the Probe's expense. Well, he has a tough nut to crack. The Probe is strong enough and independent enough to follow its own. line of investigation and research. It does not depend on popularity or advertisement, and Mr. Boddington's cheap sneers will neither help nor harm the Probe.

[20] Two Worlds, October 21st, 1938 (*slightly edited – repeated information*).

[21] Mr Bell misspells "Wakely" as "Wakeley".

With regard to the matter of my wife and I condoning fraud. Let Mr. Boddington first prove fraud by Mr. Harry Brown—I wish to emphasise the word *prove*, not make statements—then I will take up the matter of condoning fraud.

We can all have differences of opinion. We may not all see alike, but let us state facts plainly and truthfully, and not rely on subterfuge to make our case good. Only thus can we hope to arrive at some germ of truth.

FRANK H. C. BELL.

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The editor, Ernest Oaten, on October 28th brings a halt to the argument, letting Harry Boddington have the final say (*slightly edited*):

This brings us to the crux of the matter so far as Brown is concerned. Both of them deny that he uses extra-sensory perception, psychic sight, or the faculty of clairvoyance (which Mrs. Bell admits he developed), during his stage shows. The "dangerously misleading statement" is theirs, not mine. Readers must judge.

I have before me two printed accounts of the way in which he claimed to train for his stage show. The clearest explanation is taken from *Pearson's Weekly* of July 10th, 1937, and reads as follows:—

" 'But how did you suddenly discover that you had this power' I asked.

" 'It wasn't sudden,' he corrected. '*It's a matter of concentration and development*.' As a child he could see hazy forms while blindfolded. He mentioned this to a friend, who suggested he might be able to do the Kuda Bux [1905-1981: known as "The Man with the X-Ray Eyes."] act.

" 'I tried, but at first it did not work. Yet I somehow felt that with patience I should be able to recapture my childhood's powers. I lighted a candle in a darkened room, bandaged my eyes very tightly, *so that I could not see the candle*, and sat gazing at the place where it was. I concentrated on seeing it.

" 'After a time I began to see the dim form of the light, A mere glimmer. Then it took shape. I could see the actual outline of the flame. Then, *after weeks of further practice*, I got expert that I could not only see the candle, but some of the things in the room which were lighted up by it.

" 'Then I increased the bandage thickness and tried again, gradually developing the power *of seeing without my eyes*' "

What becomes of the suggested stage "trick" after that very lucid explanation? I called it positive development on Yoga lines. I still adhere to that explanation.

I think Brown's denial that anything "psychic" enters into his show is due to the fact that his later development differed from his earlier clairvoyance in that his concentration has caused him to restrict his extra-sensory perception to the physical plane that same act shuts out normal clairvoyance and its relationship to the spirit world. To me, it is simply a difference in degree and not in actual fact.

Please note that I have not suggested that Brown ever committed conscious fraud. But I have emphasised the fact in "Materialisations" that all entranced mediums are liable to subconscious actions and also to influence from their audience. These are the actual points in debate, but which have in no way been dealt with by any contributor.

H. BODDINGTON.

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Editor's note:

Boddington's article, "Fraud", and its response brought out some complex problems of what truly constitutes fraud, pointing to the possibility of blatant deliberate fraud, unconscious fraud and perhaps other considerations as to the mechanics of physical mediumship, as in the case of Clive Holmes, the materialisation medium, whom Boddington does not directly mention in the above article *but in fact, strongly supported*—while others *cited above* were equally satisfied from their first-hand observations and experience of Holmes' mediumship: "*... had positive proof of his fraudulent practices…*". However, the magistrate had no problem in their judgement that Clive Holmes was indeed guilty of his charges.

Regarding the points raised in the article, "Fraud", by Boddington and his apparent attack on Mrs E. Wakely, Frank Bell and his wife (Margery), these people were all Spiritualists, President and Councillor of an SNU church, Boddington a Diploma-holder of the Union, etc. On the surface, it appears that Boddington was not impressed with "The Probe", in which Wakely and the Bells were active members. The published response from "The Probe" was from its founder and then current Honorary Secretary, Mr Harold Chibbett.



Harold Chibbett

Harold Stanley Walter Chibbett (1900-1978) was in fact a supporter of physical phenomena, as is demonstrated by his involvement with Noah Zerdin (1889-1972), who was well known for pioneering a general awareness, and the safe practice, of physical mediumship.

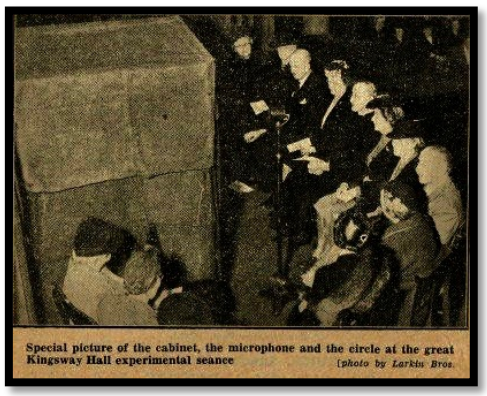
The development of physical mediumship, generally speaking, is restricted to private home circles. Around 1930 Noah Zerdin began to exchange reports of his home circle with those of Harold Chibbett. This would lead to the formation of the "Link Association of Home Circles" in 1931, which developed into an international association of home circles, privately publishing its own monthly journal, "The Link".



NOAH ZERDIN

In 1931 Harold Chibbett and Noah Zerdin held their first conferences of "The Link". Chibbett became its Honorary Secretary. It represented 21 home circles and the following year it increased slightly to 26. By the third Conference, held on October 15th, 1933 in London, it had reached 156 affiliated home circles (1934 – 187 home circles).

"The Link" held large mass meetings for psychical phenomena. Mrs A.E. Perriman was the first voice medium for "The Link" in 1934 at the Æolian Hall.



Special picture of the cabinet, the microphone and the circle at the great Kingsway Hall experimental seance [photo by Larkin Bros.

A year later Leslie Flint,[22] a friend of co-founder Noah Zerdin, gave a large direct-voice séance at

[22] The photograph is a later Leslie Flint direct-voice public séance by the "Link Association of Home Circles" in 1946, where over one thousand people witnessed direct voice. The photograph shows the cabinet Flint was sitting in; the microphone can be seen surrounded by Leslie Flint's home circle members. The "Link" event was started by various speakers: Noah Zerdin (whose photo is shown), Lord Dowding and former SNU Presidents Percy Wilson and Harold Vigurs (then SNU President).

Bloomsbury's Victoria Hall. Colin Evans' home circle was a member of the "Link Association of Home Circles" and reports were circulating of remarkable physical phenomena in Evans' home circle, in which he was already a well-known clairvoyant. "The Link" decided to centre some large mass séances around Evans' home circle. This was in late 1937; arrangements were made for Nandor Fodor, research officer for the "International Institute for Psychical Research", to record any phenomena which might occur.[23]



In more recent years, after the deaths of Chibbett and Zerdin, in their footsteps came the formation of the "Noah's Ark Society", whose journal carried important articles on pioneers of physical mediumship. The name came from Noah Zerdin, followed in later years by the "Zerdin Fellowship", which also had its own magazine, the "Zerdin Buzz Sheet". All of these are now sadly defunct.

See Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. 8: "The Link"—The Association of Home Circles & "The Noah's Ark Society"—for Physical Mediumship.

To conclude the arguments between Boddington and the "Probites," it is correct to say that Mrs Wakely, Frank Bell and his wife Margery were sometimes involved in the exposure of alleged fraud. For example, Frank Bell and Mrs Wakely were involved in the exposure of the flower apport medium, Miss X – Miss Hilda Lewis, 'Flower Medium'. Bell played a fairly substantial part, with Mrs Wakely as a signed witness. An overview of the story is published in Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 6: "The Flower Medium — Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, Oct 1935", albeit this article does not include the involvement of Wakely and Bell.[24]



During the discussions of Boddington and the "Probites" former SNU President and editor of the Two Worlds Ernest Oaten publicly exposed two physical mediums, Mrs Grover and Mrs Woolf. Following the exposures Oaten publishes in the Two Worlds, August 26th, 1938:

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[23] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: International Institute for Psychical Research – The Case for Real Psychical Research – by Arthur Findlay.

See also Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. 8: "Spiritualism through the Lens – Colin Evans" – "Paul J. Gaunt comments on Colin Evans" – "Sitters See His Body Floating in the Air – A. W. Austen" and " "The Link" Triumphs Again – Two Worlds".

[24] Further information is available from the editor.

The Question of Fraud

THE exposure we have published in the last two weeks, which concern Mrs. Grover and Mrs. Woolf, draw attention once again to the element of fraud in psychic phenomena. In the minds of many people mediumistic phenomena, by reason of their strangeness and exceptional nature, are invariably associated with fraud, credulity and deception. Unfortunately such accusations are not always without foundation.

Accusations of fraud have *always* been levelled against. mediums, and while some of them have been undoubtedly based upon facts a large number of such accusations have been due to the fact that men of ordinary experience found it impossible to believe that such phenomena *could* actually occur; there appeared to be no laws known to science which would allow such happenings, and it was therefore far easier to assert that they were produced fraudulently than to accept results which lay beyond the pale of ordinary experience. We are convinced that a very large number of the accusations of fraud in the early days of the Movement were by no means well founded. Men were dealing with phenomena which were new to them, the laws of which were *not* understood, and the only comparison which most men had was to the delusions produced by conjurors, and they imagined that there was some relationship between the deceptions of the conjuror and the seances of mediums.

Rogues and cheats are to be found in every walk of life. “The Church, the Law and Medicine are all disgraced occasionally by the conviction of disreputable practitioners,” but however numerous such people may be, it is only when we come to Spiritualism that the existence of fraud and deception is used as an argument against the whole movement.

Psychical researchers have *ever* been suspicious of professional mediums, and, of course, it is quite conceivable that where the element of gain enters into the matter the prevalence of deception is far more likely than in cases where no material gain is at stake. There are, of course, other factors, such as the desire for fame, notoriety or personal vanity, all of which may enter into the matter, but in the main it can be said that ability to extort heavy profits in any department of life or trade offers a temptation to the cheat to pretend to powers which he does not possess.

The difficulty of dealing of with fraud in mediumship, however, would be very much simplified if it was attempted by people who processed no genuine powers whatever, but there have been remarkably few cases of this type in the history of the Movement. The problem is complicated by the fact that we have to deal with sensitive people who under *some* conditions are capable of producing genuine phenomena, but who, when those conditions are not present, resort to deceit and trickery. Now in our opinion, when we are dealing with the most sacred convictions of the human soul, when we are attempting too, to analyse the very serious matter of the love-links which bind us to our best-beloved friends, the individual who would practise wilful fraud under such conditions deserves the worst that can be said about him. To exploit the deepest emotions of the human soul and the most sacred of human associations by using fraudulent means to exploit them for personal gain is a detestable and disgraceful thing, showing a lack of all fine feeling and of decency.

As the importance of Spiritualism grows in public estimation, as its claims become popular, it is obvious that there is a greater demand for phenomena, and while, half a century ago the best mediums in this country lived on the borders of starvation, to-day the medium who can produce definite and positive evidences can undoubtedly command large fees. There seems little doubt, from facts in our possession, that Mrs. Grover must have been receiving somewhere in the region of £20 per week, and for an individual whose

position in life has always been moderate and humble one, the ability to acquire such fees is a very great temptation. The fact, too, that such fees are payable to-day throws upon the Spiritualistic Movement a very great deal more responsibility than in the days when fees were few and mediums wore despised.

Let us be perfectly frank: we should maintain that the individual who can produce actual evidence of the continued survival of loved ones, the apparent loss of whom has brought sorrow, misery and despondency into the hearts of their relatives; the individual who can stem the tide of sorrow, which is the result of bereavement, and substitute therefor the joy and confidence which comes from the conviction of reunion, is doing a great deal more good in the world than a Hollywood film star. The medium who can bridge the gulf of death is conferring quite as great a benefit on humanity as any bishop or archbishop, and is entitled—and rightly entitled—to comfort, security, and those amenities which bring peace of mind, so essential to the practice of mediumship.

It must not be forgotten that in the practice of mediumship there are psychological factors at work which are too often overlooked by the uninformed. The fact that a medium in the seance room is more or less in a hypnotic condition and may react to mental and psychical factors which are difficult to trace, very often causes them to do things unconsciously which they would not consciously do. Sitting some time ago with one materialising medium, the guide distinctly told us, "Will you bear in mind that my medium is in a hypnotic state, and if you give orders she will obey your suggestions; when in state she acts automatically." Such a statement throws a great deal of light on the process.

Again, Dr. Crawford [25] showed that much physical phenomena is produced by the extrusion of psychic rods (visible or invisible) from the body of the medium, and it would seem that there in a current of nervous energy flowing through those rods which corresponds very closely to the nerve energy flowing through the arms when we attempt to lift a chair, for instance. It is not surprising that in such cases part of the energy thus projected *is* directed through the limbs, and one gets involuntary twitchings and movements of arms and legs which may easily excite suspicion and lead to the supposition that the medium is wilfully and very crudely attempting to move objects with his hands. These characteristics were especially notable with Eusapia Palladino, who made little or no attempt to disguise the facts.[26]

It is always well to remember, then, that a medium in the seance-room may be liable to act unconsciously to psychological factors of which the sitters may be largely ignorant. In the days of long ago when such matters were imperfectly understood, many accusations of fraud were made against mediums which had no foundation other than the ignorance of the sitters. Such considerations, however, are not an excuse for fraud —in fact, when they are understood they make fraud easily apparent. When, however, as in the case of Mrs. Grover, it can be definitely shown that preparations were made beforehand to practice fraud by carrying into the seance-room the materials used for fraudulent purposes, such as butter-muslin and band of linen with a large safety pin in it, there is only one conclusion to be reached, namely, that a deliberate attempt had been made beforehand to deceive the sitters. And we hope Spiritualists, despite their sympathy for the bottom dog and the desire to practise kindliness and the spirit of brotherhood will let no false sentiment stand in the way of keeping the Movement clean. There is far less fraud in the Movement than the outsider is prepared to admit, but with the growing popularity of Spiritualism one can understand the danger of an increase. It's up to Spiritualists of every grade to denounce and make

[25] See Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 5: "Letter from Harry Houdini to Dr W. J. Crawford", "Dr. W. J. Crawford & the Goligher Circle", "Ectoplasm Photographed – John McIndoe", and "Editor's endnote".

[26] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 6: "Eusapia Palladino – Hereward Carrington".

public every case in which fraud has been definitely proved. It is our duty to the spirit world to keep *their* reputation and our own as clean as the conditions of this world will allow. Any false sentiment is a reflection upon that band of ministering spirits who in the last ninety years have laboured under very trying conditions to establish their case.

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Mrs Elizabeth Grover's exposure was published in the Two Worlds, August 12th, 1938; below is the full report by Ernest Oaten:

MRS. GROVER EXPOSED

IT is with very great regret that we have to announce that Mrs. Elizabeth Grover, who has posed as a materialising medium, was definitely discovered in fraud last week while giving an alleged materialising séance near Birkenhead. The seance had been arranged for the 2lst of August, but to fit in with Mrs, Grover's engagements, at her request the date was altered to the 7th. There were nine sitters, in addition to Mrs. Grover and Mr. J. L. Hampson. Mrs. Grover was met at Liverpool and motored across to the Wirral peninsular. Two ladies were appointed to take her into an ante-room for a complete search. After her outer clothes had been removed there was some delay before she removed her underclothing. She was *never* completely stripped. While the search was in process, Mr. Hampson called the two ladies, who were examining her to examine the clothes that she was to wear, thereafter they returned to the ante-room. A complete search was not made and to that extent the sitters were lax.

After the seance had started a form came from the cabinet who claimed to be Albert Stewart. Close scrutiny showed no likeness to the Albert Stewart whom many of the sitters were familiar with not even the voice being satisfactory. Two other forms came from the cabinet, one claiming to be "White Rose," a guide, and another one, who said he was Hill, but no one knew him, and he couldn't tell the sitters who he was. Mrs. Grover had heard a sitter addressed as "May," and the next form announced itself as being for May, although there was no one of this name in the room. The sitters were by now definitely of the opinion that in every case the form which appeared *was* Mrs. Grover, clothed in white substance. When another form appeared who gave the name of Ethel, one of the sitters slipped into the cabinet and found the cabinet empty. The light was put on and Mrs. Grover was then discovered in her underclothes draped with wet butter muslin, with a calico bandage round her head. The exposure was complete, and no attempt was made, either by Mrs. Grover *or* Mr. Hampson to disguise the fact. Mrs. Grover signed the following statement:—

> I, Elizabeth Grover, hereby acknowledge that on August 7, 1938, at 3 p.m., at a seance held in Wye View, Meadowbrook Road, Moreton, Wirral, I fraudulently produced the materialised form of "Albert Stewart" and others. These forms were produced by muslin and other material hidden on my person, in the presence of Edward Edwards, Caroline Davies, Lilian Roberts, Ethel Wearing, Dorothy H. Pugh, W. J. Lee, K. Nichols, W. O. S. Lee, Ada Lee.
>
> Signed,
>
> E. Grover,
> J. L. Hampson.

Mr. Hampson expressed his surprise, as he claimed that he had believed absolutely in Mrs. Grover, but as it was he who called the two ladies aside from the task of searching her, Mr. Hampson has signed the following statement:—

August 7, 1938.

I hereby agree that it was possible for Mrs. Grover to have secreted the muslin on her person, when I called, the two ladies who were examining Mrs. Grover into the seance room, to examine the gown she would wear,

J. L. Hampson.

The sitters acquit Mr, Hampson of wilful complicity and assert that he was as much surprised as they were.

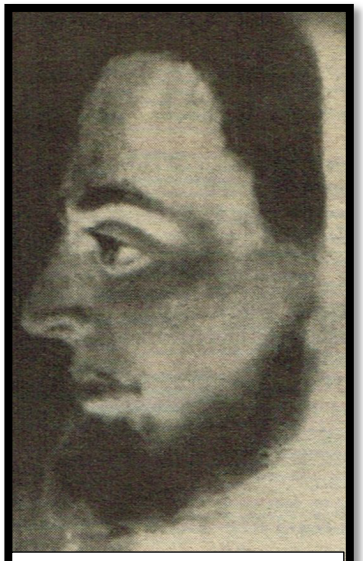
Mrs. Grover has been sitting for a number of years in Edinburgh, and from time to time reports have reached our editor. He had hopes that a reliable medium was in process of development, but some months ago Mr. Hampson offered *The Two Worlds* a series of advertisements announcing that Mr. Hampson and Mrs. Grover would be prepared to undertake materialising seances throughout the country. Our editor wrote Mr. Hampson *definitely* stating that while Mrs. Grover might possess mediumship, he was of the opinion that that mediumship was by no means sufficiently advanced to guarantee the giving of public seances, and advised that she remain for another year or two in her developing circle. It was a loss of advertisement income to us, but *The Two Worlds* has always put the interests of the Movement first. Steps were then taken to give Mrs. Grover publicity in other ways. Since then we have received quite a dozen adverse reports of seances held in different parts of the country, and at least five persons who have sat with her have called upon us personally to express their dissatisfaction, On the other hand we have had two reports only which express satisfaction, and in neither case did the evidence offered seem to us conclusive, otherwise we should have published it.

There are many materialising mediums who can produce good results when they sit in the same circle with the same sitters regularly, but who are quite incapable of producing satisfactory results when they have to sit with different sitters at each seance, It *may* be that Mrs. Grover possesses mediumship, though we have little evidence of it, but in any case, the best course open to her is to put herself in the hands of a carefully selected committee for a series of seances under rigid test conditions. It is a matter of deep regret to us to have to call attention to wilful fraud, but in the interests of honesty and for the protection of honest searchers, it has been the policy of *The Two Worlds* for fifty years to make such facts known wherever they occur.

E. W. O.

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The exposure of Mrs Elizabeth Grover brings out another problem that some mediums *claim* to have other mediums' guides/controls. This was indeed sometimes the case with Estelle Roberts' "Red Cloud." At one point the alleged guide made a statement to the effect… *that he only works through his medium and after her death he will not chose another medium*—this is in contrast to "John King", who, it is claimed, worked with numerous mediums for decades—even today!



Alleged image of Albert Stewart

The Grover séances claimed Helen Duncan's alleged control, "Albert Stewart." The story was written very much from the point of view that Helen Duncan was *herself aware* of the fact that Grover was to be exposed. The letter below is from one of the people present at the exposure and a signatory to the confession, Edward Edwards; the following is a quote from the Two Worlds, August 26th, 1938:

Will you permit me, Mr. Editor, to explain how and why the exposure came about? For some considerable time at Mrs. Grover's "seances," a form purporting to be "Albert Stewart" has been appearing and giving so-called advice to sitters, which, when acted upon, has caused quite a lot of sorrow and disappointment. So much so that Albert himself was greatly grieved at the havoc that was being done.


MRS. VICTORIA HELEN DUNCAN
Aged 32½ years

When Mrs. Duncan was in Birkenhead during May last, Albert spoke to me very feelingly about this, saying: "Mr. Edwards, can you not, for God's sake, do something to stop this use of my name," I asked what could I do. He then suggested that I write a disclaimer to the Spiritualist paper, which I did. The Editor can bear me out in that. The letters were not published. Laws of libel, etc., had to be considered. At a trance sitting, Albert again pleaded for something to be done. He was asked if we should arrange a sitting to try and find the lady out. This, through Mr. W. J. Lee, was eventually arranged. We were directed by Albert all through. He told us what Mrs. Grover would be wearing, how we were to sit, and what we would find when the light went on.

Mr. Hampson is quite right in saying that Mrs. Duncan knew of the proposed exposure. She was staying for the week-end at the home of Mrs. Roberts, some five miles away, as we wished to keep in touch with Albert, and to ask him if the arrangements we had made were satisfactory. Mrs. Duncan gave up part of her holiday so that we could do this. Apart from that she had nothing whatever to do with the exposure. It was carried through by personal friends of "Albert Stewart," solely in an endeavour to vindicate his name.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Hampson considers he was subjected to some little abuse, but, as I have stated previously his action in calling the ladies away from Mrs. Grover placed him under suspicion. Regarding, his statement that he has received letters from persons who still have faith in Mrs. Grover, and are prepared still to engage her, I believe it was the "Great Barnum" who said, "There is one born every minute." So consequently, I am not surprised at this. And now, Mr. Hampson, a message to yourself from the real "Albert Stewart," which asked me to pass on to you. Albert said you were not knowingly a party to the frauds perpetuated by Mrs. Grover. And, in conclusion, I can only say I regret to find you still sign yourself as "Acting Secretary for Mrs. Grover."

EDWARD EDWARDS.

5, White Street,
Birkenhead.

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Many points of view have been expressed and discussed and reasons given for and against conscious and unconscious fraud, etc. In the next issue Pioneer will look at the early Victorian mediums and the claims of fraud against them. As Ernest Oaten remarked:

> "… that it may be quite possible for suspicious sitters, who sit with the express purpose of exposing the medium to so permeate the mental atmosphere with their intentions that a medium acts under their suggestion. Mediums, being sensitives, must necessarily, in some measure, be influenced by the mental powers brought to bear upon them. The theory is perfectly valid, and is well recognised by all qualified experimenters. It is because of this that many people have been accused of fraud, when they have been perfectly innocent, …"

Given this article, “Fraud”, by Harry Boddington, it appears to suggest that perhaps the underlining factors of his article were the conviction and imprisonment of the physical materialisation medium Clive Holmes. It has been noted that it was Mrs. Wakely who said:

> “… several members of the Church Council (not all members of “The Probe”) had witnessed the so-called phenomena of Clive Holmes, and had positive proof of his fraudulent practices, …”

In Boddington's article, “Fraud”, he called “The Probe” members ‘Probitis’ and ‘Probites’, which he used throughout the article, but “The Probe” had nothing to do with the conviction of Holmes directly, albeit some were members of “The Probe.” Clearly its founder and Honorary Secretary, Mr Harold Chibbett, was in support of physical mediumship with “The Link”!

Below, Pioneer publishes the front-page story of the Two Worlds, July 30th, 1937:


CLIVE HOLMES

A MEDIUM CONVICTED

CLIVE HOLMES SENTENCED

FROM OUR SPECIAL REPREHENSIVE

WHATEVER one’s ideas of justice may be, the sentence on Clive Holmes will rankle in all minds. Robbery with violence gets no heavier sentence. A clean life’s record, honourable army service, with King George’s Jubilee medal, twenty years’ service in Government employ, employment which will automatically cease, with loss of pension, and not even the grace of the First Offender’s Act. All this will be the normal sequence of four months’ imprisonment, because a lad claimed to seize a piece of muslin in a seance room. The magistrate said he had “no doubt a clever conjuror could produce all the phenomena.”

The witnesses who testified to searching, stripping, handcuffing, and recognising spirit forms, and accepted the manifestations as genuine, were dismissed as “dupes.” The magistrate’s attitude towards psychic phenomena is illustrated by the following extract from his summing up: “A certain French cynic said, ‘Faith consists of believing what you know to be untrue.’ I cannot help thinking that the faith of these witnesses is faith of that variety.” He also decided that ‘the “religious atmosphere in which these manifestations occur all form part of the ‘false pretence.’ ”

Mr. Ronald Evans, who sat next to the prosecutrix and her son at the seance on May 20th, said he had known Clive Holmes about three years. He was not an official, but went as a seeker after truth. He had definitely recognised his grandmother because of a particular scar on her nose. He had also recognised his aunt Mary, seen two forms out at a time, and sometimes young children had manifested. (Holmes is 6ft. 2in.) Sometimes he had seen forms and heard Clive’s voice speaking from the cabinet at the same time.

Several people had inspected the cabinet on May 20th. On that night four forms materialised. Three were recognised by sitters. Mr. Smith had handcuffed Mr. Holmes. He was a stranger to him, and was there for the first time. Smith held the key. The fourth form did not “lash out” at Evans, but tried to strike the light down with the luminous slates. Mrs. Evans could not have fallen on to the floor, as he was sitting next to her and she would naturally have fallen on him. The spirit form seemed to rise from the floor about 3 ft. away from him. As it passed him he was tapped gently on the face. He then saw the beam of light which for a moment he mistook for a psychic phenomenon. The torch was directed towards the stomach of the spirit, which used the slates as a shield to ward it off. The form then

disappeared towards the cabinet. He saw nothing whatever of the alleged striking of either Mrs. Evans or her son. Mrs. Evans held his hand nearly all the time and sat still. He went to the cabinet within a few seconds and found Clive Holmes, still handcuffed, with his head lolling on one side. He saw no theatrical properties nor anything suspicious in the cabinet.

He helped Mr. Clive Holmes out of the cabinet still handcuffed. The key was obtained and he was released and helped downstairs and laid on the couch. The unscrewing of the handcuffs occupied two or three minutes. One of the sitters had taken off his coat and made a pillow of it. They did this because the medium was apparently lifeless. When they got him downstairs he seemed in a very bad state, and complained that he could not see. Cross-examination rebutted the suggestion that he had concocted this story in collaboration with the defendant's solicitor. He had summarised his evidence in a letter to a psychic journal before he saw the solicitor for the defence.

Mr. Forsyth said he took the photographs exhibited in court. They were the same as Mr. Boddington took at the same meeting. He examined the cabinet while he was busy fixing up the infra-red photographic apparatus. It was impossible for anything to be smuggled into the room after the examination, and he was quite sure there were no theatrical properties in the cabinet. He saw Mr. Boddington cut the lock of hair from the head of "White Moose." He was quite sure it was not Clive Holmes, and that Holmes was a genuine medium.

Miss Silver, a maidservant to the Holmes', said she had access to all cupboards, drawers, and every part of the house. She was a Baptist and did not go to the meetings, but had never seen anything suspicious. Part of her Work was to clean the seance room. The lino over the cabinet floor was one solid piece. She was certain there were no trap doors or hiding places for theatrical properties. There was no restriction at any time to prevent her going to cupboards and drawers.

Mr. Chitty submitted that on the evidence of the prosecution he had no case to answer. There had been no false pretence. No specific promise to produce anything. In any event, if it was held that the phenomena were not genuine it was for the prosecution to prove it.

The magistrate intervened, and said it had been a false representation to suggest that Holmes could produce genuine psychic phenomena. It was not genuine, it was a fraud.

Then as to Mrs. Evans. She had posed as a poor ignorant widow duped by Mr. Holmes. Her own evidence proved her to be a woman who ought to have known all about psychic phenomena as she had been a practising medium for twenty years, and her son claimed to have been clairvoyant all his life. She first instructed a solicitor to claim compensation on her behalf and then denied instructing him. He was quite sure that if Mr. Seaton had known the type of woman he was acting for he would not have taken up her case. Exactly the same phenomena occurred on the 20th as had occurred when Mr. Holmes was sitting under strict test conditions. The material with which the forms are clothed cannot be distinguished from the manufactured article. If, therefore, any of it is seized it is no proof of fraud. If Mr. Evans could come armed with a torch, why not also a piece of muslin as well. This quite apart from the white scarf which Mrs. Evans admitted losing on that night.

In summing up, the magistrate said: "The case merely concerns what happened on the 20th May. Matters followed their usual course until Mr. Evans produced a torch. Mr. Evans' sworn evidence is that he saw the defendant. He apparently did not attempt to do Mr. Evans any bodily harm, but in the struggle his mother may have been struck. The fact of the handcuffs being used also constitutes a pretence that the phenomena were genuine. It is said, amongst other things, that white light would destroy the spirit.

But this never happened. It is said that the Evans' were inspired by spite against the Holmes' and brought the muslin in themselves. It is extremely unlikely. If any competent conjuror were asked to simulate the phenomena I have no doubt he could do so. I think that the whole thing can be reproduced. It was therefore a fraudulent series of seances. The procedure followed on that night was no different from those on any other night. Therefore representations were given to Mrs. Evans to produce genuine phenomena. She paid money by reason of these false pretences. I must therefore find him guilty. Police testified to the witnesses' good record. Mr. Chitty reminded the magistrate that the defendant had already lost a source of income by resigning his post as chorister. Also that his client had held a steady appointment for twenty years, and that he made no personal gain from the work of the centre. To this the magistrate dissented. Bail was demanded in £250. On further protest this was reduced to the prisoner's own recognisances in £50 and two sureties of £25 each. Bail was immediately arranged. Notice of appeal was given.

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The Two Worlds, October 1st, 1937:

CLIVE HOLMES APPEAL FAILS

The Clive Holmes appeal has failed. A grave miscarriage of justice has occurred. In the present state of the law and the prevailing ignorance of psychic science, nothing else was to be expected, no matter how honourable or innocent a medium may be.

Had I no other evidence of the genuineness of his mediumship than the letter I enclose from Mr. Case, the Vice-President of the Cambridge Psychic Research Society, I should hold myself justified in proclaiming his imprisonment a martyrdom.

At the moment, my energies are being directed into providing a means of livelihood for the martyred man. To this end, I am collecting all available reports on his mediumship and will publish them with an analysis on physical phenomena generally. Every aspect of the case will be reviewed in my forthcoming book on *Clive Holmes' Martyrdom*. I aim at producing a cheap volume at 2s. 6d. each. Subscribers helping me to cover the initial outlay by ordering their copies in advance will receive them at 2s. each. The entire proceeds, after paying costs of advertising and production, will go either to Clive Holmes as salary for organising a centre, or to the expenses of its creation. Full details will be stated in the book itself.

In the letter which follows, note the facts. Flesh is nipped into the lock of the handcuffs. It remains fixed until after the seance. Blood flows, which proves the location has never shifted.

> Dear Mr. Boddington,—I have been following with great interest the case of Clive Holmes, also your articles in *The Two Worlds*. It may interest you to know that in June of last year, in company with the President and other members of the above Society (Cambridge Society for Psychical Research), I attended one of the seances at Blackheath.
>
> I was invited to secure Mr. Holmes to his chair, and in doing so caught a small piece of the flesh of his wrist in the handcuffs. He told me not to bother about undoing them again. When I released him after the sitting, I found the flesh still nipped in the handcuffs and a small quantity of blood on the wrist. This seems to rule out any idea that he could have been released during the sitting.

I may say we were invited to search the room before the seance commenced, which I can assure you we did thoroughly, and were satisfied that there were no props or make-up concealed anywhere.—Yours faithfully,

A. J. CASE (Vice-President, C.S.P.R.

P.S.—Quite a number of materialisations took place, and in our opinion there was no loop hole for fraud.

The Committee and Mrs. Holmes tender their thanks for assistance rendered in their hour of need. The long period between arrest and hearing of the appeal, with all sources of income dried up, has proved a great strain. If no donors object, the Committee contemplate cleating all liabilities to date and pacing the balance towards clearing the rent as it comes due.

HARRY BODDINGTON,

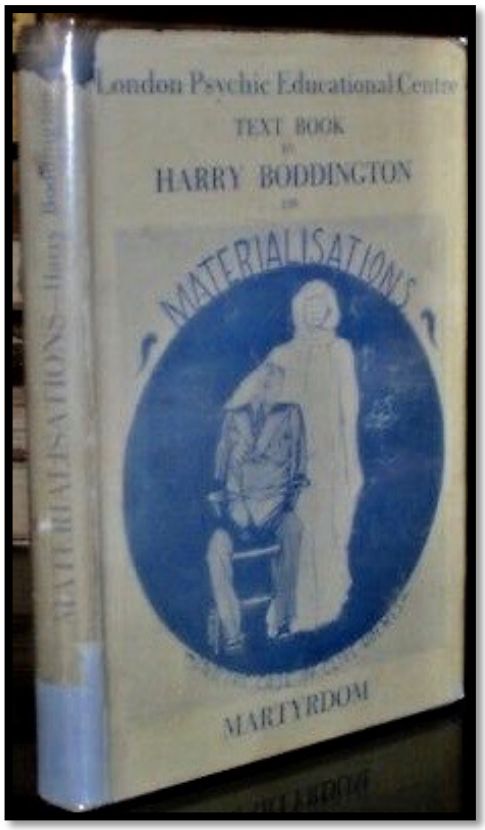
Director, London Educational Psychic Centre.

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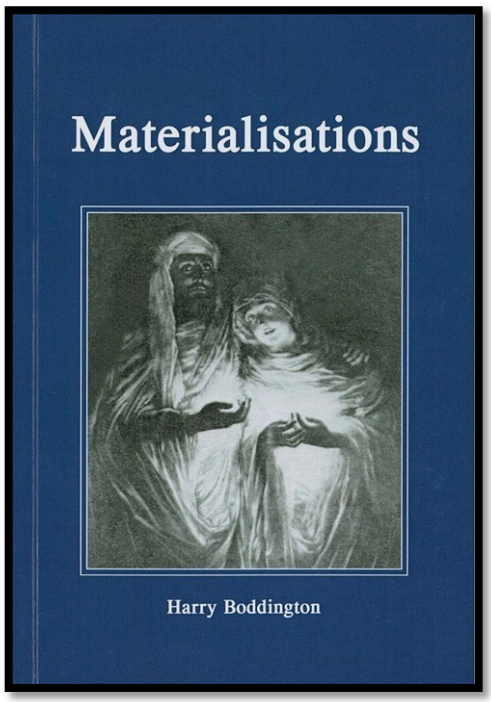
For further information please see:

"Materialisations: a critical analysis of physical phenomena, an instructive text-book showing the martyrdom of Clive Holmes"

by Harry Boddington, published by Psychic Press for the London Psychic Educational Centre [1938]



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Available at the SNU online shop
and the Arthur Findlay College (AFC)

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A QUESTION OF FRAUD!
Continued … Pt II.

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In the last issue of Pioneer, an article by Harry Boddington was published, titled "Fraud", which delved into the various avenues of fraud in physical mediumship/materialisation either by conscious action or, indeed, totally unconscious action. It was noted:

> Do mediums consciously premeditate fraud or is the fraud carried out unconsciously by *low* mischievous spirits? Some will argue that the medium premeditated the fraud and is therefore conscious and responsible for their actions, whilst others would say that due 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.

This led to some mediums being accused, and sometimes convicted, of *fraud* who were *in fact* acting unconsciously owing to the medium being in a trance or somnambulistic state, but unconsciously acting, not under the influence of the medium's control-guide but under the direct influence of a sitter or sitters in the circle or *low* mischievous spirits. In the last issue former SNU President Ernest Oaten noted:

> "… that it may be quite possible for suspicious sitters, who sit with the express purpose of exposing the medium to so permeate the mental atmosphere with their intentions that a medium acts under their suggestion. Mediums, being sensitives, must necessarily, in some measure, be influenced by the mental powers brought to bear upon them. The theory is perfectly valid, and is well recognised by all qualified experimenters. It is because of this that many people have been accused of fraud, when they have been perfectly innocent, …"

In the case of the exposure of Mrs Elizabeth Grover, Oaten further added:

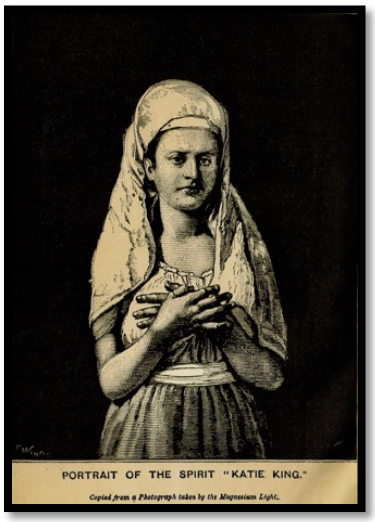
> It is always well to remember, then, that a medium in the seance-room may be liable to act unconsciously to psychological factors of which the sitters may be largely ignorant. In the days of long ago when such matters were imperfectly understood, many accusations of fraud were made against mediums which had no foundation other than the ignorance of the sitters. Such considerations, however, are not an excuse for fraud —in fact, when they are understood they make fraud easily apparent. When, however, as in the case of Mrs. Grover, it can be definitely shown that preparations were made beforehand to practice fraud by carrying into the seance-room the materials used for fraudulent purposes, such as butter-muslin and band of linen with a large safety pin in it, there is only one conclusion to be reached, namely, that a deliberate attempt had been made beforehand to deceive the sitters.

The Pioneer Editor noted:

> It is often claimed that physical mediums are sometimes badly injured, with some claims of actual death as a result of a spirit form, ectoplasm, etc. being grabbed. There are numerous accounts but there appears no firm documented material, medical evidence, etc. of such injuries.

In this issue Pioneer will start at the beginnings of full materialisation in Britain, and look at the alleged exposures of the Victorian physical mediums; many were physically grabbed to expose them—but were they *all* conscious of their actions? In addition, were there any serious injuries or deaths to the person when the alleged spirit form was grabbed, as is sometimes claimed in reports?

In November 2010, for over a year, I ran a series in Psypioneer titled: "The Beginnings of Full Form Materialisations in England". Naturally some of the material will be reproduced here but, in general, I will cite new research materials and a different perspective. One early researcher from the start of form materialisation was William Henry Harrison (1841-1897), who was the founder editor of the Spiritualist journal, "The Spiritualist Newspaper" (1869-1882). Harrison was an experienced photographer, which would aid him in his investigations into this early phenomenon in Modern Spiritualism.



When the name Florence Cook is mentioned, it is the scientist William Crookes who springs to mind! As her researcher, etc., however, it would be, I believe, fairer to include William Harrison equally. Harrison was one of the most experienced sitters with Florence Cook, covering at least two years during her stages of development to full materialisation, and he was the first to obtain photographs of the alleged materialised figure, "Katie King".[15] Many of the books and reports claim that the photographs of the alleged materialisations of Katie King were taken by William Crookes but in fact they were taken by William Harrison at his séances with Florence Cook, albeit Crookes may have been present at some of these séances. See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 6: "Florence (Florrie) Cook - Corner & Katie King Photographs".

Below is quoted from "The Spiritualist", December 1st, 1872 and gives an account of Mrs Mary Andrews, who appears to be credited as the first medium with whom spirit faces, etc. began to appear regularly:

SEANCES AT MORAVIA, UNITED STATES.

The *Banner of Light*, of November 16th, contains the following account of five *seances* for spirit faces, held at the house of Mr. John Andrews, Moravia, New York State. Mrs. Andrews was the medium, and it will be noticed that the spirits have the power of making themselves visible, so as to be identified by their friends,—a stage of development not yet reached in England. The following description was written and signed by Messrs. Daniel, D. Bonnett, and John Hayward, of New York:—

> In the light circle, where everything in the room could be seen, we saw several faces, arms, and hands. The faces resembled those whom they represented so closely, that in nearly all cases they were readily recognised.
>
> The eyes of one figure were extremely bright and clear; the beards of some of the men were seen so plainly that the colour could be easily distinguished. A pure white handkerchief was held in fall view, in the hands of another dressed in female attire; it was then by her placed over her mouth while coughing; she then withdrew it, and on it was a large spot of fresh-looking blood.
>
> We afterwards saw the head of a coloured female; her curly hair was partly covered with a white kerchief; she gave her name as 'Bet.' She was not known to anyone present. John Pierpoint came, and was recognised simultaneously by many. As viewed by us, he seemed to be an old man with long white hair and beard. Before leaving he delivered a short address, concluding with these words: "Thank God, we live after death!" Giving his name, he disappeared from view. The son of Mr. Pope, a Universalist minister of Hyannis, Mass., showed himself to his father, mother, and others, three different times. At one time he said that drowning was not so hard a death

[15] Portrait of the spirit "Katie King" (as shown): Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 9.

as was thought; he said further that Spiritualism was true, and requested his father to preach it, promising that he (his son Milton) would inspire him. Mr. Pope stated, after the *seance*, that one of his sons, named Milton, was drowned a few years ago, and he was fully convinced that he saw and conversed with that son.

Three brothers, of the name of Weaver, from Baltimore, Md., recognised one of the faces as that of their mother; the kind of cap on her head, and the way she wore a kerchief about her neck (one of the brothers informed us) being strong points identical with her while in earth-life. The face and hands of another lady were plainly seen; the hair was dark and glossy; her hands were nearly of the same colour and appearance as if alive; on her wrist was a bracelet, and on the small finger of her left hand a plain ring; both had the colour and lustre of fine gold.

[…]

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Mary Andrews is reported to have remained conscious during the phenomena; it appears she started her form materialisations in late 1871.[16] Soon afterwards the spotlight was pointed to London. In January 1872 Mrs Agnes Elizabeth Guppy [17] became the first British medium to materialise spirit hands and faces, followed by Frank Herne and Charles Williams, followed closely with the introduction of the teenager Florence Cook.

Reference has been made to the then weekly periodical, " 'The Spiritualist Newspaper'—A Record of the Progress of the Science and Ethics of Spiritualism". Its editor, William Harrison, was without doubt a major historian in the early phases of *form materialisations*.[18] Unlike William Crookes, Harrison was a Spiritualist; although Crookes is often stated as being a Spiritualist this *would not* be the case until many years later, after the death of his wife. In "The Spiritualist" for February 1st, 1873 Harrison gives an informative overview of its progress up to the beginning of 1873:

SPIRIT FACES

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THE systematic appearance of spirit-faces to ten or twenty people at the same time, at *seances*, although a comparatively new manifestation, has now developed to such large proportions that it may be as well to review the whole range of facts, as far as they have been recorded. In all the past history of Spiritualism, there are occasional instances of the appearance of a spirit to one or more persons; for instance; Lord Lindsay and Mr. Home once saw the spirit of Mr. Home's first wife, Sacha; and Mr. S. C. Hall and several other witnesses saw the materialised spirit-form of Mr. Hall's sister at a *seance*. The regular occurrence, however, of such striking and interesting manifestations, is a thing of comparatively recent date.

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[16] In the latter part of 1871 the American papers contained accounts of sittings held with a new medium, Mrs Andrews, at the house of a farmer named Keeler, in Moravia, New York, not far from Auburn. At these sittings spirit hands and faces were shown from the cabinet, and spirit forms, frequently recognised as those of deceased relations, walked about the room and conversed with the sitters. (*Mediums of the 19th Century*, Frank Podmore)

Mary Andrews was of Irish parentage and lived for some time as a domestic in Mr Keeler's family. She was described (Dec., 1871) as "a well-formed, comely married woman between twenty-five and thirty years old, and the mother of three little girls". From p. 32, *The Proof Palpable of Immortality*, by Epes Sargent.

[17] Sometimes called Elizabeth Guppy – later Volckman.

[18] Frank Podmore commented: "The Spiritualist was avowedly intended to represent the scientific element. It essayed primarily to record the phenomena, to analyse the evidence, and discuss the explanations, and proposed to defer theological and Socialist speculations until a more convenient season. This paper, which was conducted with fairness and ability for some years, did in effect adopt a more critical standpoint than any of its predecessors or contemporaries, and did contrive to keep clear of theological controversy and irrelevant humanitarian enthusiasms."

One Sunday morning, about a year ago, Mr. Benjamin Coleman, of Upper Norwood, called our attention to several New York and Boston newspapers, containing column after column of descriptions of the *seances* through the mediumship of Mrs. Andrews, at Moravia, U.S.; the *New York Sun*, a daily paper, had sent a correspondent to the scene of the occurrences, and he fully authenticated the facts. Mrs. Andrews, it appeared, sat for manifestations in a cabinet, as the Davenport brothers did, but instead of spirit hands and arms making their appearance, spirit-faces were formed in the dark, and afterwards showed themselves at the opening in the cabinet, so as to be recognised by friends or relations present. The faces were living, and could in some instances talk. At once full details of the new manifestations were published in *The Spiritualist*.



Mrs. Guppy

Mr. Guppy read the account thus published in these pages, and resolved to try at home whether he could not get spirit-faces through the powerful mediumship of Mrs. Guppy. He accordingly turned a photographic dark room into a cabinet, by cutting square openings in its wooden sides, out of which the spirits might thrust their heads if they could make them. Spirit faces were seen, obtained in a very feeble light at first; and a long account of the first manifestations at Mr. Guppy's; written by Mr. Harrison, was published in the *Daily Telegraph*. Shortly afterwards, Messrs. Herne and Williams began to obtain spirit faces at their dark *seances,* the spirits themselves making an artificial phosphorescent light to reveal their features to the observers. Next, Miss Florence Cook, of Hackney, and her spirits resolved to give their time and attention almost exclusively to the production of spirit-faces. Lastly, Mr. Holmes, an American medium, who recently arrived in England, began, a few months ago, to obtain spirit face manifestations.

Before the manifestations became common, it was thought that the appearance of spirits to several persons at once would be one of the strongest proofs of spirit identity that could possibly be had, but the facts have not borne out the anticipation. The faces are *manufactured* by the spirits, and are not usually like themselves as they are at present, but are made to resemble the faces they had on earth, in order that friends present may recognise them. The spirits who make these wonderful living faces often speak of them in a most irreverent manner, just as a hairdresser might speak of the wax dummies in his shop window. "That last spirit had scarcely any nose," remarked an observer, one evening. "Yes," replied the spirit Katie, "I know that. I only had a little dab of stuff left, and stuck it on for a nose."

In the earlier development of the manifestations, the first spirits who showed themselves were not deceased relatives of the sitters, but the chief spirits almost always in attendance upon the mediums for the production of the physical phenomena,—the spirits calling themselves John and Katie. Most of the first spirit-faces strongly resembled the faces of the mediums in shape, though not usually in colour. Many can testify how much Miss Cook's "Katie" usually resembles herself, though there are often unaccountable differences. Mr. Burns and Mr. Harrison have testified that Mr. Williams's "Katie" had



Florence Cook / Corner

features much like himself, though softened, more effeminate, and of fairer complexion. Mr. Guppy has published that in the lines of the eyes and nose, the faces he has seen through Mrs. Guppy's mediumship strongly resemble herself'; he also says that the faces seen by him through Mr. Herne's mediumship were much like Mr. Herne. Mr. Holmes, who has been the most successful medium as yet in getting recognisable faces, said that at first they bore a certain amount of resemblance to himself, but not enough to excite comment.



"Katie"

In the early days of Spiritualism the question of the possibility of the duplication of the whole or portions of the human form had been mooted. An article published by Mr. Coleman in the *Spiritual Magazine* of March, 1865, tells how, at the house of Sir Hesketh Fleetwood, where the Davenports gave a *seance,* a match was suddenly struck by a spirit, and the "double" of Ira Davenport, who himself was firmly bound in his chair, was seen gliding before the observers. Mr. Coleman states also that Miss Laura Edmonds, a medium, the daughter of Judge Edmonds, of New York, had the power occasionally of leaving her body, and appearing to friends at a distance. She frequently appeared in this way, and delivered messages to Miss Mapes, daughter of Professor Napes, the American agricultural chemist. Once, Mr. Coleman was on the platform with Mr. Fergusson at one of the Davenports' public exhibitions. The brothers had been elaborately tied and sealed as usual by a committee elected by the observers. Their hands, moreover, were filled with flour, as usual, to show that they did not unclasp them during the dark *séance*. Four hands came out of the cabinet, and after the *seance* Mr. Fergusson said to Mr. Coleman,—"Did you see those hands?" "Yes," was the reply, "and one of them was covered with flour." Mr. Fergusson remarked,—"It's a good job the audience didn't notice it, or we have had a row." There was a particularly noisy audience that night.

The Banner of Light recently stated how some ink was squirted by observers on some spirit-hands, and the ink was afterwards found on the hands of the boy medium in the cabinet, so that he was denounced as an impostor there and then. A gentleman, who had seen spirit-hands thrust out of one end of a shawl, when the boy simply put his hands under the other end to get darkness, was not satisfied. He tried experiments, and discovered that colouring matters placed upon spirit-hands, were afterwards found upon different parts of the body of the medium. The spirits told him that the colouring substances went into every part of the body of the medium. A little tar was once rubbed round the end of one of the paper speaking-tubes used at the *seances* of Mrs. Andrews, at Moravia, and a ring of tar was afterwards found round her month, yet the spirits who appeared at her *seances* had been recognised by their friends at the rate of more than a dozen a week, so that there was no reason to suppose imposture on the part of the medium.

Recently, at one of Miss Cook's *seances*, some violet ink was rubbed on the back of a spirit-hand for the purpose of experiment, and the smear—larger than half-a-crown—was

afterwards found on the arm of the medium near the elbow. Mrs. Holmes tells us that once she was at a dark *seance* in America. A gentleman called suddenly for a light, saying he had caught a hand. A great, long additional arm and hand was then seen protruding from the body of the medium, and it shot back into one of the normal arms of the medium as swiftly as the eye could follow it. At dark *seances* spirit-hands and arms are very busy. The tying of the medium does not appear to prevent their formation, but the holding of his hands seems, so far as we have seen, to do so. After a short time has elapsed, the holding of the medium's hands does not matter much; but if the hands be held closely from the first; it is, probably, a barrier to the production of many manifestations. This is one of the many reasons why persons of a thoroughly suspicions nature, get fewer tests and more inconclusive manifestations than nobler people.

It would seem that the spirits always in close companionship with powerful physical mediums, because of similarity of tastes and character, can make themselves visible with more ease than others. They rise out of the bodies of the mediums, and, at first, exactly resemble the mediums, though they can change their features within certain limits before they show themselves. They do not materialise more of their bodies than is necessary, but usually form only a head, and sometimes arms and hands. The faces at Mr. Holmes's *seances* do not seem to come from him, but have been seen forming near the ceiling of the dark room, and then floating down towards the opening. Katie has been seen rising from the body of Miss Cook; and while she manifested, she was connected with the medium by cloudy, faintly luminous threads.

The recognisable faces of deceased persons seem to be formed with more difficulty, and to be able in all cases to bear less light, than the faces of the spirits in affinity to the medium. The latter spirits have the advantage of constant practice in making themselves visible, which, they say, is one reason why they can bear more light, their first attempts producing but weak results. The recognisable faces have less life in them, and but few of them can talk.



"JOHN KING."
A Materialised Spirit-form.—Medium, Charles E. Williams.

At Mrs. Andrews's in America, where this kind of manifestation is more developed, they can talk more than they can at present, through any British medium. In no case, as yet; has a recognisable face been known to come directly from the face of the medium, in the same manner that the faces of their attendant spirits do. Some of the heads are bound up in white spirit drapery, or have white turbans upon them, the object, they say, being to economise power, as the heads would not last so long were they bare, and wholly materialised. The intelligences animating the heads for the time being, say that both light and the intense gaze of the eyes of the spectators, give them a burning sensation while manifesting, and cause them to feel tied.

The influence of the spiritual state of the observers finds optical expression at face *seances*. Worldly and suspicions people get the feebler manifestations; the spirits then have often a pale, ghastly look, as usual when the power is weak. Spiritual people, in whose presence the medium feels thoroughly happy, see by far the finest manifestations.

Different mediums, however, vary very considerably in their power of resisting and overcoming adverse mental and psychological influences. Although spiritual phenomena are governed by fixed laws, those laws so work in practice that Spiritualism undoubtedly partakes much of the character of a special revelation to special people.

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Below, Harrison again gives an equally valuable overview of the different classes of form manifestations in "The Spiritualist Newspaper" dated December 28th, 1877:

CLASSES OF FORM MANIFESTATIONS

OBSERVATION shows that there are two great classes of form manifestations; in the one class the forms appear with living, flexible features, plainly visible to all the observers, and in the others the features are rigid, or not visible at all.

FORMS WITH FLEXIBLE FEATURES

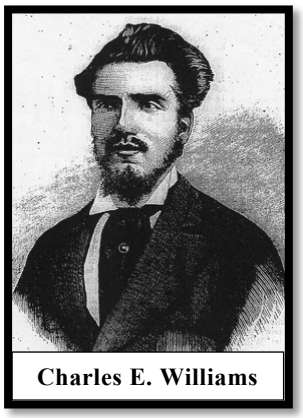
Sometimes when strong mediums, like Dr. Slade, are sitting with their hands in full view, in broad daylight, living hands and arms are thrust into view from some position where shade prevails, usually from under a table. These hands, when we saw them in Dr. Slade's case, were apparently the duplicates of his own, like the invisible hands which do the writing on his slates, for the said writing generally bears a very strong resemblance to his own, tending to show that it was executed by fingers and muscles like those of his own hand.

And this fact of the duplication of hands and forms has been demonstrated in many ways during a long course of years.

It was first well proved through the mediumship of Florence Cook (Mrs. Corner); indeed, it was better and more continuously tested in her case than in any other. She frequently left her own home to present the phenomena in the rooms and laboratories of men of science, and submitted patiently to every test which they could devise. For the last two years or so of her mediumship she scarcely ever sat without being carefully secured with tapes, applied by scientific and carefully considered methods by numbers of responsible people; the knots were sealed with signet rings. The upshot of all this was to prove that in some cases a separate form, bearing a strong resemblance to herself, was materialised; also that the power about her could free her, like the Davenports and other mediums, from any kind of bonds, and return her to the same.

The same phenomena took place with the Davenports, for there are records that when lights have been suddenly struck at their *séances* one of the Brothers has been seen in duplicate.

It is the same with Mr. Eglinton. The materialised form bears a strong resemblance to himself, as testified to at the last meeting of the National Association of Spiritualists by Mr. Fitz-Gerald. Moreover, in one case it was the medium himself, for Mr. Stainton Moses recently recorded that, at Mrs. Makdougall Gregory's, Mr. Eglinton became covered with white drapery, and that when his entranced figure stood before them there was no medium on the sofa where he had been lying. Mr. A. P. Wallace and others searched him thoroughly after one of his sittings, and no white drapery was found upon him. Yet had the form been seized, plenty would have been obtained, and this shows how much injury might be done by rough "investigators" to the reputation of an innocent medium, the subject of abnormal phenomena understood neither by himself nor the sitters.


Charles E. Williams

The late Mr. Samuel Guppy once printed in these pages how through the mediumship of his wife (now Mrs. Volckman) he had seen materialised faces strongly resembling her own.

With Mr. Williams a form appears, with a face strongly resembling his own in the lines of the eyes and nose, when a close view of it is obtained in a good light. This form has sometimes

appeared under good test conditions in an open circle with no cabinet, and while the medium was held by both hands.

Mr. C. P. B. Alsop has often seen in Mr. Herne's presence a form, the duplicate in features of that medium.

In the presence of Miss K. Cook a form appears, which on the one occasion we saw it had a face resembling that of the medium.

The forms once presented through the mediumship of Miss Showers, bore a strong resemblance to herself.

Mr. C. C. Massey and others can testify that at Miss Lottie Fowler's form seances, the faces strongly resembled her own.

Mr. Olive told us that Mr. W. G. Haxby's recent *séances* at his house, the faces had some similarity to that of the medium, but that some of them had beards.

Mrs. Fay's spirit forms, as observed by Mr. Serjeant Cox, ourselves, and others, resembled herself, and were accompanied by undoubted evidence that the medium herself was not presented.

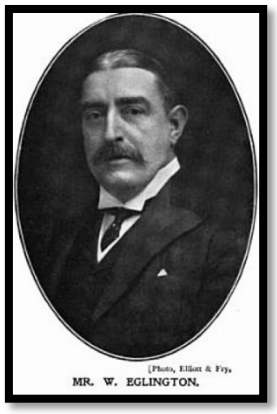
The Blackburn Spiritualists are quite satisfied that Miss Wood's forms resemble the medium.

Thus it is well established that there is a class of manifestations in which forms and faces, more or less the duplicates in appearance of those of the medium, present themselves to view, and that the intelligences animating the forms claim to be spirits. These forms have living flexible features, which are seen by all the observers, but while they are visible, the medium is usually in a cabinet out of sight; on other occasions his body, transformed by abnormal power, and released from the securest bonds, is presented to the gaze of the observers.

FORMS WITHOUT FLEXIBLE FEATURES

In another class of manifestations, the medium is in full view, instead of in a cabinet, but the forms do not generally as yet under these conditions, present flexible features, with the life in them visible to all the observers.

Once, while Mr. Eglinton was held on both sides, at the house of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, a draped form, with no features visible, rose from the floor behind him to a height of about two feet six inches, then sank again.


[Photo, Elliott & Fry.
MR. W. EGLINGTON.

Sometimes when Mrs. Volckman has been similarly held, not in her own home, a form has appeared in the same way, without the presentation to the gaze of all the observers, of flexible, living features.

In the presence of Miss Cook, in Signor Rondi's studio, a form appears while the medium is in full view; but it does not present living, flexible features.

Thus the established manifestations divide themselves into two classes as yet—those *with* flexible, living features, visible to all the sitters, and those *without* flexible, living features, visible to all the sitters. We have patiently watched for years for a living, flexible face in a good light, which face bore no resemblance to that of the medium, and was not produced on his or her own premises. Hitherto this search has been prosecuted without success.

Mr. A. R. Wallace and Mr. Crookes have witnessed a great number of form manifestations, without once recording, that off the premises of the medium, they have seen a living, flexible, materialised spirit-face, bearing no resemblance to that of the sensitive. Neither has Mr. Varley made any such record.

We have been present at *séances*, on the premises of professional mediums, where perfectly honest and enthusiastic sitters saw anything the spirits gave them a suggestion that they ought to see, accompanied by any objective "something" which gave them a slight excuse for seeing the thing desired. Also, on the premises of mediums, who afterwards proved not to be trustworthy, we have seen a few living faces, bearing no resemblance to their own. But, sweeping these things away as "not yet proven," one can but wait patiently for living, flexible faces to make themselves visible to all the sitters at once, off the premises of the medium, in a good light.

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Editor's Note:

William Harrison gives the reader a good overview of this new phase of physical phenomena which started to change the face of Modern Spiritualism in England in early 1872. It can be noted that in the early stages of form materialisation it would be the early controls who *were almost always in attendance upon the mediums for the production of the physical phenomena—the spirits calling themselves John and Katie*.

This is referring to John King, his wife and his daughter. As the phenomena grew, this could become confusing, as both wife and daughter were called "Katie King"! Later, the recognisable deceased relatives and friends of the circle sitters would come. Generally, the materialised spirit-faces strongly resembled the various mediums; marks made on the materialised form were later represented on the medium.

Further noted is the manifesting spirit sometimes rising out of the medium's body*; ...at first, exactly resemble the mediums, though they can change their features within certain limits before they show themselves*.

To conserve the required power to form the materialisation only the necessary body parts were formed; *...usually form only a head, and sometimes arms and hands*.

Recognisable faces of family, friends, etc. were formed with much more difficulty and needed more subtle light than those of the spirit controls owing to the spirit attendants having constant practice in the development of the medium. *The recognisable faces have less life in them, and but few of them can talk*.

It is also noted that some of the heads were bound; *...in white spirit drapery, or have white turbans upon them, the object, they say, being to economise power, as the heads would not last so long were they bare, and wholly materialised*.

The most constant factor in all the above articles giving these early stages of form materialisation is the *fact* that the materialised form bears a strong resemblance to the medium! The above examples of *duplicates in appearance* of those of the mediums shown were British mediums: William Eglinton, Charles Williams, Frank Herne, Kate Selina Cook (Florence's younger sister), Miss Mary Rosina Showers, Annie Eva Fay, Catherine Wood and Florence Cook.

All of them were strongly subjected to allegations of deliberate conscious fraud, given that their alleged spirit forms strongly resembled the medium at this time and also the fact that the

medium could shed their restraints and be found out of the cabinet, etc.; this would be, of course, a disadvantage to the genuine medium and an advantage to the fraudulent medium!

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The above information about the first five years of form materialisation in England indeed gives the reader some reference and idea of these earlier stages and its problems. It can be noted that the withdrawal of the necessary fluids, more widely known today as ectoplasm,[19] did not appear to present itself in the way of later mediums from the mouth, etc., as with, for example, Helen Duncan.



At Christmas Week 2019 at the Arthur Findlay College my lecture focused on the Polish physical medium Franek Kluski and I strongly noted that Kluski's mediumship was reminiscent of past mediums Henry Slade, Florence Cook, Catherine Wood, etc. Until researching this article, both the old and the new material, I did not realise just how accurate that statement was; his remarkable mediumship represented much of the early mediumship given here. For example, Kluski's forms were doubles of himself; he produced forms with and without flexible features, etc. I have been wondering if in fact Kluski was the first to produce ectoplasm being shown *objectively* to come from the body, e.g., the mouth, but further research is required.

Pioneer will, at this time, focus on the most famous British medium of this era, Florence (Florrie) Cook, who in April 1874 married Captain Edward Elgie Corner. Following Florence's death on April 22nd 1904 from pneumonia, aged 47, he married her sister, Kate Selina Cook (1859-1923), in October 1907.

William Crookes, who investigated Florence Corner, was, as previously noted, not convinced



of the alleged identity of Katie King, who claimed to be the daughter of Sir Henry Owen Morgan, ex-buccaneer and Governor of Jamaica under Charles II. Her name was Annie Owen Morgan. The name "John King", assumed by her father, was never satisfactorily explained: his identity with the Governor, Sir Henry Morgan, has never been established. Crookes, in a letter to Professor Brofferio in 1894, said:

> *All that I am concerned in is that invisible and intelligent beings exist, who say that they are the spirits of dead persons. But proof that they really are the individuals they assume to be, which I require in order to believe it, I have never received, though I am disposed to admit that many of my friends assert they have actually obtained the desired proofs, and I myself have already frequently been many times on the verge of this conviction.*
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> *Für den Spiritismus*. Leipsic. 1894.

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[19] The term generally used at this period would have been "psychic force".

Below are a few quotes from "The Spiritualist Newspaper" dated December 12th, 1873:

SPIRIT FORMS

Dr. Purdon, of Sandown, Isle of Wight, was the first to see the face of the spirit Katie in strong daylight, and he was exceedingly startled and pained to discover the strong resemblance of her features to the features of Miss Cook, which, it will be remembered, caused the medium a great deal of trouble at the time, until it was discovered that the faces through all the other mediums in London, bore more or less resemblance to themselves. It appears as if spirits, when clothing themselves with matter, find it most convenient to take the material form of the instrument through whom they act. Although the faces of Miss Cook and Katie were very much alike, it was soon found that there were also strange differences, varying in amount at different times. Sometimes the spirit face would be half as big again as the face of the medium, and the parts of the face which seemed to be least subject to change, were the lines of the nose and eyebrows. The similarity of the features of the media and the spirits, soon gave rise to an elaborate system of testing, to relieve mediums, especially those engaged in the rough work of proselytising, from the odium of being supposed to do the manifestations themselves, so that at the present time nearly all the mediums in England who get spirit forms and faces, are bound with ropes and sealed with signet rings in their cabinets while the manifestations are going on.

"To return to Miss Cook's *seances*. After a time Katie began to exhibit not only the whole of her bare face, but her hands and arms in a strong light. In these early stages of the development of the manifestations, Miss Cook was nearly always awake while the manifestations were going on, but sometimes when the weather was bad, or the other conditions unfavourable, Katie would entrance her; the effect of the said entrancement being simply to increase the power of the manifestations. The medium usually objected to be entranced, because she very naturally wished to see and hear what was going on, although sometimes the sight made her nervous. She said that it was not pleasant to be shut up in a nearly dark room with a person in white floating about in it, who had a head and shoulders, but no legs or body. The activity of the mind of the medium also seemed to interfere with the manifestations, and after a time Katie never appeared without the medium being in a trance.

"From that time for the next year or two, Miss Cook never saw the materialised form of the spirit Katie, although of late she has seen her again on one or two occasions. Now that the spirit Katie appears in full form, and even walks about in the room outside the cabinet, she says if her medium were to wake up while she (Katie) is outside the cabinet, she would be in considerable danger; she also sometimes says that malignant spirits occasionally attempt to wake up the medium at inconvenient times."



Some sittings, for recognisable faces, were held at Miss Cook's, and the spirit Katie said that while they were showing themselves, on no account was the medium to go to sleep, and that if she did she was to be taken out of the cabinet at once. It soon therefore became clear, that the "recognisable face manifestations" were altogether different in kind from the appearance of the John's and Katie's, who so commonly manifest through different physical mediums.[20] Katie said that

[20] As previously noted, John King, his wife and his daughter could become confusing, as both wife and daughter were called Katie King. Katie King senior was active with other mediums, for example Charles Williams.

while these strange faces were about, malignant spirits who sometimes tried to interfere with their work, always began by trying to put the medium to sleep. It will be remembered also, as another example of the way in which different manifestations fit in with each other, that Mrs. Andrews is always awake in the cabinet while recognisable faces come, and she, like the observers outside, comments upon their general appearance.

"Another circumstance was noted in connection with the advent of these recognisable faces at Miss Cook's. Noises and disturbances became common in the house, and trinkets and other small articles were often missing; sometimes they were found hidden away, and sometimes stolen altogether. It was quite clear that the medium was passing through a period of danger, and there were disagreeable influences about. Katie said it was an ordeal which all mediums must pass through before getting recognisable faces.

"Of course, when low spirits of this nature were about, every kind of protection should be thrown over the medium, but it chanced that at the same period visitors were admitted very freely out of pure kindness to Miss Cook's *seances*, and if an occasional failure occurred, some few of them put the worst construction upon it, thereby causing the medium additional trouble and annoyance. It was further found that these strange faces began, as did Katie's, in a weak light, and were imperfect; in fact, this new manifestation wanted cultivating under the influence of genial sitters for many months, just as the Katie manifestation had done, and it was impossible to do this when visitors were admitted, who wanted to see startling manifestations, and not new and imperfect ones in their undeveloped form. For all these reasons sitting for recognisable faces was discontinued, but it is to be hoped that they will be resumed at some future time. These facts are very interesting, as tending to prove the desirability of entirely separating scientific from proselytising work in Spiritualism, since this manifestation was not perfected, solely in consequence of the fear of showing undeveloped phenomena to visitors who wanted tests."



"More recent developments at Miss Cook's circle, such as the appearance of Katie in full form, and her walking about the room, and her being able to bear so strong a light as to be photographed, are fresh in the memories of the readers of these pages. Of late Miss Cook has seen Katie once or twice when materialised, the spirit waking her up for that purpose."

"Where the white drapery of the spirits comes from is a mystery. The manifestations were too important in their nature not to be verified in every possible way, although to the many who know the integrity of the medium, tests are not considered to be necessary. Nevertheless, not only is the medium bound and sealed while the manifestations are going on, but sometimes she has requested ladies to accompany her to her bedroom to take off all her clothes and to search her, to see that she had no drapery of the kind concealed about her. At the same time the cabinet has also been thoroughly searched.

"The cabinet is nothing but a large cupboard, with no concealed machinery about it, and, in fact, the manifestations go on just the same at the residences of Mr. Luxmoore, Dr. Purdon and others, away from the home of the medium. Katie says she makes this drapery out of matter obtained from the dresses of all the sitters in the circle. She says that when she is forming herself she materialises the drapery first, and her own body afterwards; indeed, one or two persons have thought that they have seen Katie's head on the floor, in the middle of a heap of drapery, just inside the cabinet, although this has not been witnessed in a good light.

"Two hypotheses have been mooted to account for the phenomenon. One is, that the spirit Katie is not an independent spirit, but the spirit, or "double" of the medium, and certainly, in mental capacity, Katie is considerably limited by the intellectual capacity of the medium. But when the medium is awake, Katie and she carry on conversations and arguments with each other; in such case they would appear to be two distinct individualities.

"The other speculation, and the one to which we most incline is, that Katie is an independent spirit, allied in tastes and inclinations to the medium, consequently, much resembling her in mental capacity. Perhaps the spirit in attempting to communicate with mortals, is much limited by the mental powers of her medium, and by the conditions of manifesting, so that in the materialised spirit we have a mixture of the individualities of Katie and of Miss Cook."

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In the same issue is a report of a séance held with Florence Cook at Mr Luxmoore's house in London on November 28th, 1873, where the alleged Katie King is questioned:



"Is it possible for you to explain to us what are the powers or forces you employ in materialising and dissolving your form?" *"No, it is not.*"

"Is it electricity or does it bear any resemblance to it?" "*No; it is all nonsense what they talk about electricity."*

*"*But have you no name or mode of conveying it?" "*It is more like will-power than any else; in fact, it is the will which is at the bottom of the power I exercise."*

"When you disappear where is it to?" *"Into the medium, giving her back all the vitality I took from her. When I have got very much power from her, if anyone of you were to take her suddenly round the waist and try to carry her, you might kill her on the spot: she might suffocate. I can go in and out her readily, but, understand, I am not her, not her double: they talk a deal of rubbish about doubles; I am myself all the time."*

"When you dissolve, which part disappears the first. the body or the dress?" *The body, of course; its material power goes back to her and then the dress goes into the elements"*

"Do you think one in the flesh can ever appreciate the powers you use in manifesting?" *"No; you never can."*

"You speak of being yourself, and not a double of the medium—who were you when in the flesh?" *"I was Annie Morgan."*

"Were you married?" "*Yes; but don't talk of that."*

(At this she retired behind the curtain, apparently either hurt or grieved at the question, a state she has exhibited before when questioned about her married life.) She speedily returned, and was asked, "Have you a husband now?" *"Of course I have."*

"Can you give us any idea under what reign you lived?" *"I left the body when I was twenty-one years old, and 1 lived in the latter part of the reign of Charles I., during the Commonwealth, and to the early part of the reign of Charles II. I remember the high peaked hats of the Commonwealth and the broad hats of Charles I. and II.; the short hair of the men, but Cromwell's was not short."*

At this point the time which had been agreed on as the utmost that could be given, having the health of the medium in regard, was reached, and although the spirit expressed a desire to remain longer, she retired on Mr. Luxmoore insisting on it, and the *seance* terminated.

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Katie King / Annie Morgan

SEIZED AT A SÉANCE

Florence Cook was the first form materialisation medium to have her séance disturbed by a fully materialised form being seized. This took place on December 9th, 1873 at Hackney, London. Mr William Volckman, a known respected researcher and Spiritualist, had gained an invitation to the said séance. Volckman breached the circle conditions set down by the medium's father, Henry Cook: he felt that the circle itself was in breach, because he claimed that the medium, Cook's eldest daughter, Florence, was in fact acting as the spirit form—"Katie King"—and that the whole affair was a fraud. Volckman would claim to have taken the 'responsible' position to show this! Reports at the time and today of what actually took place at Mr Henry Cook's residence and Volckman's actual actions on December 9th, 1873, and before, are often contradictory, sensationalised and incomplete.

The full story is discussed in detail and is published in Psypioneer over three issues, starting in Vol. 6, No. 7, "William Volckman"; not only is this a story of the seizure of Florence Cook/Katie King but later, in 1875, the medium Mrs Guppy would marry William Volckman. This will bring in the possibility of Guppy's involvement and also the name of Mr and Mrs Holmes, mentioned in this article. Anyone wanting a pdf of these issues should please contact the editor.[21]

Below is quoted from Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 8:

"GROSS OUTRAGE AT A SPIRIT CIRCLE.

"LAST Tuesday night there was a seance at Mr. Cook's. Among the guests present were the Earl of Caithness (who is not a Spiritualist), Lady Caithness, and the Count El Conde de Medina Pomár, of 46, Portland-place, W.; Mr. Charles Blackburn, Parkfield, Didsbury, near Manchester; Mr. Henry M. Dunphy, barrister-at-law, Essex-court, Temple, E.C.; Mr. J. C. Luxmoore, J.P., 16, Gloucester-square, Hyde-park, W.; Mrs. A. Corner, and Mr. E. E. Corner (ship's first officer), St. Thomas's-square, Hackney; Mr. H. Bielfeld,[22] 208, Euston-road; Mr. G. R. Tapp, 18, Queen Margaret's-grove, Islington; Mr. W. H. Harrison, Wilmin-villa, Herne-hill; Mr. and Mrs. Cook and children; and the person who committed the outrage described in the following document:

"This evening at Miss Cook's seance, during the appearance of what purported to be the spirit 'Katie,' a man, named Volckman, rose up, grasped her round the waist with both arms, and tried to throw her down with his feet. Mr. Tapp and Mr. Corner seized the man who thus broke the conditions which we were all admitted on the understanding we would keep. 'Katie' instantly extricated herself from his clutches, and aided by Mr. Luxmoore, was in a moment back in the cabinet. After a delay of about five minutes, during which Katie gave earnest instructions to the sitters, the cabinet was opened and Miss Cook found in black dress, and boots, with the tape tightly round her waist, as at the beginning of the seance, the knot sealed as at first with the Signet-ring of the Earl of Caithness, and sewn underneath the seal with thread, as it had been sewn before the seance by Mr. Luxmoore.

9 Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 7: Henry Bielfeld (1802-1892).

The tape and seal are now in the possession of the Earl of Caithness. Before the seance the cabinet was searched by the strangers present, and after it by Lady Caithness and others. Lady Caithness and Mrs. Corner, who never lost sight of Miss Cook from the moment the cabinet was opened, subsequently led the medium to her bedroom after she had recovered from the severe shock, and searched her. She had her boots and black dress on, and no white drapery, and nothing but her ordinary dress.

There was nothing in her pockets. Her under garments were coloured wadded winter clothing. We all regard the act of the man as a gross outrage, and think the results redound greatly to the credit of Miss Cook.

"CAITHNESS.
MARIE CAITHNESS.
EL CONDE DE MEDINA POMAR.
CHARLES BLACKBURN.
AMELIA CORNER.

J. C. LUXMOORE
HENRY M. DUNPHY.
HENRY BIELFELD.
EDWARD ELGIE CORNER.
GEORGE ROBERT TAPP.
WILLIAM H. HARRISON.

"Dec. 9th, 1873."

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William Volckman responded initially in "The Spiritualist Newspaper":

'SIR,—In the report which appears in your journal of a *séance* lately held at Mr. Cook's, I am accused of seizing the ghost, thereby breaking the conditions by which the members of the circle were bound.

'In reply I have to state, that having for forty minutes carefully observed and scrutinised the face, features, gestures, size, style, and peculiarities of utterance of the so-called spirit, the conviction irresistibly forced itself upon me that *no ghost*, but the medium, Miss Florence Cook, herself, was before the circle. I perceived also an occasional tip-toeing by the young lady as if to alter her stature, and was much struck by the utter puerility of her remarks throughout the *séance*. I am confirmed in my conviction, as above stated, by the facts that the *struggling* ghost had to be forcibly extricated from my grasp, and afterwards to be "aided" into her cabinet by a Justice of the Peace.

'I may add that no third-parties had any knowledge of my invitation to, or presence at, the *séance* in question.

WM. VOLCKMAN.

'Dec. 16th, 1873.

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Second seizure:

During a séance with Mrs Corner on Friday, January 9th, 1880, and under the protection of Edmund Dawson Rogers, Chairman of the Séance Committee of the British National Association of Spiritualists (B.N.A.S), London,[23] Sir George Sitwell seized the full-form materialization of 'Marie', who appeared attired in white robes. The seized 'Marie' was found to be the medium herself, Mrs Elgie Corner (Florence Cook).

The 'seizure' raised the question: was Mrs Corner actively and consciously producing fraudulent mediumship or could she have been unconscious of the fact and under the influence of a controlling spirit or that of the sitters in the séance, the medium being totally unaware of their actions, as they were in a somnambulistic state and therefore not accountable for their *unconscious* actions?

This case became public with "The Capture of "A Spirit."—To the Editor of the Times" by Sir George R. Sitwell and Carl von Buch. The account of Sitwell, Buch, Dawson Rogers, the BNAS Council, etc. is published in Psypioneer, Vol. 2, No. 8, "The seizure of Mrs. Elgie Corner". This account shows both sides of the story, in full agreement that the seized *spirit of Marie* was, in fact, the medium.

Sir George Sitwell and the others claim that the medium was *consciously producing fraudulent mediumship*, whereas Dawson Rogers

> "… believed her to be totally unconscious, and therefore totally guiltless of any deception, and that he was satisfied the Council, after hearing his report, would arrive at the same opinion."

Quoted from Psypioneer, Vol. 2, No. 8, August 2006:

THE CAPTURE OF "A Spirit."
To the Editor of the Times.

> Sir,-We think the following facts will be interesting to the readers of The Times. Some time ago, being desirous of investigating the truths of so-called Spiritualism, we were advised by an eminent Spiritualist to attend the seances held at 38, Great Russell-street (British National Association of Spiritualists). We were assured that the seances conducted at that association were the most genuine in England and under strict test conditions. On our first visit, the medium being tied by one of us with great care, no manifestations followed.
>
> At the second visit (January 2) one of us again tied the medium, but under the directions of the chairman, who is officially connected with the institution, a "Spirit" soon appeared; which we were told was "Marie," and was represented to be that of a dead child 12 years of age. She was dressed in white, her face covered with a veil, and her arms and feet bare. We were surprised to distinguish the appearance of a corset under the white robes, and her voice and general appearance gave us the idea that it was the medium herself—Mrs. Corner (nee Florrie Cook).
>
> On the third visit, January 9, we were accompanied by a friend, Mr. John C. Fell, engineer, and editor of a scientific journal, of 23, Rood-lane, E.C., with his wife. The spirit "Marie" again appeared, and rendered our former suspicions almost certain by the audible

[23] BNAS would evolve into The London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA), later The College of Psychic Studies (CPS), as it is today. The BNAS members would help substantially in the formation and foundation of the "Society for Psychical Research". See Psypioneer, Vol. 4, No. 10: "The Society for Psychical Research, Officers and Council for 1882".

sound of undressing within the curtain and by the “unspiritual” levity of her behavior and conversation.

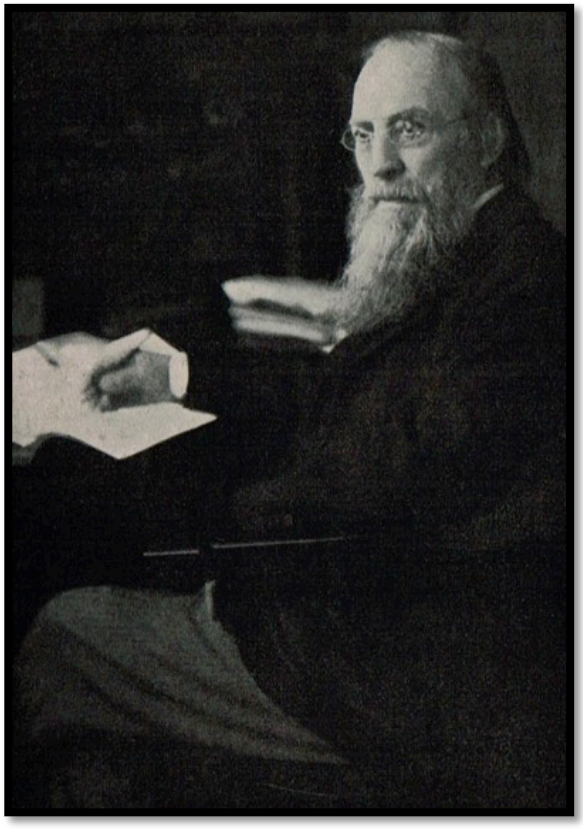
One of us by a sudden rush intercepted and gently held “the spirit,” while another dashed into the curtains, and drawing them aside, displayed the medium’s empty chair with the knot slipped, her dress, stockings and boots, and other discarded garments. There was sufficient light from a half-obscured candle for the captured “spirit” and all the above objects to be plainly seen, which latter were handed round for inspection and examined by those present. After a few minutes—to cover the confusion, we presume—the candle was extinguished by the official present, and we adjourned to the lower room. All present, except the officials, one of whom took refuge in abuse, entirely agreed with us and thanked us for exposing the deception.

Now, Sir, we leave general conclusions on Spiritualism to others, but what we do claim to have proved is that in the first society of Spiritualists in England, one of its best mediums has been detected in personating the spirit herself. Not wishing to further occupy your valuable space, we shall be happy to give fuller information to any one interested in the cause of truth.

GEORGE R. SITWELL.
CARL VON BUCH.

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Quote from Dawson Rogers' response to the letter:



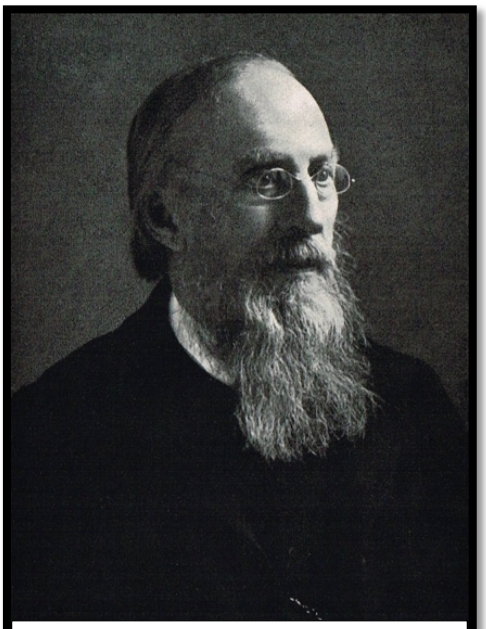
Mr. DAWSON ROGERS then proceeded. This letter, he said, stated that at a séance held at the rooms of the Association, on the evening of Friday, January 9th—and at which he (Mr. Dawson Rogers) was present in his capacity of Chairman of the Séance Committee —a form appeared attired in white robes, that the form was seized by one of the circle, and was found to be the person of the medium (Mrs. Corner), and that the chair to which the medium had been bound was found to be vacant, while several articles of the medium’s dress were scattered about the floor behind the curtains which were used as a cabinet. He was sorry to be obliged to admit that all this was true. He would also take this opportunity of stating that, in the act of seizure, Sir George Sitwell was as gentle and considerate towards the medium as the successful accomplishment of his purpose would permit, and that he (Mr. Dawson Rogers) was sorry that in the heat of the moment he applied to Sir George an epithet which he freely confessed he ought not to have used. Having made a mistake he had done all he could to remedy it, and had personally conveyed the expression of his regret to Sir George, who had kindly accepted it.

He would now briefly state all the circumstances connected with this unfortunate affair, prefacing what he had to say by the assurance that he had no word of censure for Mrs. Corner, that he believed her to be totally unconscious, and therefore totally guiltless of any

deception, and that he was satisfied the Council, after hearing his report, would arrive at the same opinion. Naturally enough, perhaps, some persons would hastily conclude, after what had occurred, that notwithstanding all that had been heard of Mrs. Corner, she was not a genuine medium for physical manifestations, and that the Séance Committee ought to have taken more care before they accepted her services in that capacity. But as a matter of fact great care had been taken. At some of the preceding seances she had not only been well secured by tying, but her dress had been so sewn together that it was simply impossible that it could be removed and replaced without detection; and he himself had also, when sitting near the curtains, put his hands behind them and felt the medium's head, shoulder, arm, and hand at the same time that the "form" was out and visible to all the company; and he had reported the fact to another member of the committee. He had also had recourse to other tests which left no room for doubt as to the genuineness of Mrs. Corner's mediumship.

But how about the third sitting—that at which the capture was made? Mr. von Buch did exactly as he pleased without a single suggestion being offered by any other person. Did he then tie the medium securely, and, if not, why not? Be this as it might, a "form," after a little while, came out from curtains at the side, and stood with the back to the wall. It was covered with white drapery over head, face, and shoulders, and had a long white robe reaching to the heels, so that the naked feet could not be seen except when they were put slightly forward from beneath the skirt. While in this position Sir George Sitwell made a sudden rush, captured the "form," and, gently holding her, exclaimed, "It is the medium; I knew it was."

He (Mr. Dawson Rogers) at once stepped up, and taking the "form" out of Sir George's hands, threw up the veil to see whether it really was Mrs. Corner or not. For the moment he could scarcely recognise her, as the eyes had a vacant gaze as though there was no consciousness of what had occurred. He had been told that at the same moment Mr. von Buch rushed forward, and from the front of the curtains drew out the empty chair and various articles of Mrs. Corner's apparel; but of this, as he was then standing at the side curtains, he knew nothing. It should be borne in mind that when he took Mrs. Corner in this apparently unconscious state from Sir George's hands she was covered with white drapery as mentioned. He at once put his arms round her, and led her behind the curtains. There, for a few seconds, she remained perfectly quiet and silent, then trembled violently, and presently exclaimed, "Where am I? Where am I? What is it? Tell me, what is it?"



Edmund Dawson Rogers

He endeavoured to soothe her, but finding that she was getting heavy in his arms, and fearing that he should able to prevent her from falling, he proposed to lead her out into the adjoining room. She replied, "Yes, do!" and he was about to remove her, when she suddenly exclaimed, "Why, I am undressed; get away, get away" He did not, however, feel that he could leave her without letting her fall, and he therefore called Mrs. Maltby, who received her from his hands behind the curtain, and removed her into another room. Mrs. Maltby would tell them in what condition she was at the time.

Mrs: MALTBY: She had nothing on but her corset and flannel petticoat, and no white drapery whatever.

Mr. DAWSON ROGERS: What then had become of the drapery? It was impossible that Mrs. Corner could have removed and secreted it, for he had his

arms round her from the moment he received her from Sir George Sitwell's hands to the moment he placed her in the hands of Mrs. Maltby behind the curtains. The published letter already alluded to said that to cover the confusion he had put the light out. This was altogether untrue. The light was at one end of the room, and he at the other, and he was engaged all the time as he had said in attending to Mrs. Corner. Moreover, in another part of the letter, the writers themselves admitted that there was sufficient light for the discarded garments to be handed round for inspection.[24]

[…] full report available in pdf from the editor.

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To conclude in this issue:

SPIRIT FORM, ECTOPLASM, ETC. BEING GRABBED

As earlier noted, it is often claimed that physical mediums are sometimes badly injured, with some claims of actual death as a result of a spirit form, ectoplasm, etc. being grabbed. There are numerous accounts but it appears that there is no firm documented material, medical evidence, etc. of such injuries.

The first reference to any serious injury or death appears to come from Florence Cook's "Katie King":

> "… if anyone of you were to take her suddenly round the waist and try to carry her, you might kill her on the spot: she might suffocate."

We can clearly note that, when William Volckman seizes the alleged form of "Katie King", he

> "… grasped her round the waist with both arms, and tried to throw her down with his feet."

We can clearly note that, when Sir George Sitwell seizes the alleged form of "Marie", he

> "… made a sudden rush, captured the "form," and, gently holding her, …"

It can also be noted that Dawson Rogers, without apparent permission,

> "… when sitting near the curtains, put his hands behind them and felt the medium's head, shoulder, arm, and hand at the same time that the "form" was out and visible to all the company; …"

albeit given in Katie King's own words just a few weeks prior to the William Volckman incident: "…if anyone of you were to take her suddenly round the waist and try to carry her,

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[24] **Psypioneer Vol.11, No.02: February 2015: "SPR Recognises Dawson Rogers At Last".** The Society for Psychical Research has acknowledged Edmund Dawson Rogers as a founder in 1882. This follows a ten-year campaign by Psypioneer. In our first issue of May 2004 we carried a lead story, "SPR was conceived by a Spiritualist" and cited evidence of the significant role played by Rogers, a journalist. He did not hold an academic position, however. In November 2014, we presented new evidence from both Rogers and Professor William Barrett, the other prime mover in the first meetings. On Christmas Eve, we were informed that the SPR had revised the history section of its web site to state:

The SPR, the first learned society of its kind, was founded in London on 20 February 1882, following initial discussions between William Barrett and Edmund Dawson Rogers, and then a conference convened in London in January to discuss the viability of such a Society.

P.S. The inaugural SPR conference in January 1882 was held at the rooms of the British National Association of Spiritualists. Leslie Price.

you might kill her on the spot: she might suffocate." Apart from the initial shock of the grabbings of the alleged *spirits,* Florence received no injuries!

Continued in the next issue …

Given that this issue holds numerous references to the now defunct Psypioneer all issues can be downloaded via my website (Study Weeks) page:

www.pauljgaunt.com