the PIONEER

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

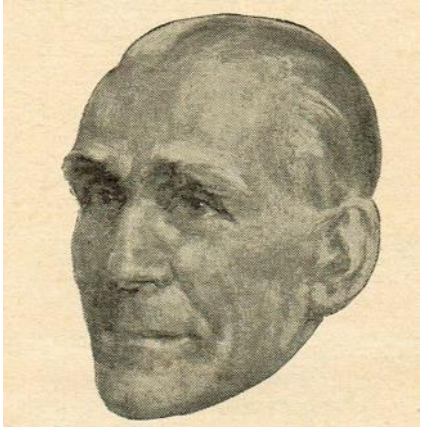
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WILLIAM (BILLY) PARISH

One of the Movement's finest Spiritual Healers of the twentieth century

His story is told in "Parish the Healer", by Maurice Barbanell, which was first published in April 1938; this has now been republished and is available at the SNUi bookshop. [1] The French psychic artist, Marcel Poncin (1891-1953), painted a number of inspirational images of Parish's healing ministry; two are shown in this article. Other works by Poncin in oil, crayon or pastel include "Poppet", guide of Lillian Bailey, and "Rosie", guide of Bertha Hirst. "Estelle Roberts, Red Cloud and Spirit Friends" hangs at Stansted Hall, as well as the well-known image of Silver Birch.



W. T. Parish, as painted by Marcel Poncin

Parish's healing ministry began after he cured his wife Peggy of cancer in the late 1920s. It is said he did not charge for his healing and never sought publicity or advertised his services. In late December 1945 Billy Parish died and his funeral service was conducted by SNU Minister Maurice Barbanell at Mortlake Crematorium, Clifford Avenue (situated on the banks of the River Thames by Chiswick Bridge, London) on Friday January 4th 1946 at 2 p.m.

Healing mediumship came to Parish late in life and like many mediums he was warned of the strain his continuous working without a break would have on his physical body. Silver Birch from the start of Parish's work had supported the healer with messages of encouragement and advice. Silver Birch said, according to an article by the Spiritualist author Paul Miller, that "he [Silver Birch] was acting as the mouthpiece of those who were behind him."

Below is a quote from an article by Paul Miller:[2]

> PARISH the healer wore himself out with healing. Three years ago he was warned by Silver Birch, a spirit guide whom he regarded as his closest link with the spirit world apart from his own work, that he should "make his own physical body one of his primary concerns and give it due and proper care and attention."
>
> Thereafter there were reminders of the strain to which the body was subjected by constant healing, and Parish sometimes heeded the advice

[1] SNUi Bookshop: http://www.snui.org/index.php?act=viewProd&productId=159

[2] Quote taken from "A Friendship Between Two Worlds", published in *Psychic News*, January 5th 1946, page 5. For further information on this article please contact the editor.

and rested. But always there were more and more calls on his time, and he did more when he should have done less.

Between Silver Birch and Parish there was a close bond and when they met it was like a reunion of old friends.

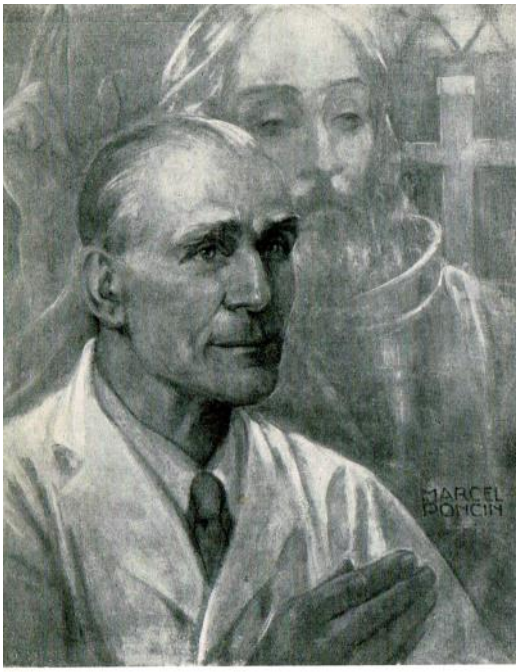
In the middle of November, Silver Birch said at his home circle: "I have just come from seeing Parish. His work is done." The healer was then unable to do the personal healing, though the absent healing went on.

"There comes a time," went on the guide, "when the body is frail. The spirit is strong, but spirit, if it is to be expressed on earth, can function only through matter. And where the body of matter is worn out, then the amount of spirit that can be manifested is very small."

Because of Parish's love of healing the guide was guarded in his statements, and told his circle that when he passed on his work would continue in the spirit world.

After the death of Parish his wife Peggy, who worked closely with her husband, continued his work, becoming a well-respected healer in her own right.

Published below is an article by Maurice Barbanell, which brings out additional information about Parish not published in the earlier 1938 book, "Parish the Healer".[3]



PARISH THE HEALER—as painted by Marcel Poncin.

W. T. PARISH, THE WORLD'S GREATEST HEALER AND THE MOST FAMOUS HEALING MEDIUM PRODUCED BY SPIRITUALISM, HAS PASSED ON AT THE AGE OF 73.

NO DOCTOR HAS EVER HAD SO MANY PATIENTS. FOR THEY NUMBERED ALMOST HALF A MILLION.

[3] *Psychic News,* January 5th 1946. Later this year Maurice Barbanell would resign his editorial post after a disagreement with Arthur Findlay. Sixteen years later, on June 20th 1962, Barbanell returned to his previous role and continued as editor of *Psychic News* and *Two Worlds* jointly until his death in 1981.

At the Sanctuary in Christchurch Road, East Sheen, on the outskirts of London, the address from which his healing powers girdled the globe, there are stored away nearly 500,000 letters written by sufferers, most of whom said they were cured through his instrumentality.

The majority of them were the "hopeless" cases, the "incurables" who had made the rounds of doctors, hospitals and specialists, only to be told that nothing could be done for them. The spirit power that streamed through Parish revealed that, where all other means had failed, God had provided a "second chance."

Equally remarkable is the fact that the vast majority of these people never saw Parish. The healing power traversed oceans and continents. The letters prove this fact, for they come from all over the world.

RECORDS OF SUCCESS

I do not know where to begin the story of this remarkable man, whose life from the moment he became aware of his healing gift was dedicated to those who suffered.

There are five folders, full of cuttings of the successes achieved by Parish as described in *Psychic News*.

If this newspaper had done nothing else but draw attention to the remarkable healing power he possessed and thus enabled the blind to see, the deaf to hear and the crippled to walk, it would have justified its existence.

There is no disease known to mankind that has not been cured through Parish's ministry. The records prove it. The X-rays confirm it. Again and again the words, "It is a miracle," recur as former patients, with uplifted hearts, proclaim the joyous tidings.

COULD HAVE BEEN JAILED

Yet so much of his work was illegal. In so-called Christian England, when Parish, who always declared that he was following in the footsteps of the Nazarene, cured cancer, he was breaking the law of the land!

His reward for this humane task could have been imprisonment. It is an offence for anyone to cure certain diseases, cancer amongst them, which the medical profession says are incurable. I, as editor of this newspaper, could also have been sent to jail for publishing the accounts of these healing successes.

Yet he was consulted by nurses, doctors, surgeons and specialists for their own maladies and for the treatment of relatives and patients whom they knew were beyond medical aid. I have seen scores of

letters written by doctors certifying cures which they attributed solely to the spirit healing through Parish.

The names of these medical men could not be published. If they were they would have been disqualified for daring to co-operate with a "quack," an unregistered practitioner.

Parsons fulminate against mediumship. They declare that it is the work of the devil and that only evil spirits come back. But secretly many of them consulted Parish. I know of one bishop who visited the Sanctuary for treatment. I know of other parsons who regularly sent lists of their sick parishioners to obtain absent healing for them. When Parish succeeded the parsons got the credit. The parishioners were seldom, if ever, told the truth.

One exception was the Rev. T. B. Clarke, a Northampton rector, who asked Parish to treat sick members of his congregation. The parson accompanied the healer on his visit and a few days later obtained permission from his bishop for Parish to conduct healing services in his church!

One day, at their home, there was a knock at the door, which was opened by Mrs. Parish. The caller was a parson asking for her husband.

"I hope you have not come very far," she told him. "Because of the large number of calls on his time, my husband has to ask sufferers to make appointments."

PARSON'S SPECIAL JOURNEY

The clergyman replied that he had come all the way from South Africa to see the healer because members of his congregation had told him of Parish's splendid work!

He was not the only one to travel hundreds of miles to see Parish. Our files contain the accounts of patients, some of whom journeyed thousands of miles so that the healer could lay his hands on them. In no case do our records reveal that any one of them regretted the journey.

The Church talks idly of a ministry of spiritual healing, believing that in some mysterious way it can be restricted to those who wear a particular type of collar, are trained in theological colleges and who work in buildings which are called churches.

Parish was not ordained in the clerical sense, but he possessed a divine gift, which he cherished and developed to its fullest capacity.

CONFIRMED BY DOCTORS

What, you might ask, is the acid test of spirit healing? Did Parish really cure people suffering from diseases which the medical world regard as hopeless? The answer is a positive yes, as the testimony of medical men proves.

I have in front of me, as I dictate this story, accounts in which doctors have testified to the success of the unseen power of spirit healing.

Here is a surgeon who declares: "It seems too good to be true. . . The spiritual help has been specific, definite, pronounced, especially as I had been taking the very best remedies but had left them after 10 days."

Another doctor certifies a triumph achieved in the case of pulmonary tuberculosis. "There's no doubt about it, that lung has healed," announces the medical man, basing his verdict on X-ray photographs.

Another doctor, living 3,000 miles away in Bermuda, reveals that medical tests prove his diabetes was cured. In Yugoslavia a doctor certifies that Parish was responsible for the cure of a chronic disease of the kidneys in the case of a child.

After describing the tests he made, the doctor asserts: "I must declare with emphasis I see no reason for this great change except that your work had a full success. Every other explanation I must throw away as unreasonable."

Then there is the eminent Harley Street specialist who, told by a patient that he had consulted Parish, and expecting to be reproved for this action, was met with the reply, "Parish cured me of duodenal trouble."

I will quote one other case. It concerns a boy who lived in an iron lung for three months and who was paralysed in every limb. Here again the doctors were amazed by his recovery.

The truth is that no matter what opposition there may be to spirit healing, whether it comes from foolish clerics, biased doctors or ignorant laymen, the sick will always go where they are healed. That is why hundreds of thousands besieged Parish, with the result that they are living testimonials to the reality of spirit healing.

No figures are available of the numbers walking the earth today who are alive solely because of the spirit power which flowed through Parish and others. These are the greatest monument to the wondrous work he performed.

THE LAST RESORT

How much greater it would have been if sufferers had consulted him in the first place, right in the early days of their troubles! Parish, like others, never had a fair chance. People came to him as a rule only after they had exhausted all the rounds of orthodox healing. They tried spirit healing as a last resort, their attitude being, "It cannot do any harm, but it may do some good?

Of course, not everyone who sough this aid was cured. There were failures—death comes to all sooner or later. But the majority were cured and that is why he achieved world fame.

There was something about Parish's personality that captured the imagination. He radiated love. He made great sacrifices and forswore nearly all the delights which human beings cherish.

To the end of his earthly days he remained, as always, a great human being who flung his arms round friends, male and female alike, and whose greatest joy was to bring healing to afflicted children, whose sufferings called forth great compassion.



He had a special healing service for children and this was a never-to-be-forgotten spectacle. None but the churlish and the most hardened cynic could witness it without being moved.

To Billy Parish all who suffered were "dear loving souls." He never betrayed any bitterness when parsons denounced him or when friends failed him. "I must pray for them," was his usual comment.

Frequently his wife would go to his wardrobe to find that articles of his clothing had gone. When she asked him, he would reply, "Oh, some dear loving soul was in trouble."

He lived for his healing and for his healing alone, and he never charged for his services. When he had to accept money, for that was thrust upon him, he did so only when it was necessary for his immediate expenses. If it were offered as payment it was returned.

No patient was ever turned away because of poverty. Billy always sent the necessary money to pay their fares. He never hesitated to dip his hands into his pockets to help anyone who told him a hard-up story.

He began early in the morning, sometimes at six, and was usually still at work after midnight. The correspondence was prodigious. Soon

after there appeared in *Psychic News* the first account of his healing successes, letters poured in and were soon arriving at the rate of 250 a week. That was the minimum.

When newspapers referred to his ministry, there was an inevitable flood of letters as a sequel. Once, when the "Sunday Pictorial" described his career, Parish received 1,000 letters in two days. By the end of the week the total had reached 3,000! The average was about 600 letters weekly, but in some weeks there was a steady 1,000.

All these had to be read and answered. His wife nobly assisted him. A panel of volunteer typists did the rest. Frequently there were calls for people who could understand foreign languages to deal with the requests that came from non-English speaking countries.

GUIDE SENT FOR HIM

One of his most dramatic interventions came a few years ago on a night when he was busily engaged in treating patients. The telephone bell rang. The caller was the secretary of the House of Red Cloud, who told him that this guide wanted him to come at once.

He quickly jumped into a taxicab and was taken into the seance room where Estelle Roberts gave her trance sittings. There on the floor lay Estelle, her prostrate body showing no apparent sign of life.

Parish knelt down and started healing. Through the lips of Estelle he heard the voice of Red Cloud say: "My son, you are only just in time. I could not hold the soul to the body much longer. Take her head and call down the highest powers you can."

Parish immediately made healing passes over the medium's body, until at last he was rewarded by hearing a cry escape from her lips and noticing that her body began to quiver.

MEDIUM'S LIFE SAVED

Once again Red Cloud spoke, saying, "Splendid"; then Estelle seemed to go to sleep. Shortly afterwards Red Cloud's voice was heard once more telling Parish of the great service he had rendered and of the exceptional healing rays which had been used. Parish had been called in by the spirit guide because interference at a trance sitting given by Estelle had endangered her life.

Having accomplished the healing, Parish, returned home to resume the treatment of his patients which had been interrupted by the telephone call.

How did it all begin, this story of a man with patients in all the five continents? Nearly 17 years ago Parish learned that his wife had only

six months to live. He was in the nursing home when his wife was operated on.

"Tell me the worst," he said to the surgeon after he had seen what was taken away from her. "It's cancer, and damnably bad," he replied. "I have cut as deeply as I dare."

The sister who helped at the operation, asked for her candid opinion, answered: "It is one of the nastiest jobs I have seen. The cancer must return. There is no doubt about it, so be prepared."

Before the operation the surgeon had confirmed by pathological examination that it was cancer.

Soon she was due to have another operation because of the same disease. At that time Parish held a responsible position with one of the large railway companies. His duties made it necessary for him to be away for weeks at a time.

During one of these absences his wife spoke to a Spiritualist, who suggested she should try psychic healing. But her husband opposed the idea. "Spiritualism is only for weak-minded women and for men who don't think," he said.

Mrs. Parish was not easily dissuaded. She prevailed on her husband to visit a Spiritualist church. There his prejudices disappeared. He read psychic literature and prayed for guidance. He became aware of unseen influences at his bedside.

Not long afterwards he went to his first seance. The medium, a complete stranger, was entranced and the spirit communicator, who said he was a doctor on earth, diagnosed Mrs. Parish's complaint and described the operation she had undergone.

SPIRIT INSTRUCTIONS

Then, addressing Parish, the spirit doctor told him that he was a born healer. "You will be used for the healing of your own wife," were his words.

At that time Parish knew nothing of psychic healing. The spirit doctor gave him instructions, which he faithfully carried out for nine months, with the healer reporting to the "dead" man once a month.

When his duties compelled him to be away from home, Parish gave his wife absent healing. Often on those occasions he sensed the presence of the doctor and other spirit entities.

After nine months' treatment, by a combination of laying-on of hands and absent healing, Peggy Parish was cured. The second operation became unnecessary. The wheel has since turned full cycle,

and the woman who was given only six months to live has developed psychic healing and given successful treatment to sufferers.

The spirit doctor told Parish that his wife had been saved so that he could start on his sacred mission of healing. So began the great work which has grown throughout the years. Parish never sought publicity. He never advertised himself.

The news of his wife's remarkable cure became known. Sufferers called at his house, imploring his aid. He willingly gave it. Feeling that he had a debt to repay God, Parish cheerfully took on his burden.

The number of patients increased. Letters came from all over the land. The telephone bell rang incessantly. Parish visited homes, hospitals, institutions, anywhere where he could be of service.

BODY OF TRAINED ATHLETE

Soon he realised that this was more than a spare-time job. He approached his employers and was allowed to retire at the earliest possible date, which doubtless affected his pension. This did not deter him. He had discovered his gift late in life and, therefore, the rest of his days had to be spent in utilising his power.

Fortunately he possessed a magnificent physique. For years he was an instructor in fencing, wrestling, boxing and physical culture. He had the body of a trained athlete.

Though he and his wife only had a small flat, they gave up the best room to be the healing sanctuary. No meal was eaten in it; no cigarette was smoked in it. It was dedicated to the sacred work of spirit healing.

Meanwhile Parish unfolded his gift in co-operation with his spirit inspirers. To make himself, as far as possible, the perfect instrument, he gave up drinking and smoking, the cinema and the theatre. In the last few years he seldom left the Sanctuary.

It did not take him long to establish the identity of his spirit co-operators. Mediums described and named them. Parish clairvoyantly saw them. One was a distinguished surgeon on earth. His identity Parish confirmed by visiting the hospital of which he was the president. There Parish saw a portrait of the man whom his clairvoyant vision had already revealed to him.

Another spirit co-operator was Abdul Latif, a Persian physician who has for many years, since his passing, interested himself in healing the sick.

In a few years Parish had outgrown his tiny flat. It simply could not accommodate the numbers who crowded to it. Neighbours complained about the innumerable callers.

Quite unexpectedly, a wealthy woman whose husband had been spiritually helped by Parish offered to pay the cost of building a new sanctuary. There was only one piece of land in the whole of the locality suitable for Parish's purposes.

ACHIEVED "IMPOSSIBLE"

Local estate agents said it was impossible to secure it, especially for the purpose required. The land was owned by Leslie Hore-Belisha, then a member of the Cabinet, who had rejected all previous inquiries for building on the site.

Parish was not daunted. As always, when confronted by difficulty he made it a matter of prayer.

Parish interviewed Hore-Belisha and found him very sympathetic. He displayed a great interest in the healer's activities. But he did not think that his mother would approve the idea. Her house adjoined this land and she did not relish her peace being disturbed.

When Parish saw her, all her objections disappeared. Indeed she became so enthusiastic that she contributed some chairs and asked that a special chair should be reserved for her visits to the Sanctuary.

Soon the new healing home was ready and it was dedicated by a spirit guide, Silver Birch.

I once asked Parish. "To how many people have you personally given healing?"

"I lay my hands on nearly 5,000 sufferers every year," he replied.

FROM 73 LANDS

To gain an indication of the extent to which his reputation had permeated all over the world, I asked him, when I was writing my book, "Parish the Healer," to note the countries from which requests came for healing. I was amazed at the result.

They totalled 73 and ranged from the Argentine to the Canary Islands, from Mexico to Denmark, from Egypt to Ecuador, from Greenland to Hong Kong, from Iceland to Japan, and from Nigeria to Spain.

Despite the fact that he lived in a constant atmosphere of disease, Parish maintained his cheerfulness and was full of good humour. "Look at the results of Parish relief," he once declared when he showed me the latest postal applications. In similar humorous vein I heard him say, without any trace of boastfulness, "The world is my Parish."

He lived for others, and "Others" was the title of a poem which accompanied every answer he sent to requests for healing.

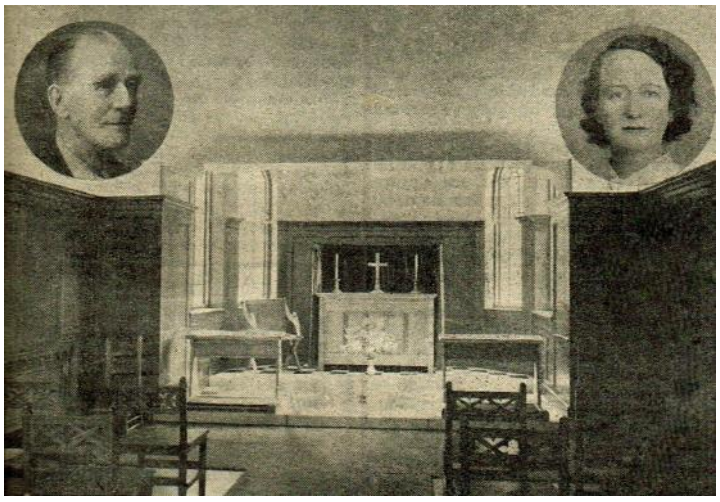
"The age of miracles is not past," wrote, one newspaper in describing his cures. But they were not miracles. A finely attuned instrument, matured after years of development, provided his spirit inspirers with a vehicle through whom a mighty power descended.

He never took any credit for himself. "I am only the instrument," he inevitably said when thanked for his ministrations.

"Parish is doing God's work," is how we described him in the first account in *Psychic News* l2 years ago. That is the best epitome to a life given unstintingly in the noblest labour that a human being can perform—to heal the sick.

So far as healing is concerned, Parish made the words of the Nazarene come True. "And greater works than these shall he do … "

—~—☼—~—



Sanctuary: Christchurch Road, East Sheen.

These words were given by Silver Birch, referring to Billy Parish:[4]

He is not a priest; he has no titles; he is not a reverend; he is not a clergyman; he has no church, his sanctuary has no steeple; there are no gorgeous vestments or raiment; no creeds are recited; no dogmas uttered; but a humble man striving to serve and succeeding because he yielded himself as an instrument of spirit power.

And, because of his service, throughout the whole of your world thousands bless him for the work he does.

[4] Quote taken from "A Friendship Between Two Worlds", published in *Psychic News,* January 5th 1946, page 2. For further information on this article please contact the editor.

Estelle Roberts and the House of Red Cloud



Parish not only linked on a personal level with Silver Birch, as noted above, but also with Red Cloud, one of the guides of Estelle Roberts. Noted in the above article, the secretary of the 'House of Red Cloud', who incidentally was, I believe, Estelle's daughter Iris, called Parish to treat her mother under Red Cloud's instruction.

Estelle was born May Estelle Wills on May 10th 1889 at May Cottage, Kensington, the daughter of Isobel and Edwin Blackstone Wills, one of eight children, having four sisters and three brothers. At fifteen she worked as a nursemaid to a family in Turnham Green. Later she met and married Hugh Warren Miles, according to her daughter Ivy ("Why I Believe in Red Cloud"); she married at age 17. Estelle and Hugh had three children, Ivy, Eveline and Iris. Eight years after they were married Hugh fell ill and was diagnosed with Bright's disease and died in May 1919.

In 1920 Estelle married Arthur Roberts. It was from this period in the early 1920s that she started to become involved with Spiritualism, initially at Hampton Hill Spiritualist Church. At the third meeting she attended, the medium, Mrs Elizabeth Cannock, singled Estelle out, saying in unequivocal terms:

> "*You are a medium and have much work to do. Chosen by the Spirit World, you must not ignore the call. Please come and see me after the meeting.*"

After the passing of Mrs Cannock on November 11th 1945 her obituary published in *Psychic News* stated:

> "*The following Sunday Estelle Roberts gave her first public demonstration in the same Spiritualist church*."

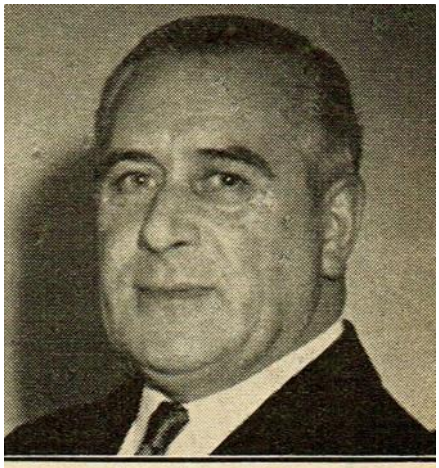
In 1922 Estelle's son, Terry, was born. She had become aware of Red Cloud and it would be at Richmond Spiritualist Church in 1925 that Red Cloud would first control her. A headquarters for Estelle's work as a medium and healer was established in October 1934, called the 'House of Red Cloud', in Wimbledon.

In 1938 her marriage to Arthur Roberts ended in the divorce court. She was granted a decree on the grounds of cruelty after successfully defending an action alleging misconduct. In 1941 she was bombed out of her home at Esher, moving away to the West Country to live; the doors of the 'House of Red Cloud' also closed. One of the 'House of Red Cloud' healers was Charles Tilson Chowne, who would play an important part in Estelle's life.

The article below gives an outline of some of the physical mediumship exhibited through Estelle Roberts at the 'House of Red Cloud' and also the introduction of Charles Tilson Chowne:[5]

HE HAS SEEN A LIVE BIRD ARRIVE AS AN APPORT AT A SEANCE

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE, though founded by a medium, Mary Baker Eddy, is opposed to Spiritualism, yet C. Tilson Chowne, a Christian Science practitioner, turned to Spiritualism when his wife "died."



C. Tilson Chowne

Because of a clairvoyant message from Estelle Roberts he became a Spiritualist and now devotes most of his time to the House of Red Cloud.

His inquiry began six years ago and since then Chowne has seen some of the finest psychic phenomena that the movement has produced.

He has seen amazing proofs of Survival given to people who were strangers to the medium, attended direct-voice seances at which evidence poured from another world, seen the materialisations of spirit guides, from one of whom a lock of hair was cut, and seen a live bird apported into the seance room from a garden and then taken back.

Once, when Chowne was sitting in a circle at which all the sitters received apports as gifts from Red Cloud, the guide announced he would take a stone from Chowne's pocket. It was an apport Red Cloud had given him on a previous occasion and was kept with a number of other stones in a wash-leather bag, within an envelope, which Chowne had put for safe keeping in an inside pocket of his waistcoat.

[5] *Psychic News,* August 3rd 1940, page 5.

TAKEN FROM POCKET

Though the sitter felt nothing, that stone was extracted from his pocket in a flash. Other people in the seance room saw a light and then came a rattling sound in the trumpet, signalling the arrival of another apport. And Chowne was presented with the stone he thought was still in his pocket.

The bird was apported at another sitting when Red Cloud, to illustrate a point, offered to bring into the room, at the top of the house, any article from the garden. When Shaw Desmond asked for a budgerigar out of the aviary, the guide accepted the challenge.

FEATHERS AS PROOF

A few minutes later there appeared on a table a luminous clock on which was perched a budgerigar. Red Cloud made all the sitters touch the bird and examine it closely to make sure it was real. Then, so that they could not say afterwards that they were hypnotised, the guide took a few feathers from the bird and gave them to a sitter so that he could later inspect them.

Then the little bird disappeared as suddenly as it came.

Once, when Red Cloud materialised, another of Estelle Roberts's guides, Archael, also appeared and remained in solid form for an hour. He was closely examined by the 60 sitters, four of whom felt the spirit's hair. Except for occasional pauses, Archael's face was illuminated all the time with a red torch which he held.

Then Red Cloud asked for a pair of scissors, which were handed to him inside the cabinet. The guide was heard cutting off a lock of hair from the materialised form. This hair, which was preserved [Now displayed at Stansted Hall],[6] was different both in colour and in texture from that of the medium.

When Chowne's wife passed on, he began by reading our literature and then went to Spiritualist meetings and received messages from his wife.

Once he tried automatic writing, and the pencil wrote what seemed to be a meaningless scrawl which Chowne did not attempt to decipher. But he was impressed to go to the Grotrian Hall instead of the Spiritualist service he had intended visiting.

Estelle Roberts was demonstrating clairvoyance at the Grotrian Hall and Chowne sat at the back. He was a stranger to her. Estelle picked

[6] The séance took place in March 1937; the lock was exhibited in the 'House of Red Cloud' séance room and is now exhibited in the Britten Memorial Museum, housed at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall.

him out and gave him a very evidential message from his wife, whom she described accurately.

Then the medium told Chowne his wife was placing some flowers on his lap and said he would understand the significance of the action later.

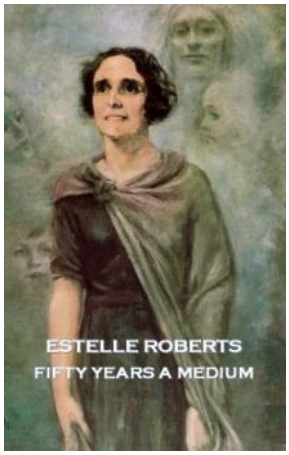
When Chowne got home, he looked again at the scrawl the pencil had written through his hand that afternoon. After careful scrutiny he could read a message. It was: "Coming tonight, bringing flowers."

Chowne, after receiving more evidence of Survival through Estelle Roberts, joined in her work and, in addition to administrative activities at the House of Red Cloud, has been a member for years of Red Cloud's band of healers.

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In 1941, when Estelle was bombed out of her home and the 'House of Red Cloud' was closed, she married Charles Tilson Chowne. Within the Red Cloud circle the guide, who claimed to be an Egyptian working through the astral body of an Indian 'Red Cloud', held special names for the circle members, for example Tilson Chowne was addressed as 'Zebedee' and Red Cloud called Maurice Barbanell 'John'. Charles died in 1959 and Estelle on May 30th 1970, aged 81.

SNUi has republished "Red Cloud Speaks"[7] and also "Estelle Roberts – Fifty Years a Medium". The cover on this book shows the painting by Marcel Poncin; the original hangs in the Mediums' Room at the Arthur Findlay College.[8] Those visiting the Arthur Findlay College can read the file on Estelle and see the various photographs and Archael's hair in the museum.



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[7] "Red Cloud Speaks" published by Psychic Book Club in 1938; the book compiler is anonymous; the Foreword is by Red Cloud through his medium Estelle Roberts. This was later re-published in a 1992 paperback but still remains scarce. Now re-published and available at:— http://www.snui.org/index.php?act=viewCat&catId=1

[8] In 1969 Estelle Roberts "Fifty Years a Medium," was published in paperback by Corgi Books, London, numerous later editions came and went. Some information given on this book suggests it has an added chapter, "16. Final Chapter", added to the original 1959 "Forty Years a Medium". However, it should be noted that some of the text has also been updated and additional text added, as well as the new chapter. Now re-published (in a number of languages) and available at:—http://www.snui.org/index.php?act=viewCat&catId=1

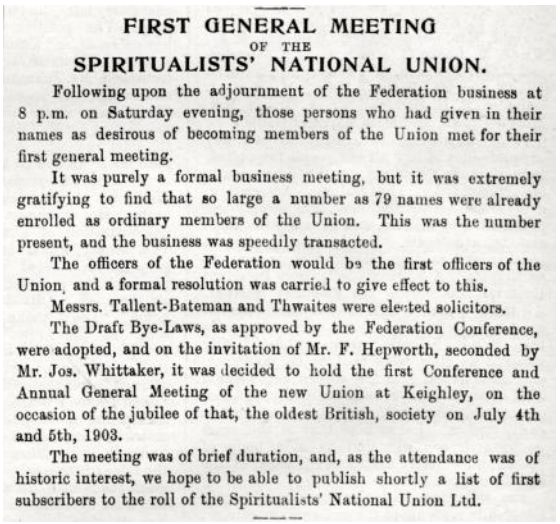
GENERAL SECRETARIES OF THE SNU

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

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

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

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



FIRST GENERAL MEETING
OF THE
SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION.

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

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

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

Messrs. Tallent-Bateman and Thwaites were elected solicitors.

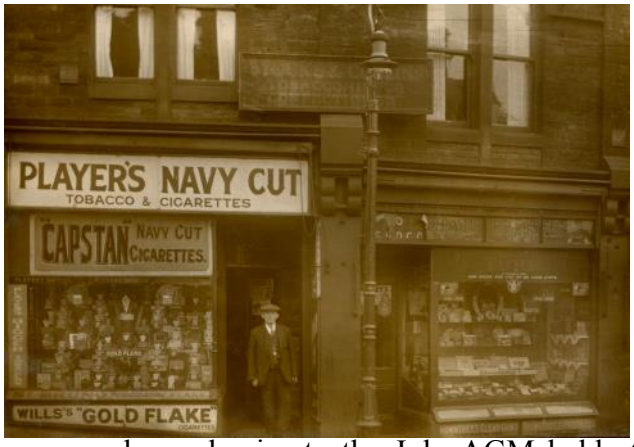
The Draft Bye-Laws, as approved by the Federation Conference, were adopted, and on the invitation of Mr. F. Hepworth, seconded by Mr. Jos. Whittaker, it was decided to hold the first Conference and Annual General Meeting of the new Union at Keighley, on the occasion of the jubilee of that, the oldest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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The Two Worlds reported on December 6th 1946:



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

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

various offices until in 1930 he was elected Church President.

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

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

Diploma Holder.

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

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

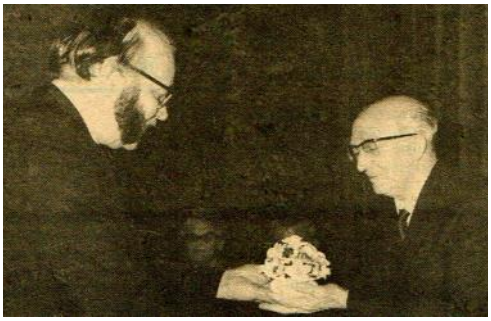
Although only in his middle thirties, the General Secretary has extensive international and political knowledge, which should be of value to the Movement. From the cotton industry, where he spent many years, Mr. Ellidge took over a post during the war, as an export correspondent for India and Ceylon,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

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

[14] SNU President 1909.

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

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

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

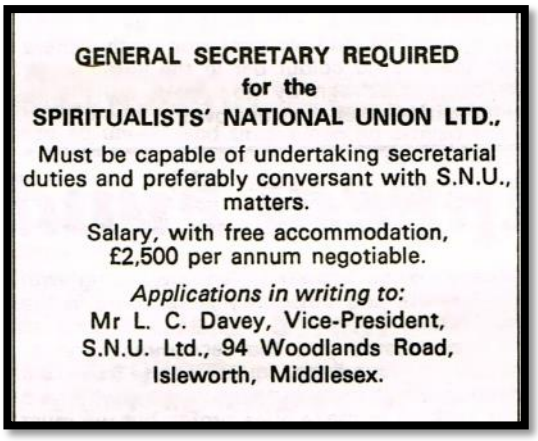
Dick packed up home and moved to Stansted Hall, where he continued his duties as Secretary until around 1973, then taking on a new role as SNU Consultant. He was diabetic and suffered from heart problems; he had two previous heart attacks and, sadly, the third was the cause of his passing in around December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



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

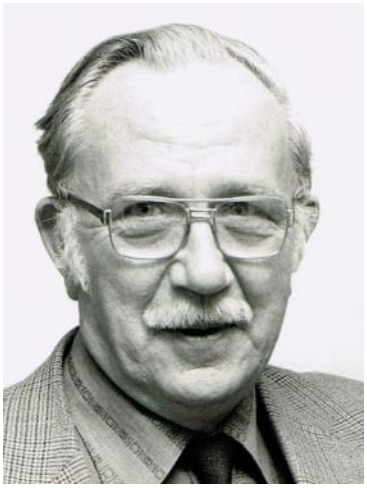
In 1972 Ron joined the SNU as a full-time officer responsible for administration and finance, then becoming the General Secretary. Ron resigned

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


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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Church Work

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Official Opening

Mr Henwood C.I. Quastel, President SNU Harry Johnson, Minister GW
Miss Mercy Mee Chris Anthony, President EMDC

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

National Secretaries

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

* Ellidge / Baker circa 1973



MR. J. B. TETLOW (PENDLETON)



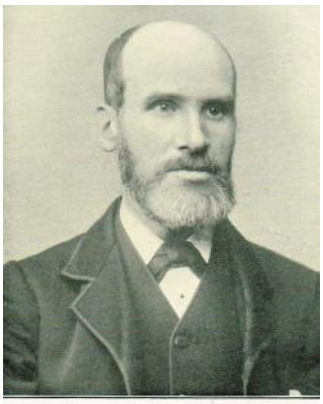
MR. WILFRED ROOKE (LEVENSHULME, MANCHESTER)



May Price



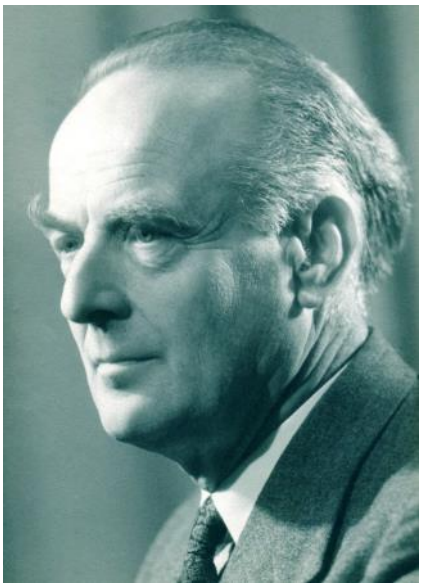
Hanson Hey



MR. J. SWINDLEHURST (PRESTON).

HAROLD SHARP

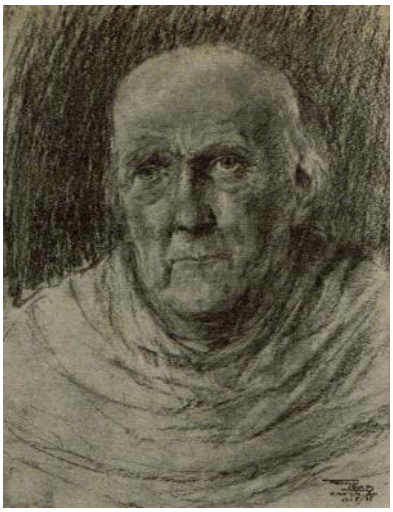
Symbolic Drawings – Auragraphs



Harold Sharp started to investigate Spiritualism around 1930 and began to develop his mediumship. In Sharp's early childhood he used to see a monk and in later life he found the monk to be his guide, Brother Peter, who had lived in Vienna and, it is said, had been a healer who used rare herbs in his treatments. As a tribute to his guide Sharp cultivated his own herb garden.

The image of Brother Peter was captured by psychic artist Frank Leah and later by Coral Polge, showing a striking resemblance. Both of the original drawings are displayed in the Britten Memorial Museum at the Arthur Findlay College; below is the image by Frank Leah.

Harold came from a farming background, living with his father on their farm in Leicestershire. He was raised a Roman Catholic and when his father died Harold moved to London.



On his first day in London Harold visited Westminster Abbey and on coming out he saw Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's psychic museum and called in.[17] The secretary recommended the names of some mediums; he was careful not to give his name to the museum secretary or any of the mediums he would later visit. He went immediately to one of the mediums' addresses given by the secretary, Charles Gover Botham, whose guide was called Lily.[18]

[17] For details on the museum see Psypioneer Archives, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: – http://www.woodlandway.org/

Below is a quote from an article in *Psychic News* around 1980:

> "Then Lily said, "You have your father's watch but not your father's chain." That was true. Sharp had given his father's watch-chain to his brother.
>
> The guide next said, "Was your father a schoolmaster?" Up to that time, Sharp had been getting more and more amazed, but now he thought he had found a flaw. His father was a farmer – and looked like one.
>
> Lily added: "He is not telling me he was a schoolmaster. But he is showing me a picture of a very big school, with all the little boys dressed in grey, and saying, 'Those little devils always left the gates open'."
>
> This was very evidential. The farm owned by Sharp's father adjoined a preparatory school. The boys used to walk across the ground, leaving all the gates open, causing endless confusion.
>
> The sitting with Botham made Sharp think seriously about the case for Spiritualism.
>
> Harold visited all the mediums whose names he had been given.
>
> At his sitting with automatist Hester Dowden,[19] Sharp gave the fictitious name of Cyril Roper."

In the early 1940s Sharp began to develop symbolic drawings, popularly known today as auragraphs, for which he later became well-known. An auragraph is basically a symbolic representation of one's life, past, present and potential. Sharp was an early pioneer of this technique and generally produced his auragraphs within circles.

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[18] Many years later Botham was charged with fraud, which came at a bad time. During the General Elections of 1945 and 1950 the Spiritualists' National Union and other organisations submitted a questionnaire to candidates in the respective constituencies and 200 elected Members of the House of Commons gave unqualified support to a Fraudulent Mediums Bill.

"It was a case in which Charles Botham was convicted on 20th June, 1950, on three counts of false pretences. There were also two counts of conjuration under the Witchcraft Act, 1735. The jury was discharged from returning a verdict on them, so that, in fact, they never came before the court. What happened in that case was this. Botham persuaded a widow to place sums of money of the order of £1,000 and £500 on a chair, with the story that the spirit of her late husband would dematerialise them and apply the money to medical charities. The notes were not dematerialised, but, in a very material form, reached Mr. Botham's own wallet. The charges under the Witchcraft Act were added in case the widow insisted that she believed her husband's spirit was going to come into the room. The jury, as one would expect, were not concerned with that part of the case; they said they were quite sure that the whole show was a fraud." See:–http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1950/dec/01/fraudulent-mediums-bill

[19] For Hester (Dowden) Travers Smith see Psypioneer: Volume 9, No. 03, March 2013: – A review of Voices in the Void by Hester (Dowden) Travers Smith by Maxine Meilleur.

Below is taken from *Psychic News,* January 30th 1943:

> HAROLD SHARP has developed a new phase of his mediumship. It is automatic drawing and colouring, the latest stage being the production of "graphs " of the human aura executed in delicate colouring and intricate but rhythmic designs. These are produced at high speed by a medium who has never had an art lesson and cannot draw normally.
>
> By means of his clairvoyance, Sharp has seen the spirit artist who is responsible for this new development. He is Chan Shih, a young modern Chinaman of about 30. This Chinaman had often been described to him by other mediums, but until these drawings began Sharp did not know of the reason for the spirit association.
>
> In years gone by Harold Sharp discovered that when telephoning his friends he used to "doodle " on the pad or scrap of paper. Then he noticed that, instead of being meaningless scribbling, he had drawn symbolic designs, some so beautiful that he was loath to destroy them.
>
> In February last year he received as a gift a large book with "clear pages," expertly bound and with gold lettering. The medium thought this was just the thing for his favourite quotations. Soon after that he was about to record a much-loved "pearl of wisdom" on the first page, when his pen began to weave discernible fascinating vignettes of caves, waterfalls and woodland vistas. These were repeated again and again, the designs taking definite shape and obviously containing hidden meanings.
>
> Sometimes in the quietness of his seance room Sharp would receive clairaudiently the interpretation of the sketches.
>
> One drawing was interpreted as:
>
> "The harp-string shall break down the strong wall;
> And the tree of wisdom
> Shall dwarf the temple and pagoda,
> And all mankind shall sing—
> 'How lovely is our dwelling-place.' "
>
> Then one day Harold Sharp heard clairaudiently these words, "Place colours at my service and I will place myself at yours." Now, Sharp merely sits quietly, thinks of his guide and receives these coloured representations of the aura.
>
> He is not in trance during this form of mediumship, but he never knows what the result will be. Sometimes he begins at the middle of the sheet, other times in one corner. The colours are done first and then the ink drawing is superimposed.

Even the most intricate "graphs" are executed usually in about an hour. The speediest has been 20 minutes and the largest, a "graph" of thousands of closely packed lines, took an hour and 20 minutes. The largest measures 26in. by 14in. The most recent results are in circular form with a diameter of about 10in.

He possesses about a hundred ink sketches and 30 coloured "graphs." To interpret these "graphs" the Chinese guide takes control and gives their meaning.

Often in the past Sharp had been told by other mediums, "You will draw," or "You will paint," but knowing his inability to do anything of the kind normally he always replied, "That would be proof of spirit-world activity."

He is quite convinced that these drawings do not originate in his subconscious mind. Sharp, a fervid supporter of Russia even in the days when his partisanship was difficult, points out that in all the hundreds of designs there has never been one hammer and sickle!

In around 1966 Sharp, then in his late 70s, visited Peking, where Chan Shih had lived and worked as a metal engraver; he saw the house where Chan Shih had lived. Sharp said a commune was named after Chan Shih, who had died in the Boxer Rising.

For over a quarter of a century Sharp worked at the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, founded in 1872, today known as the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain (SAGB). He was also programmed in the early days of the Arthur Findlay College.

In the 1970s Harold moved into a health home for elderly people in Golcar, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. He died soon after his 90th birthday on February 22nd 1980.



One of Sharp's Auragraphs.

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.”

