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SNU Pioneer goes bi-monthly from January 2015

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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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THE EFFECT OF THE VAGRANCY ACT

THE WORK OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION

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In the January 2015 issue of Psypioneer was a report on the case of Claire Frances Cantlon and Miss Mercy Phillimore. Early in April 1928,[1] Detective Inspector Walter Burnaby of Scotland Yard had ordered three policewomen to visit the London Spiritualist Alliance at 16, Queensberry Place (today it is known as the College of Psychic Studies.[2]). In July of that year, medium Mrs Claire Cantlon was charged at Westminster Police Court for "professing to tell fortunes", and the society's secretary, Miss Mercy Phillimore, was charged with "aiding and abetting".

Eighteen months later, former London Spiritualist Alliance President Sir Arthur Conan Doyle led a delegation of United Spiritualist Organisations to meet the Home Secretary, J.R. Clynes, M.P., on Tuesday, 1st July 1930. The official printed minutes of the official deputation seeking a change in the law of England were published in Psypioneer July 2012.[3] Amongst other representatives and societies, Conan Doyle and Lady Conan Doyle represented the Spiritualist International World Federation (International Spiritualist Federation), Lady Conan Doyle was its Honorary President and its President was Ernest Oaten. Oaten also represented the Spiritualists' National Union with Hannen Swaffer (journalist), George Berry (General Secretary) and John Stewart (Treasurer). Maurice Barbanell represented the Jewish Spiritualist Societies. The London Spiritualist Alliance would not join in the delegation to the Home Office; Doyle resigned as President as a result just a few days before his death on July 7th 1930. See Psypioneer July 2006: "New light on the final days of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle".[4]

The outcome of the 1930 delegation was negative; Parliament had been lobbied since the arrest of Henry Slade, shortly after seeing the first imprisonment of a Spiritualist medium, Francis Monck, under Section 4 of the 1824 Vagrancy Act.[5] 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.[6]

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

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[1] Psypioneer: Volume 11, No. 01: January 2015: "Claire Frances Cantlon & Miss Mercy Phillimore".

[2] Psypioneer: Volume 10, No. 12: December 2014: "The College of Psychic Science – Change of Name".

[3] Psypioneer: Volume 8, No 7: July 2012: "Deputation to the Right Honourable J.R. Clynes, M.P. by the United Spiritualist Organisations".

[4] Psypioneer: Volume 2, No 7: July 2006.

[5] Monck styled himself Dr Monck and sometime previously he was a minister at a Baptist Chapel at Totterdown, a suburb of Bristol. See Psypioneer: Volume 2, No 9: September 2006: "Rogues and Vagabonds".

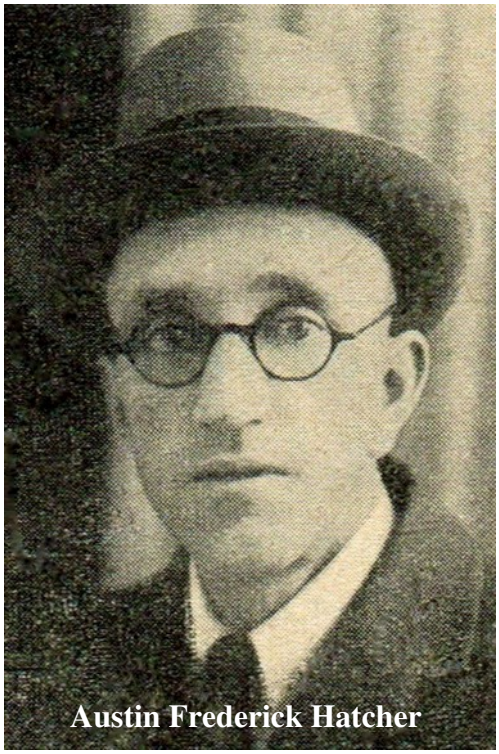
[6] A copy of the petition addressed to R. A. Cross is in the College of Psychic Studies, 16 Queensberry Place, London archives.

Amendment)". The official SNU statement outlining the problem of the Acts was published in the April 2014 issue of the SNU Pioneer.[7]

In the 1930s Austin Frederick Hatcher was a well-known physical medium but in September 1942 undercover police officers attended one of his séances, which was disrupted by the officers, resulting in Hatcher and his secretary being charged under the 1824 Vagrancy Act. The expert witness called by the defence was John Brown McIndoe, former SNU President 1930-1938. The report below is taken from the *Two Worlds*, November 20th 1942, page 374:

Medium Sentenced to three months

AFTER several adjournments and a hearing which occupied five days at the Cardiff Police Court, Austin Frederick Hatcher was sentenced to three months hard labour and Emily Hilda Little, his secretary, to one month, for pretending to hold communication with the spirits of deceased persons and deceive the public. Mr. Russell John, defending, gave notice of appeal. The case has exceptional features and, in view of the nature of the charge, the S.N.U. exercised a close watch over the proceedings, which might become a precedent for many others.


Austin Frederick Hatcher

On September 27th Hatcher held a seance at his headquarters, at which, amongst other sitters, were two police officers. They were disguised as sick soldiers and dressed in hospital blue. The wife and sister of one of the officers were also present. It was apparently a family party. Some of the women had been to previous seances. One woman witness admitted in evidence that she knew the police were using them as "stooges."

Within ten minutes of the opening of the seance the police flashed a torch, and the resultant scene was a matter of acute controversy. The police witnesses contradicted one another in important matters. One of them stated that Miss Little was standing on a chair holding a trumpet in each hand, whilst the testimony of another witness was that she held Miss Little throughout the whole of the seance, even after the lights went up, and she was in her place. This was confirmed by several witnesses. In the course of the case, Mr. Russell John called the attention of the magistrates to the contradictory testimony of the police witnesses, which he said gave clear evidence of wilful perjury. The witnesses for the defence, on the other hand, gave consistent and corroborative testimony.

Mr. P. J. Richards, who said he was not a Spiritualist but had 35 years' experience of psychic phenomena, told how he had roped Hatcher in a chair at several seances—stood behind him and held his shoulders—yet levitation occurred beyond the medium's reach. One witness claimed that she had received an apport of silver earrings which she thought came from the spirit world. The

[7] The Pioneer: Volume 1, No. 3: April 2014: http://www.snu.org.uk/spiritualism/pioneer

magistrates examined them and declared they were made in Birmingham. Mr. Richards explained that apports were undoubtedly produced at seances, but there was no doubt they were obtained from this world and were merely transported by occult power. Mr. Russell John asked permission to call Mr. J. B. McIndoe as an expert witness. After hearing objections from the prosecuting solicitor, the magistrates said they were not trying the case for Spiritualism and could not allow propaganda Mr. John pointed out that the prosecution had quoted Mr. Harry Price and suggestions had been made that Hatcher possessed no psychic powers. He thought Mr. McIndoe's opinions would help the bench to come to a decision. He (Mr. John) knew nothing of psychic phenomena and his friend (prosecuting solicitor) seemed to know less.


John Brown McIndoe

Mr. McIndoe was then examined by Mr. John. He said he had studied the phenomena for 25 years. Most Spiritualist seances were held in light, but with certain phases of physical phenomena darkness was helpful, as white light had a deleterious effect on psychic structures. Trance was an incidental condition, not essential to the phenomena, though it was frequent. Trance had many stages and was often difficult to determine, especially in darkness. Hatcher was not a member of the Spiritualists' National Union, but had asked the Union to sponsor his work. He had been told that if he submitted to a series of seances under test conditions decided by the Union, they would report upon him. Hatcher had agreed to six sittings, of which two had been held. These proceedings had interrupted the series. At the two seances which had been held he and his colleagues were satisfied that supernormal movement of objects and materialized hands had actually occurred when the medium was roped in his chair and held by the shoulders. If a light was suddenly flashed on an entranced medium or any sudden shock occurred the medium might be seriously hurt. Witness had seen such effects on many occasions.

Cross examined by prosecuting solicitor, Mr. McIndoe said he knew Mr. Harry Price, who was certainly not a "prominent Spiritualist." Price had never claimed to be a Spiritualist, but only a psychical researcher. Asked if he agreed with Mr. Price that "many mediums, after sitting successfully under test conditions for a long time, had subsequently been discovered to be fraudulent," witness asked for the names of such mediums.

"Do you deny Mr, Price' s statement?"

"I don't believe Mr: Price said anything of the kind! Will you read his exact words?"

The solicitor read an extract from "Fifty Years of Psychical Research," to the effect that many mediums, after sitting a long time, were found to be fraudulent when test conditions were imposed.

"That," said Mr. McIndoe, "is a totally different statement, and I agree with it."

We Spiritualists say that test conditions should always be imposed before mediums give sittings for the public.

Witness then related Mr. Price's record of the materialization of "Rosalie," from Page 130 ("Fifty Years of Psychical Research"), which Mr. Price admitted would have convinced him had it occurred in his own laboratory. He agreed, however, that phenomena of this degree were rare. Materialization covered a large field, from ectoplasmic rods, hands and faces, up to the phenomena of Rosalie. Voice phenomena, too, were very varied. Some people received good evidence at their first seance, others received messages which were thought to be false, but were subsequently proved true. It was not difficult to establish fraud where it existed without adopting the dangerous method of flashing a light.

He agreed that the guides would do their best to produce phenomena at the test sittings he had attended, but it did not follow that the best results would be obtained. The deciding factor would be the medium, rather than the guides. His health, mental attitude, nervousness, weather conditions, and the sitters, had all to be taken into account. Knowing that the results might be built up from the medium, the voice may be quite distinctive, but to some extent they will have a resemblance to the medium's voice. It is a question of the degree of development of the medium, and probably also of the experience of the communicator.

It is quite usual to hold hands during circles for physical phenomena. The theory is that the sitters contribute much of the energy which is used, and the linking of hands enables it to flow in the direction of the medium.

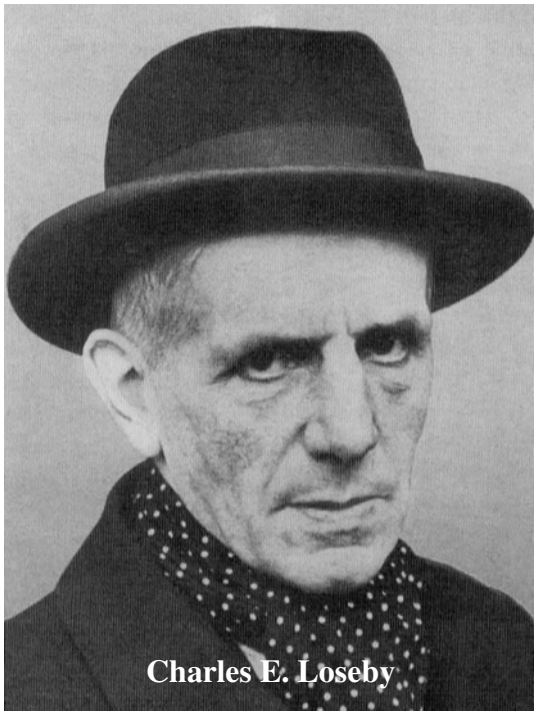
The magistrates, in summing up, again asserted that they were not trying the case for the religion of Spiritualism and complimented Mr. John on the excellent way he had conducted the defence.

Since Mr. John knew nothing of Spiritualism prior to this case, he deserves high praise for the splendid manner in which he grasped essential principles. It's a pity this case was not heard by a jury.

Several friends who were in court expressed their opinions that the verdict was against the weight of evidence and I am glad there is to be an appeal. As far as Spiritualists are concerned, it is the nature of the charge, rather than the person prosecuted, which will concern us in the long run.

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Captain Charles E. Loseby, who had previously defended mediums arrested under the 1824 Vagrancy Act as early as 1929, undertook the appeal of Austin Hatcher and Emily Little. Below is taken from *Psychic News*, January 23rd 1943, page 2:


Charles E. Loseby

Hatcher, Convicted of Fraud, Loses His Appeal

HE MUST NOW GO TO PRISON

THE Cardiff Recorder last week dismissed with costs the appeal of Austin Frederick Hatcher and Emily Little who had been convicted and sentenced by the Cardiff magistrates to three and one month's imprisonment respectively.

They had been charged with "unlawfully using subtle means by pretending to hold communication with the spirits of deceased persons to deceive and impose upon certain of His Majesty's subjects."

The Recorder found that both were guilty of the offences with which they were charged.

"This is a gallant effort on the part of the authorities of Cardiff to put back the hands of the clock. They might as well try and dam the ocean itself."

So said C. E. Loseby, in opening the case for Hatcher.

Saying that it was a case of far-reaching importance, Loseby said that there was nothing to prevent the police doing what was done in the bulk of such cases and proceed for fraud.

PLEA BY COUNSEL

Psychic research had many branches. There were people, and he was one, who thought that with greater knowledge of the subject and given greater research into it by the medical profession, there was no reason why the profession within 20 years should not advance its science by not less than 100 per cent.

Hatcher had been told that he had brought happiness incomparable into the lives of people, because not only had he satisfied them that their "dead" ones were still, alive, but had been able to identify them and were able to see, hear and speak to them.

The police visited a seance to arrest Hatcher, and by a chance got the only evidence in the case of any value, because if it were true that Miss Little was standing in the way described and Hatcher was sitting with the plaques and a tambourine in his hands, then that would be evidence of fraud.

REASON FOR SINGING

Hatcher in evidence said he was a direct-voice medium and in seances his "voice-box" was taken out of him and materialised in a part of the room or a trumpet.

He asked the people to sing lighter songs to create light-hearted conditions in the seance—which was helpful. On the date in question a hymn was started and before it ended he was in a trance. The next thing he remembered was finding the room in light and the people in confusion, and then felt a stabbing pain in the solar plexus.

In cross-examination he admitted that he had been convicted at Birmingham on a similar charge.

Carey Evans, who represented the town clerk's department, asked him about a Sister Agnes who appeared at the seance there and who, when the police turned on the torches, turned out to be Hatcher dressed up. He replied that he did not know what happened. He was in a trance.

"You had a plaque with a cross on your chest?" said counsel.

"I have not the slightest idea," was the reply.

"Did you have a white handkerchief over your head?"—"The white handkerchief was what the police said was the dressing up."

Speaking as an expert witness and a psychic investigator for 25 years, J. B. McIndoe, treasurer of the Spiritualists' National Union, said the phenomena Hatcher purported to display were not common.

After the Birmingham case he was present at two test sittings with Hatcher. Hatcher was securely roped in a chair on the first sitting. At the second sitting the additional precaution of placing luminous bands on him was taken. Materialised hands appeared and voices were heard. It was the opinion that he possessed genuine powers as a materialising medium.

Loseby in his address said the police case put bluntly was that Hatcher was a rogue and Vagabond and had no psychic powers, but there could be no doubt but that shrewd scientific observers thought he had those powers.

DUTY OF POLICE?

Carey Evans said that in his opening Mr. Loseby had referred to the miserable and contemptible action of police, but, he asked, was it miserable and contemptible for the police to do their duty? If anything was miserable and contemptible in the matter it was that people should pretend that they were acting by supernatural means when they knew quite well that they were faking.

After hearing counsel for the defence in mitigation ask him to take the view that they both had a good side also the Recorder said that it was a long sustained course of activities, and he felt that there was nothing that made it desirable for him to alter the sentences which had already been passed.

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The first article on Hatcher/ Little stated: "The case has exceptional features and, in view of the nature of the charge, the S.N.U. exercised a close watch over the proceedings, which might become a precedent for many others." We can note that the defence counsel, Mr. Russell John, appears to have given an excellent defence, bringing in an experienced, high-profile respected Spiritualist, John McIndoe. The magistrates, in summing up, complimented Mr. John on the excellent way he had conducted the defence. Other comments at the end of the article included "It's a pity this case was not heard by a jury"[8] and "Several friends who were in court expressed their opinions that the verdict was against the weight of evidence and I am glad there is to be an appeal. As far as Spiritualists are concerned, it is the nature of the charge, rather than the person prosecuted, which will concern us in the long run." Under the 1824 Vagrancy Act, Section 4, a medium or his associates have no defence.

It was my understanding that all prosecutions under this Act came from this source, which states:[9]

> "every person pretending or professing to tell fortunes, or using any subtle craft, means, or device, by palmistry or otherwise, to deceive and impose on any of his Majesty's subjects; …"

but according to the appeal Hatcher and Little had been charged with:

> "unlawfully using subtle means by pretending to hold communication with the spirits of deceased persons to deceive and impose upon certain of His Majesty's subjects."

There is no such clause under the Vagrancy Act! In the cross-examination during the appeal Carey Evans, who represented the town clerk's department, mentioned Hatcher had admitted that he had been convicted at Birmingham on a similar charge (this also included Emily Little). Hatcher had been seized by undercover police officers in May 1940 and subsequently charged with fraud:

> "deceiving and imposing on members of His Majesty's subjects by pretending to hold communications with the spirits of deceased persons"

Charles Loseby conducted Hatcher's defence. A letter by Loseby can be noted in the correspondence column of the *Two Worlds*, August 23rd 1940, page 286:

> Sir,—In your issue of the 12th July, and again of the 16th inst., reference was made to the charge made against a Mr. Hatcher at Birmingham Police Court of having been guilty of a bogus materialisation.
>
> It is quite true that the learned magistrate, who tried the case with scrupulous fairness, was of opinion that the charge was proved. That, however, was only the opinion of the magistrate. There were several experienced psychic investigators in court who also heard the evidence, who expressed the opinion to me that they would not have hanged a dog on the evidence as it was given.
>
> As I defended Mr. Hatcher with all the vigour of which I was capable, I ought perhaps not to express a personal opinion on the merits of the case. It can perhaps be guessed.

[8] Under the Vagrancy Act 1824, Section 4, trial by jury was not an option, as the maximum penalty was three months, which did not give the right to trial by jury.

[9] Vagrancy Act 1824, Section 4: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo4/5/83/section/4

But I may be allowed to say: That had I been sitting as magistrate I should not, upon the evidence as it was given, have hesitated for a fraction of a second before giving my verdict. It would have been emphatic.

It was seriously given *as evidence against Mr. Hatcher* that in the seance room were found a trumpet and a luminous disk. A handkerchief was also found—so it was said. Nothing else of an incriminating nature was found, although the place was searched.

It seemed to me that the conjuror was a little short of apparatus.

Mr. Hatcher, I asserted—and I think rightly—was one of two things, a completely innocent man or a blasphemous fraud.

He was, however, fined a trifling sum only. *Verb sap*.[10]

C. E. LOSEBY.

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Ernest Oaten

Alarm bells were being echoed in the Spiritualist press with concerns about some of the implications arising out of the methods now being used by the police. Usually the prosecutions were based under the Vagrancy Act, Section 4. Ernest Oaten, editor of the *Two Worlds*, published an article on these concerns. Below is a quote from the *Two Worlds*, July 25th 1941, page 236:

THE Police are changing their tactics in the persecution of psychics. For many years they insisted that all clairvoyance was "fortune-telling" under the Vagrancy Act, and those accused were generally convicted on the unsupported, and often fictitious, evidence of a paid "agent provocateur."[11] In a recent case however, a second witness—not a paid spy—was put into the box for the first time in my memory. The accused, however, did not hesitate to affirm that the police witnesses wilfully lied. That, of course, is customary in such cases.

Last week a new variant of the Vagrancy Act was brought forward against a Mrs. May Reeves, of Southwick, Brighton. She was accused of "using certain subtle means, namely, by crystal reading to deceive and impose upon Mabel Read and another of His Majesty's subjects." The other witness, however, was the driver of a police car. Mrs. Reeves did not claim to be a Spiritualist. Her claim was that she was a palmist and clairvoyant. She had been bombed out of London and came to Hove to practise. She had a firm belief in her own powers—the crystal merely helped her to concentrate—and she claimed that she was able to state facts about her clients, whom she had never seen before. She believed what she told Miss Read.

[10] Austin Hatcher was fined £10 and £2 costs; Emily Little, who was in charge of Hatcher's séance, was fined £5. John Sharpe, the medium in whose home in Birmingham the séance took place, was discharged.

[11] Agent provocateur (French for "inciting agent"): http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agent_provocateur

Now! in such a case it is simply silly to suggest that the clients were deceived. Paid police spies are sent in order to get a conviction, and the wheels are generally set in motion by detestable methods. Inspector Lovell said the prosecution was undertaken "as the result of complaints." I know those complaints! They are nearly always anonymous letters and are often sent by order of the priest of a certain denomination, whose antipathy to anything savouring of the occult is well known.

Psychic News reported in its January 23rd 1943 issue on page 4:

FOR FREEDOM?

"USUALLY, when the Vagrancy Act has been cited, it has been interpreted to mean that the pretence to foretell the future was a necessary part of the "offence." Prosecutions were instituted when the police alleged that messages regarding the future had been given.

"Now, by deleting the phrase referring to pretending to tell fortunes, and substituting the one under which Hatcher was charged, the police have given an interpretation to the Act which threatens the whole Spiritualist movement. As the law does not recognise the fact of spirit communication every seance is a "pretence" in its eyes, and every medium liable to conviction.

"More than that, it could be held that every Spiritualist service at which mediumship is demonstrated and every home circle is illegal. It might also be argued in the future that every Spiritualist who takes part in the "pretence" of holding communication with deceased persons is an accessory and, therefore, a lawbreaker. Moreover, the thousands of people who attend Spiritualist services throughout the land could also be regarded as potential wrongdoers."

"WHO is to decide whether there is a pretence of spirit communication, or a reality? Is the decision to be left to policemen, magistrates and judges who, too often, unfortunately know nothing about Spiritualism?

"We do not condone fraud in Spiritualism. Indeed, every exposure of a fake medium has always been made by a Spiritualist who, by virtue of his experience, is competent to detect the difference between genuine phenomena and the attempts to simulate them.

"In the Hatcher case the police could have acted on the ground of trying to obtain money by false pretences. But interpreting the Vagrancy Act in this new way may have profound reactions on the Spiritualist movement. Who decided on the new move? What is the reason for it?

"Spiritualists already suffer under many disabilities. They are denied religious freedom. Their mediums are at the mercy of agents provocateurs. Bequests for the development of mediumship have been held invalid.

"Now, there is a new threat, one that strikes right at the core of Spiritualism. It is ironical that at a time when we are fighting for freedom there should emerge what may prove to be one of the gravest threats to our liberty."

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The 41st Spiritualists' National Union AGM held on July 3rd 1943 at Brixton Spiritualist Church was followed on Sunday the 4th by a Consultative Conference at Conway Hall, Holborn. Charles Loseby addressed the meeting with a "summary of the repressive state of the law as it affects spiritual mediumship". Dr Sidney Peters MP continued with an account of the efforts he and other members of Parliament were making to put the grievances of Spiritualists to fellow members. In John Stewart's (retiring) Presidential address he stated: "So acute has the situation become since our last A.G.M. that the Executive decided to open a "Freedom Fund." It is almost unbelievable that it should be necessary to do so in the mist of a war that is being fought for freedom."

The Parliamentary and Freedom Fund were then merged and steps were discussed as to how best to defend mediums. This included the appointment of a special Litigating Solicitor and the retention of Counsel with the object of ensuring that sufficiently uniform procedure should be followed throughout the whole country. John McIndoe was appointed Chairman, former SNU President John Stewart as Secretary, and Mr J. M. Raffill, Vice-President, Financial. Over a hundred local representatives of the Freedom Fund Committee were appointed throughout the country. Their purpose was to maintain effective contact with the Churches and mediums so that immediate steps could be taken and adequate legal advice given whenever a medium was accused or charged of any offence.

It should be noted that similar lines of action were being taken by the Greater World Christian Spiritualist League[12] and were in full support of the Union. The SNU solicitor was Mr Godfrey Elkin; one of the first prosecutions they dealt with under the Vagrancy Act with fortune-telling was that of Ann Novack. Elkin appeared but the case was lost; on the advice of Counsel it was decided not to appeal, as it was considered it could not be won and money was needed for other mediums.

Action was taken in the case of Stella Hughes. The Home Secretary was asked by Hannen Swaffer to advise the King to grant her a free pardon in respect of a former conviction on the evidence of two policewomen who a year later were themselves convicted of "long systematic felony"; both were sent to prison for twelve months. Herbert Morrison refused to grant Stella Hughes a King's pardon, saying he had been unable to find any grounds which would justify him recommending any interference with Mrs Hughes' conviction.

On July 27th 1943, Mr Osbert Peake, M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Deputy Under-Secretary of State Sir Frank Newsam and Mr Graham Harrison received a deputation to the Home Office from the Spiritualists' National Union …

To be continued in the next issue

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[12] It later became the Greater World Christian Spiritualist Association.

FRANK LEAH – PSYCHIC ARTIST

(1886-1972)

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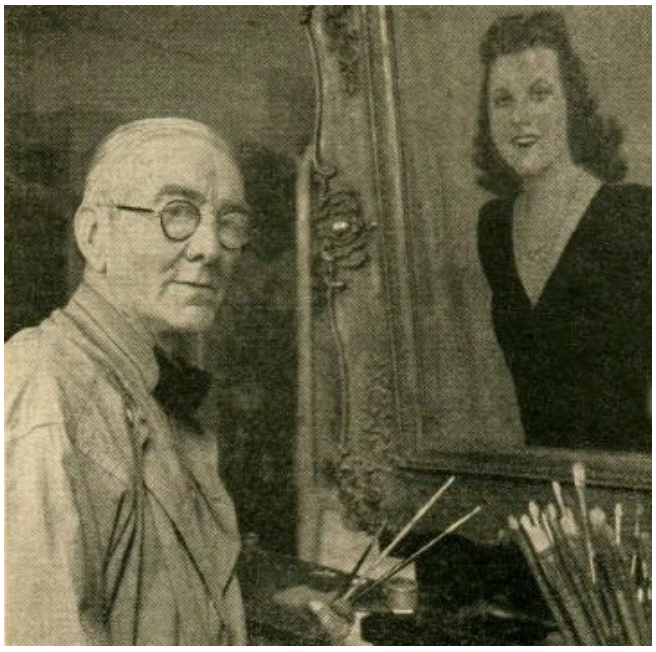
An account of the development of *Symbolic Drawings,* later more popularly known as *Auragraphs*, through the mediumship of Harold Sharp was published in the October 2014 issue of the Pioneer. Below is a description of the early development of Frank Leah, who pioneered spirit portraits of family, friends and guides. We can note in the October issue a portrait of Sharp's guide, "Brother Peter", captured by Leah.

Frank Leah paved much of the ground for later psychic artist Coral Polge, who was told through automatic writing, according to her autobiography, "The Living Image", on page 30, that "one day I would take Frank Leah's place in Spiritualism."

ARTIST WHO DRAWS "SPIRIT" PICTURES

A RARE FORM OF MEDIUMSHIP

By Horace Leaf, F.R.G.S.[13]



ART has long been a method by which the inhabitants of the beyond have communicated with us, but mediums for this special form of demonstration have been rare. Frequently it has been through inspired or "direct" music. Often it has been through what have become known as "spirit drawings." The latter have usually been beautiful but fantastic, owing, it is believed, to the spirit world having more than three dimensions. In endeavouring to convey to us something of the marvels and beauty of their world, the spirits have been compelled to resort to symbolism.

All through, however, there have been unseen intelligences who have endeavoured to inspire mediums to produce pictures which would be more easily appreciated by those too logically minded to be influenced by mysticism, and some truly wonderful supernormal results have been obtained. The remarkable paintings done through the late David Duguid rank among the best of these.[14] They were usually landscape. The Society for Psychical Research have on record a number of impressive pictures that bear all the marks of supernormal origin, but true portraits of departed friends have been rather scarce. There, is nevertheless, ample evidence that our unseen helpers have again been trying to exploit this field, in their effort to prove in every way their survival of bodily death.

[13] Taken from the *Two Worlds*, September 9th 1932.

[14] See Psypioneer: Volume 10, No. 01: January 2014: "Trance Paintings; Direct Paintings a sitting with Mr. D. Duguid, Glasgow."

During the last few months, at least one qualified artist has been exhibiting this form of mediumship in a very convincing manner. Mr. Frank Leah, journalist, cartoonist, assistant-editor and art editor in his time, of various well-known journals at home and abroad, has already won considerable recognition as being extraordinarily endowed with what may be termed supernormal portrait drawing and painting, and many bereaved souls have been gladdened by his work.

Mr. Leah has all the experience of art necessary for the work, and in selecting him as their instrument the spirit people have shown determination to recruit to their service one able to serve their purpose in the highest degree. Perhaps no one has been more astonished than this gentleman that he should have been practically coerced into this unusual branch of art. His method is different from that of the Bangs Sisters, who received their productions without having to use the pencil or palate, their striking portraits having been received through a form of mediumship allied to materialisation.

HOW IT IS DONE.

Mr. Leah works in the presence of his sitters, with a dim red light on his drawing board, and then awaits either the actual objective appearance of his spirit "sitter," or else a subjective vision of him or her. In some instances the spirit has shown a lively interest in trying to produce exactly the expression or attitude that the artist thinks most suitable, and occasionally he has had verbally to suggest that the spirit whose portrait is to be drawn shall do this or that, or explain why certain effects have been made.

I had an interview with Mr. Frank Leah to find out more about his mediumship, and found him deeply interested in the unexpected development of his art.

The first serious indication that he possessed an unusual sense of portrait painting occurred soon after returning from India, where he was occupied in journalistic and artistic pursuits. On arriving in England he became Art Editor of five journals, one of which was devoted to sport. One day the Editor asked him to produce the picture of a well-known personality who had never been photographed. Unable to get any assistance from portraits, Mr. Leah had finally to rely upon a verbal description of the man from the Editor and a friend. He then drew a full-length portrait of the subject, which was so accurate that it was published next day. The picture was said to have re-produced the man in his most characteristic mood, expression and dress, and aroused a great deal of interest.

There was an amusing aftermath. Mr. Leah met this man soon afterwards on a racecourse, and immediately recognised him from the portrait he had drawn. Somewhat taken aback at his own success, he ventured to congratulate the gentleman on the picture, and was amused to find his subject indignant that it should have been published without his consent. He told Mr. Leah what he would do to the artist if he met him, for taking such a liberty!

Inviting the indignant man to partake of some refreshments, Mr. Leah informed him who the artist was, and explained how the picture had been done. The gentleman was amazed, readily forgiving so remarkable an artist, and a close friendship was there and then formed between them.

Mr. Leah has been interested in scientific evidence of survival ever since, when a youth, he saw the spirit of his great uncle, who had been a vicar in Yorkshire. He had never seen the dead man, and was able to recognise him from an old portrait. The apparition was perfectly life-like, holding a Bible in its hand, and surrounded by a beautiful flame coloured aura.

Perhaps his first real spirit portrait was drawn in 1924. Whilst in London he heard a voice clairaudiently telling him to go home to Ireland. On arriving at his house he was delighted to meet an old friend, an army captain, who also had a keen psychic sense.

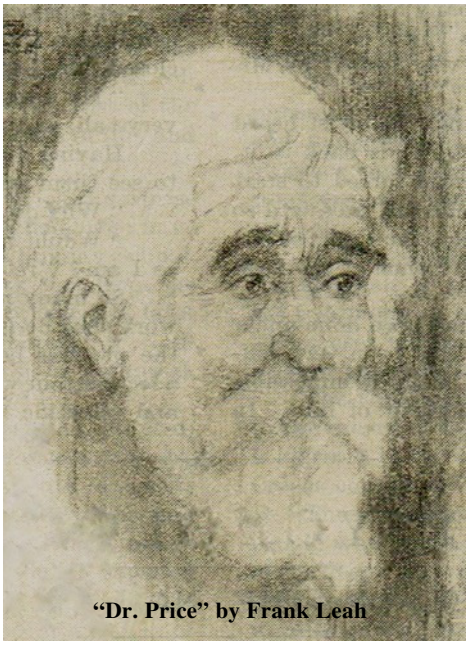
“Did you receive my mental call? ” asked the Captain.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Leah. “It was accompanied by so powerful an impulse that I had to hurry home.”

The Captain had come to ask him to draw the portrait of an important Irish personality who had recently passed away. Mr. Leah had drawn a picture of this person on the charred walls of a billiard room in a hotel which had been almost destroyed by fire, and suggested that the Captain, and a friend who was with him, accompany him. The portrait on the wall had been done in a spirit of fun, and although good, hardly expressed what was desired by Mr. Leah’s client.

Whilst looking at the mural drawing, the artist heard clairaudiently a voice instruct him to turn his back to it, and as soon as he had done so, he seemed forced to start the portrait. In less than half-an-hour he had produced so vivid a likeness of the deceased man that the Captain and his friend, both of whom were devoted friends of the dead man, were reduced to tears!

The artist knew that the drawing had been done under spirit impulsion. In life the dead man had been very self-conscious at portrait sittings, and had made it impossible for Mr. Leah to draw a satisfactory portrait of him. In death he was evidently trying to undo this by assisting the artist in this novel and unexpected way.



“Dr. Price” by Frank Leah

After this experience the artist dabbled in portraying the deceased, and became deeply interested in spiritual healing through the well-known medium, Mrs. May Bird, and her celebrated control “Dr. Price.” However, it was not until the end of 1931 that the spirit world called insistently upon his mediumship, and he resolved to devote his time to their service. The spirit friends pointed out the value to both worlds that must inevitably come from an actual portrayal of the departed through such a high form of art. The preliminary stages of his psychic development, they pointed out, had passed, and he was quite able to enter with confidence upon the suggested undertaking.

The results have been gratifying, numerous portraits having been satisfactorily produced in the presence of witnesses, who have been astonished that a man who had never seen the deceased persons, nor even a picture of them, could produce such striking likenesses.

An example of the keen interest the spirits take in this form of mediumship is shown, not only in their willingness to “sit” for their portraits, but in the astonishment they sometimes show when they realise that it can be done.

On one occasion the spirit of a venerable North American Indian appeared for reproduction, and as his eyes were closed, Mr. Leah asked him why he did not open them.

“ My eyes are not closed,” came the reply. “I am very tall, and am merely looking down; can’t you see?

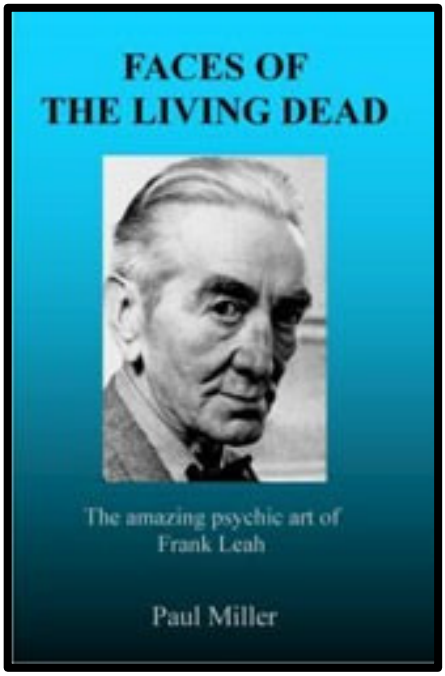
Having drawn the eyebrows, the artist was astonished to see them appear to rise as if with surprise.

"Why do you raise your eyebrows?" asked Mr. Leah.

"Would not you raise yours if you were as surprised as I am?" returned the spirit in the "direct voice."

So many people have become interested in Mr. Leah's work that he is preparing a set of lantern slides of some of the pictures he has produced, and will shortly undertake a lecture tour with a view to presenting the full philosophical and scientific value of this new evidence of survival.

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Biography of Frank Leah, "Faces of the Living Dead", by Paul Miller, first published in 1943, which has been reprinted by Saturday Night Press Publications.[15]

[15] 'Faces of the Living Dead: The amazing psychic art of Frank Leah', by Paul Miller: http://www.snppbooks.com/faces-of-the-living-dead.html

WHEN DID MODERN SPIRITUALISM BEGIN? 1848?

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In the nineteenth century questions were asked as to when Modern Spiritualism actually began; some prominent Spiritualists considered it started earlier than Hydesville!

Mr Alonzo G. Hollister published an article, which appeared in *The World's Advanced Thought*, Portland, Oregon in May 1888. In the same year excerpts of Hollister's article were published in the "Two Worlds", edited by Emma Hardinge Britten, and in "Light", edited by Stainton Moses (M.A. Oxon). The "Two Worlds" gave a fuller account of Hollister's article but, owing to space, reprinted below is the coverage given by "Light". First is the preface to the article by Emma, who had a personal connection with the Shakers, published in the "Two Worlds", Friday July 6th 1888, under the weekly front page titled "The Rostrum" – *Pre-Hydesville Manifestations: Birth of Modern Spiritualism*:

EXTRAORDINARY REVELATIONS; OR, ADVENT VOICES PROCLAMING THE BIRTH OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM



Emma Hardinge Britten

"SOME twenty-five years ago the Editor of this paper, hearing reports of spiritual manifestations amongst the Shakers of America, made visits to several of their villages, especially to those situated in the neighbourhood of Troy,[16] Northampton, and the head quarters of Shakerism, the Community at Lebanon. In each place, remarkable evidences of clairvoyance, seership, trance and impressional mediumship were displayed, and the singing and dancing of the members partook unmistakably of the nature of ecstasy. Several of the Elders in each place, also in the Communities situated more in the South, assured the Editor that spiritual manifestations had been prevalent amongst them long in advance of the Hydesville disturbances; that the Shakers in general claimed, upon unquestionable authority, to have been the John Baptists of the modern spiritual movement; and some of the most intelligent of them promised to write out for publication in the Editor's work, "The History of Modern American Spiritualism," a thoroughly attested account of what they claimed.

As that promise was not redeemed by the time when the work above-named was going to press, no detailed account was given therein of Shaker Spiritualism. The promised document, however, has just appeared in the May number of The World's Advance Thought, a very fine and high-toned paper, published at Portland, Oregon. The facts in question are drawn up by one of the most candid and reliable writers in the spiritual movement, Mr. A. G. Hollister, …"

[16] Emma's début trance lecture was at Troy, New York on July 5th, 1857.

Below was published in "Light", July 7th 1888, pages 326-327:

PRE-HYDESVILLE SPIRITUALISM



Stainton Moses (M.A. Oxon)

The *World's Advance Thought* gives prominence to an account of certain manifestations akin to those subsequently called Spiritualistic, which occurred amongst the Shaker communities in the early part of August, 1837. We have frequently protested against the mistaken idea that Modern Spiritualism originated with the Fox mediums at Rochester. The outbreak there was more widely known chiefly by reason of the sprightly Kate establishing communication with the unseen intelligences. But the outburst was by no means confined to one place, nor was Rochester the first locality where it was observed. Koons's circle-rooms, where John King the ubiquitous first manifested his presence, antedated Hydesville,[17] and here we have Shaker Spiritualism in 1837.

Mr. Hollister, who has been connected with the Mount Lebanon group of Shaker families from early childhood, has compiled the account from unimpeachable records in the possession of the community.

The manifestations of occult power were seen first in three children, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Clarissa, They had been influenced in the meeting in the way peculiar to Shakers, and were laid upon their beds about 7.30 in the evening, the other Shaker children gathering in the room. Then a scene of turning, shaking, and so forth, such as had never before been witnessed, took place. The room was filled with a display of power, like "a rushing mighty wind," for about half an hour. The children dropped exhausted, and were again placed on their beds, when they sang hymns and had clairvoyant visions. The influence seems to have been elevating and good.

"We were frequently cited by mediums, speaking under loved and venerated names, to close self-examination, to test our motives and conduct by our best light and convictions of truth and duty; all the love we had for righteousness, and all our manly and womanly dignity of conscience and self-respect, were energised to maintain fidelity and integrity to principle. We were reproved, encouraged, corrected, entreated, exhorted, or, comforted, collectively and individually, in public and in private, according to our various needs and conditions. We felt for a season that we were constantly under the inspection and instruction of the heavenly hosts; concealment was impossible – our inmost thoughts were scanned, and none escaped the notice of invisible guardians in any and all acts of life; each was approved and blessed by those whose blessing was most desired precisely according to merit. We thank God and His holy messengers for the scorching, fiery furnace of purification – if for nothing else, that it has brought liberation and peace to our souls. The evidence of spirit-power and its direction in this movement came like a flood, and was so convincing to the sinner, by its opposition to a selfish will and carnal life, the entire weight of its influence agreeing

[17] It should be noted that this is incorect: Jonathan Koons's circle-rooms (Ohio) did not start until the early 1850s.

with our convictions of truth and duty, that the voice of cavil and unbelief was silenced for a season."

Attention having been thus excited, and conviction brought home, the spirits of Shaker leaders became less prominently in evidence, and direction was given as to the future progress of the work, a mission entrusted to recipients of these messages and manifestations, These orders were given in the names "of ancient prophets, patriarchs, and sages," and were accompanied by outward signs, such as knocking and the like.

It is instructive to pause here and observe how similar this account is to the experience of Spiritualists in recent years. The invisible beings first seek to attract attention and awaken interest. To this end they use various means, adapting them to the special idiosyncrasies with which they have to deal. Usually some form of objective manifestation is employed, but at times the excitation of the spiritual faculties by clairvoyance or clairaudience, dream or vision, subserves the purpose. Then usually comes the lesson personal to the medium, and the mission entrusted to him to discharge. And this is very frequently even in the names of "ancient prophets, patriarchs, and sages," though to impress and overawe by authority. These names and messages are to be understood mystically. Literal interpretation is misleading. Very instructive it is to find this method in some of the earliest recorded manifestations of spirit-power. After this phase was over, there

"Followed next the visitations of spirits of various ages and nations, and of various stations and callings in life. Learned and ignorant, kings and subjects, civilised and barbarian, with all their native habits clinging to them, characters noted in history, and those who lived and died in obscurity, were freely represented. Tribe after tribe of native Indian spirits were instructed in our meetings how to behave, how to worship the Great Spirit, and in the importance of confessing and forsaking sin, forgiving injuries and returning good for evil; their ways, exhibited through the bodies of the brethren and sisters most impressible to spirit control, were at first rough and uncouth, but in the course of a number of visits they became gentle and refined in manner, and manifested deep gratitude for kindness shown them. Of course in our family meetings but a few members of a tribe could manifest at once, but they seemed to act as delegates and spokesmen for the remainder, who were referred to as present."

Here, again, we have that very common experience, especially among American mediums, of the presence of Red Indians. We have never found a sufficiently satisfactory explanation of this well-known fact: but here it is as it has since been and is now.

These varied phenomena seemed to have lasted from first to last for about fifteen years, for the first four of which the old Shaker, "Mother Ann," specially controlled manifestations. It was not until January 1850, that these Mount Lebanon Shakers heard of the Rochester knockings.

Finally, it is worth while to quote the very reasonable methods prescribed to mediums, so that they alight keep themselves "unspotted from the world" and free from risk of obsession.

"Some precautions taken to insure reliable communications were as follows: Mediums were not allowed to converse with members, nor with each other, about their spiritual gifts, but with the Elders only. Members were required to conform to the same rule, and not judge mediums or their gifts adversely. Mediums were required to abstain from all unnecessary conversation for days together. Sometimes their own gifts required them to diet a few days solely on bread and water. Special acts of humiliation and mortification were sometimes enjoined upon them, that their gifts

might come through pure channels. Above all things they were to observe all the rules or orders of the community, keep close union to their Elders, and strictly obey the monitions of conscience, that they should not be deceived by treacherous, dark, lying, and malicious spirits, who were represented as on the alert to decoy and lead captive whoever would listen to them, and were doing all that lay in their power to defeat and overthrow the work which the ministering angels were striving to accomplish."

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Emma Hardinge was one of the first historians of what became known as "Modern Spiritualism,"[18] Emma emphasises the problem *of dating the commencement of the modern movement*, in the introduction of her book "Nineteenth Century Miracles," quoted from the first edition (Manchester) published by her husband 1883 (USA 1884) page 4:

"In endeavouring to trace out with all fidelity, the origin of the great modern spiritual movement, it will soon become apparent that though very momentous results were obtained in the Hydesville investigations of 1848 – especially in the discovery of a systematic mode of communing with spirits through a set of concerted signals – yet even in America, the land in which Spiritualism has attained to a pre-eminent degree of popularity, spirit communion was demonstrated, long prior to the "Hydesville disturbances"; in fact, it is obvious that this century in the New, as well as the Old World, has been remarkable for the persistence with which spirits have endeavoured to effect a direct method of intercourse with mortals.

The causes before alluded to, which have favoured the marked publicity to which Spiritualism has attained in America, should be carefully considered, and will be found explanatory of the custom of dating the commencement of the modern movement, from the "Rochester knockings" in 1848. One great difficulty in attempting to chronicle the details of this movement, is the very fact that it did not originate in any special locality, or at any given time, inasmuch as it manifested its influence in a spontaneous and universal outpouring all over the world, coming and going like the wind – few, if any, could say whence, or whitherward. Again; it is because we cannot trace up the history of modern Spiritualism consecutively from point to point, either in time or place, that we find it expedient to take the commencement of this century for our data, and propose to treat of the manifestations as they occurred, independently, in the various countries of earth from which authentic records are obtainable. In pursuance of this plan, we shall commence our researches in Germany, where we shall find abundant testimony to the supra-mundane character of the intelligence derivable from spirit sources, as well as proof positive, that spirits have manifested their presence on earth through spontaneous action and wholly unprepared conditions."

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[18] "Who First Spoke of Modern Spiritualism? – Marc Demarest". See Psypioneer: Volume 9, No 01: January 2013.

Emma continues in Chapter I page 7, "Spiritualism in Germany" covering the period from the close of the 18th to the beginning of the 19th century:

> "William Howitt,[19] that most indefatigable student of every subject on which he chose to exercise his facile pen, in his "History of the Supernatural" writes in strong terms against the custom of identifying the modern spiritual movement with America as its birth place, or the "Rochester Knockings" as the opening of intelligent communication between mortals and spirits."

Below is the original text sourcing what Emma referred to, by William Howitt in his "History of the Supernatural", published by J.B. Lippincott & Co in 1863, taken from Volume 1, Chapter II, American Spiritualism:

SPIRITUALISTS BEFORE THE AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT

SO profound is the ignorance of the great subject of Spiritualism, which is but another term for the belief in the Supernatural, in this age – an influence pervading all ages and all nations, wide as the spread of the sun's light, repeating its operations as incessantly as the return of morning - so thoroughly has the ocean of mere mundane affairs and affections submerged as in its waves – that if presented with a new phase of a most ancient and indestructible power, we stand astonished before it, as something hitherto unheard of. If our knowledge reaches yesterday, it is absolutely at fault in the day before. This has never been more conspicuous than in the estimation of American spiritualism in this country. Because it has assumed a novel shape, that of moving physical objects, and has introduced spirits speaking through the means of an alphabet, rapping, drawing, and writing, either through the hand of mediums, or independently of them, it has almost universally in this country been regarded as an entirely new phenomenon. We still continually hear of spiritualism as originating in America within the last ten years.

The evidence produced in this volume will show that no view of the matter can be more discreditable to our knowledge of psychology. Nothing can be more self-evident than that American spiritualism is but the last new blossom of a very ancient tree, colored by the atmosphere in which it has put forth, and somewhat modified in its shape by the pressure of circumstances upon it. In other words, it has burst forth from the old, all–prolific stem, to answer the needs of the time. As materialism has made a great advance, this grand old Proteus of Truth has assumed a shape expressly adapted to stop its way.

As materialism has tinctured all philosophy, spiritualism has spoken out more plainly in resistance of it. The spirit-world has come, as it were, a step nearer to our firesides, and by what seemed the happy accident of a child's expression, but which, undoubtedly, was the usual promptings of Providence in all times of need, America learned to speak to spirits and to receive replies, though only, like Thisbe [*sic*], through the still sturdy wall of fleshly matter, explaining the mystery of all those knockings and hauntings, those sighings and rustlings, those thrillings through our nerves, and awe-overshadowings of the minds of men, through many a long age.

The sensation which this has created has been in proportion to the instinctively perceived value of this new key to the great old storehouse of spirit treasures. It has shown how much the modern Sadduceeism, by its holding up new obstructions between us and our invisible Fatherland, has made such an additional instrument requisite. We must clear away the death-wall of doubt and

[19] William Howitt (1792-1879). See Psypioneer: Volume 8, No 9: September 2012.

negation, or we must perish. America, by the simple discovery of the telegraphy of rapping, and the further developments of mediumship, made intelligible by this discovery, has, in truth, inaugurated a new era of spiritualism; but it has by no means created or has had created within it the power of spiritualism itself. That power is the all-time inheritance of the human race.

For about a hundred years before, Germany and Switzerland had their spiritualists, developing, or believing in phenomena, almost in all particulars identical with those of America. If they had not discovered the mode of conversing with spirits by means of rapping and the alphabet, they had been enabled to converse with them by other means. They had spirit-vision, spirit-writing, knowledge of coming events from the spirit-world, and daily direct intercourse with its inhabitants. Pre-eminent amongst these spiritualists were Jung-Stilling, Kerner, Lavater, Eschenmayer, Zschokke, Schubert, Werner, Kant, of the German portion; France had Oberlin, &c. England, at a little earlier period, had its John Wesley and his disciples, who had full faith in these phenomena, and Sweden its Swedenborg, perhaps the greatest spirit-medium that ever appeared, passing in and out of the spirit-world and holding converse with its inhabitants almost at his pleasure. But leaving Wesley and Swedenborg for another notice, I shall now devote my attention to the spiritualists of Germany and Switzerland who flourished from the middle of the eighteenth century to within less than twenty years of the spiritual outbreak in America, and one of whose most distinguished members, Dr. Kerner, was, indeed, still living at the time of commencing this work. I shall notice this group of spiritualists here, otherwise out of their course, simply because they will at once deprive the American dispensation of much of its novelty, and clear away thus the gross error of making America within the last ten years the original mother of spiritualism.

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Magnetic subjects are the mediums for the spirits still in the body, and mediums are the subjects of spirits out of the body.
Emma Hardinge Britten.[20]

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This brief appraisal of the founding of "Modern Spiritualism" would be far from complete without mention of Franz Anton Mesmer, 1734-1815, the founder of Animal Magnetism, later known as Mesmerism, which played a vital part in pre-and post-Hydesville days. It may be interesting to know that the word *Spiritualists* was in use years prior to 1848. The term, *spiritualist*, was used in the school of Chevalier de Barbarin in Lyon, France. According to Jules D. Dupotet de Sennevoy (1796-1881), in his book, "An Introduction to the Study of Animal Magnetism", we find that three separate schools of magnetism arose, those of Anton Mesmer, Chevalier de Barbarin and Marquis de Puységur.



Mesmer was principally located in Paris, Barbarin at Lyon, and Puységur founded a school at Strasburg. Puységur's school characteristically featured a combination of Mesmer's purely *physica*l treatments and Barbarin's *psychical* treatments. Dupotet de Sennevoy remarks on page 17:

The school of the Chevalier de Barbarin. This was founded at Lyons, and, although it had many partisans in France, prevailed principally in Sweden and Germany. Its principles remind us of the Platonic philosophy; its disciples maintained that the magnetic operation depended entirely upon a pure "effort of the soul," and was to be conducted only upon psychical principles. They were therefore termed spiritualists.[21]

Mesmerism continued in Spiritualism for many years to induce, or as an aid to, a mediumistic trance state. As late as the 1920s James Hewat McKenzie (1869-1929), an adept in mesmerism-hypnotism, would use *passes* with

[20] Taken from Chapter III, page 17: "Nineteenth-Century Miracles", by Emma Hardinge Britten. The early chapters in this book are most valuable in order to understand the relevance of mesmerism in the development of early mediumship. The book is available as a free download: https://archive.org/details/nineteenthcentur01brit

[21] Spelt Barberini in "Nineteenth-Century Miracles", by Emma Hardinge Britten. Quoted from page 16: Whilst the Marquis de Puységur was making converts in every direction, by his wonderful somnambulists, a magnetizer of a still higher tone appeared on the scene in the person of the Chevalier de Barberini, a gentleman of Lyons, whose magnetic processes, associated with prayer, produced results even more extraordinary than the clairvoyants of Puységur. The Chevalier de Barberini magnetized his subjects both by manipulations and will, but in most instances, the effects he produced, threw the patients into that state now known as trance and ecstasy. Visions of the most exalted character followed. The "lucids" described scenes and persons in the other world; traversed the regions of disembodied souls, and only returned to earth reluctantly, to relate their aerial flights to wondering listeners, and describe to bereaved mourners, the apparitions of friends who had long since passed beyond the grave. *The Continental Miscellany and Foreign Review*, describes "The New Sect of Barberinists," and affirms that in Sweden and Germany, where they were very numerous, "these fanatics were called *Spiritualists*, to distinguish them from the followers of M. de Puységur, who were termed *Experimentalists*."

Eileen Garrett to induce her into a deeper stage of unconsciousness. A few years prior to Hydesville we observe that Andrew Jackson Davis had established a *defined status* through philosophical thought as to a foundation and explanation of *Modern Spiritualism* through Mesmerism.

So why mark the birth of Modern Spiritualism with the events of Hydesville in 1848?

Hydesville demonstrated physically two-way communication between the spirit world and the physical world.

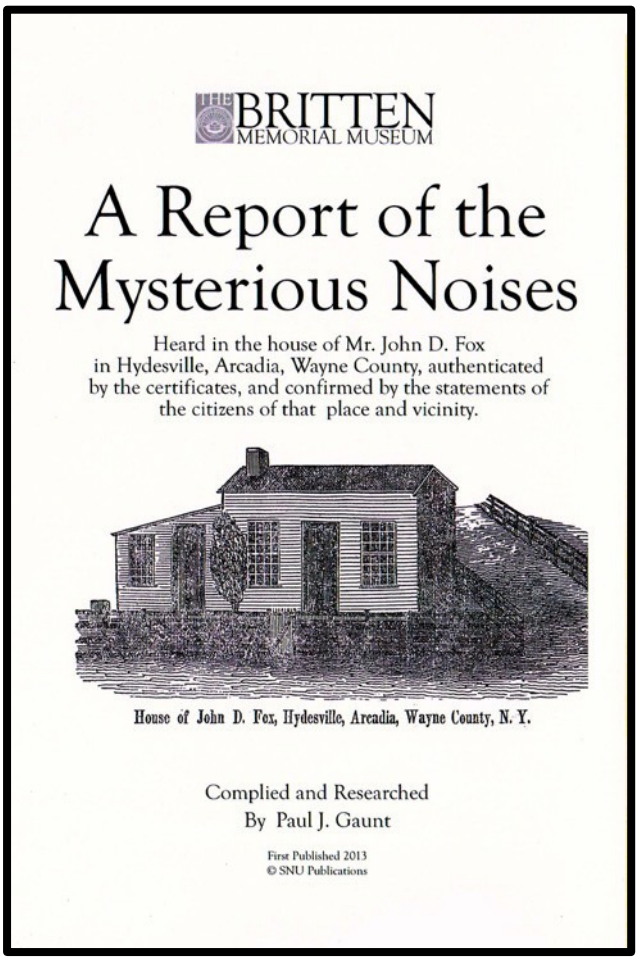
The words of William Howitt sum up the title of this article: "When did Modern Spiritualism begin? 1848?"

America, by the simple discovery of the telegraphy of rapping, and the further developments of mediumship, made intelligible by this discovery, has, in truth, inaugurated a new era of spiritualism; but it has by no means created or has had created within it the power of spiritualism itself.

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WHAT TOOK PLACE AT HYDESVILLE?

Booklet Introduction:



Most Spiritualists are familiar with the story of the occurrences at Hydesville on March 31st 1848. However, some of these claims have veered away from the original records, partly because the original report on the Hydesville phenomena by Mr E. E. Lewis, who obtained twenty-two signed statements from witnesses in April 1848, soon became extremely rare – and partly because the story was changed from its original reports by Lewis and other early historians like Eliab Capron, with later unsubstantiated verbal reports added to it by Robert Dale Owen eleven years or so later.

Owen appears to have also introduced the name Charles B. Ros**m**a into the story. Ten years later Emma Hardinge (Britten) wrote her "Modern American Spiritualism", published in 1870. She quoted from Owen's book, "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World", published in 1860, and we appear to have the first introduction of the peddler's name, Charles B. Ros**n**a ("n"!). It would appear that this is possibly a spelling or publisher's error; it would be doubtful that Emma Hardinge would bring in another name for the peddler without some explanation for contradicting Owen's Rosma while quoting him.

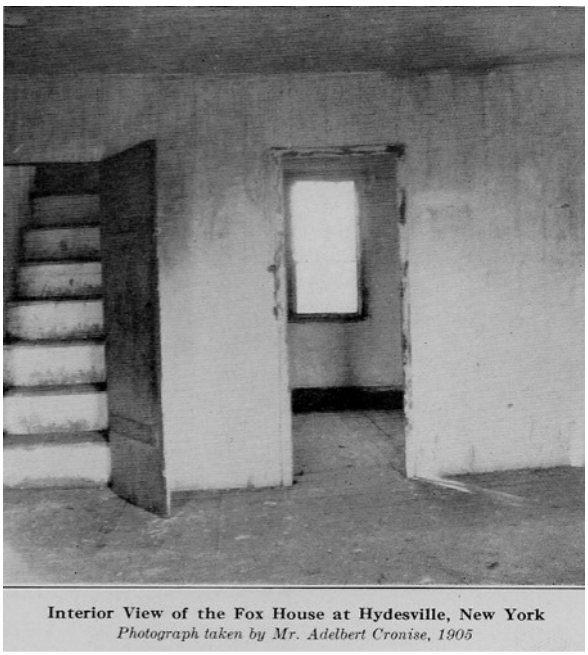
Later the eldest Fox sister, Ann Leah Underhill, published "The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism" in 1885. In the opening chapter she republishes some of the sworn statements recorded and published by Mr E. E. Lewis in April 1848. However, she failed to tell her readers that she had in fact changed some of these statements; these changes would be reflected in later works by others.

Research also shows that according to some later reports by the two younger Fox sisters (and also hinted at in some of the original material) the eldest Fox sister, then known as Leah Fish, had a daughter called Elizabeth (also known as Lizzie), who was at that time staying with her grandparents, where she was present and participated in the unfolding Hydesville events.

What actually occurred on the night of 31st March 1848?

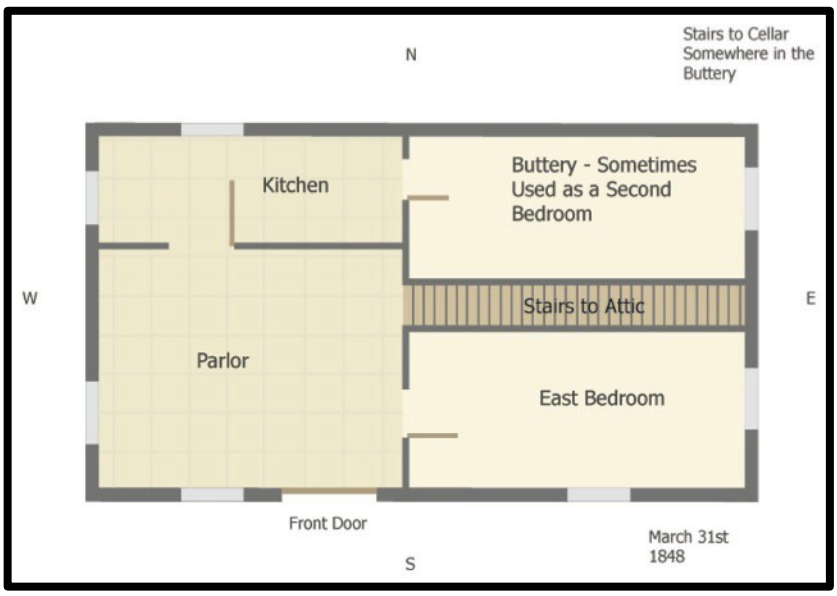
Mr and Mrs Fox had two young daughters living with them, Catherine and Margaretta; they are not actually named in the original reports. In later life they would claim there was a third girl present – their niece Elizabeth. It is also often stated that a code was adopted by the two young sisters and that the peddler's name, Charles B. Rosna, was revealed. An alphabet code was established on March 31st and would be later used by the Fox sisters in Rochester. The code was actually established by Mr William Duesler, a former resident of the house. However, no name was given at this time except the letter "C", followed by the initial of the communicator's surname, "B".

Published below is the full text of the *original* Hydesville report made by Mr E. E. Lewis in April 1848; it is not always realised that the phenomena were not just active on March 31st but continued for some days. Although the reader will find this somewhat repetitive, unlike most reports it has remarkable testimonial consistency – without contradiction. The report builds up to a remarkable and unique testament of spirit communication. It is this crude two-way communication which involved so many individuals, questioners and witnesses that would establish the foundation of Modern Spiritualism. This report gives a concise overview of what actually *was recorded and took place*, by those who were present and participated in the spirit communications.[22]



Interior View of the Fox House at Hydesville, New York
Photograph taken by Mr. Adelbert Cronise, 1905

⇐East Bedroom where the phenomena took place.



[22] Britten Memorial Museum Booklet – "A Report of Mysterious Noises" £3.99 (images above are not from the booklet): http://www.shop.snu.org.uk/new.html

“Remembering our old workers”

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

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

Mrs. MARY A. STAIR (Keighley).



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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[23] Her father passed in 1876.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MISS M. L. STAIR,

Hon. Secretary of the Fund of Benevolence



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Miss Mary Louisa Stair passes, aged 69:

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

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

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

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