the PIONEER

Volume 3, No. 2: April 2016

Contents list:

040 – Spiritualist Healers of the Past – Isa Northage
046 – Ernest Thompson
047 – Charles I. Quastel
048 – Behind the scenes in Harry Edwards storm at SNU conference
050 – SNU is still losing Churches and Members
051 – Profile of new SNU President – He Made His Name as a Rebel
053 – "No World War" predictions
054 – Estelle Roberts says – "Let the People Judge"
055 – Prophecies – SNU President Frank Blake
057 – Houdini & Conan Doyle – Story of Strange Friendship and an Historic Quarrel
062 – Britten Memorial Study Weeks at the Arthur Findlay College
063 – The Effect of the Vagrancy & Witchcraft Act (Final Part VI) – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union

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

This history journal is presented using original researched material wherever possible. Articles and quotes are taken from original sources as they were published at the time and reproduced by optical character recognition (OCR), the conversion of scanned images of handwritten, typewritten or printed text into machine-encoded text. This means that grammar, old English, spelling mistakes, etc. are not usually changed. However, long paragraphs are sometimes split for easier reading; any errors or explanations needed are noted in footnotes.

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

"Subscribe" free to Pioneer or contact the editor – pioneer@snu.org.uk

All references to Psypioneer in this issue are archived in Australia by Garth Willey at the Woodlands Sanctuary Foundation. For further information about Psypioneer or to subscribe please visit:—http://www.woodlandway.org

SPIRITUALIST HEALERS OF THE PAST



Spiritualism has had many wonderful healers who became household names within the movement but as time has moved on these have sadly become forgotten.

In the centre of the photograph is Isa Northage with some of her healers; Isa was born in or around 1898 and passed in 1985. Isa has been brought back to public attention with the republication of a biographical / autobiographical account, "A Path Prepared", compiled by Allan Macdonald, originally published by the author and then available from his Coventry home at 16s 6d or from the "Two Worlds" book department at 17s 6d by post.[1]

Isa Northage was a physical medium and during her healing sessions her spirit doctor would materialise in full view of the sitters and the patient to perform his operations – he cured by removing growths, clots and bone splinters, etc.

The photograph of Isa and her healers shown above is taken from the front page of the "Two Worlds", March 1st 1940, "Spirit Doctor Heals the Sick", by D. M. Antliff. Below is a short quote from the article:

> "Dr. Reynolds," the chief guide, is forming a band of helpers, composed of doctors and nurses in spirit life, who are co-operating with the band of healers here. His instructions are given week by week, and are followed out in detail. He himself does the diagnosing and instructs the healers, who act accordingly. He speaks in the direct voice, dictates prescriptions, and often has to spell medical terms, since Mrs. Northage and her helpers have no knowledge of them. He indicates the various patients for whom they are intended.
>
> One unusual experience came to us a week or two ago: while Mrs. Northage and her daughter, in the presence of others, were sitting at the table in full white light, a shower of pills descended into their lap. We were instructed that these were to be used for a patient whose disability was being discussed.

[1] See "Psypioneer" for a review by Leslie Price of the new edition, Vol. 8, No. 4, April 2012: "Remarkable Phenomena in Nottingham". Allan Macdonald first came into contact with Isa Northage at a séance in March 1949; this he recorded on the front page of the "Two Worlds", September 10th 1949.

Below is a quote from "A Path Prepared" book review published on the front page of the "Two Worlds", August 27th 1960:

> "Isa Northage's story is one of constant guidance since 1917 by a voice which later she learned was that of her doctor-guide. It was not until 1937 that her physical mediumship became apparent.
>
> "She had for some time been giving clairvoyance in churches and was doing so at a small meeting in Matlock, Derbyshire. In this well-lighted hall, she stood before a small table on which there was a vase of flowers.
>
> "To her own surprise and that of the audience, while she was speaking, the flowers left the vase and floated above the heads of the people. Then the table with the vase on it rose several inches above the ground.
>
> "After that there was a progressive development of her physical mediumship, always under the control of her chief guide, Dr. Reynolds, who says he practised on earth about 150 years ago."

Allan Macdonald also records some of Dr. Reynolds' teachings in his book.

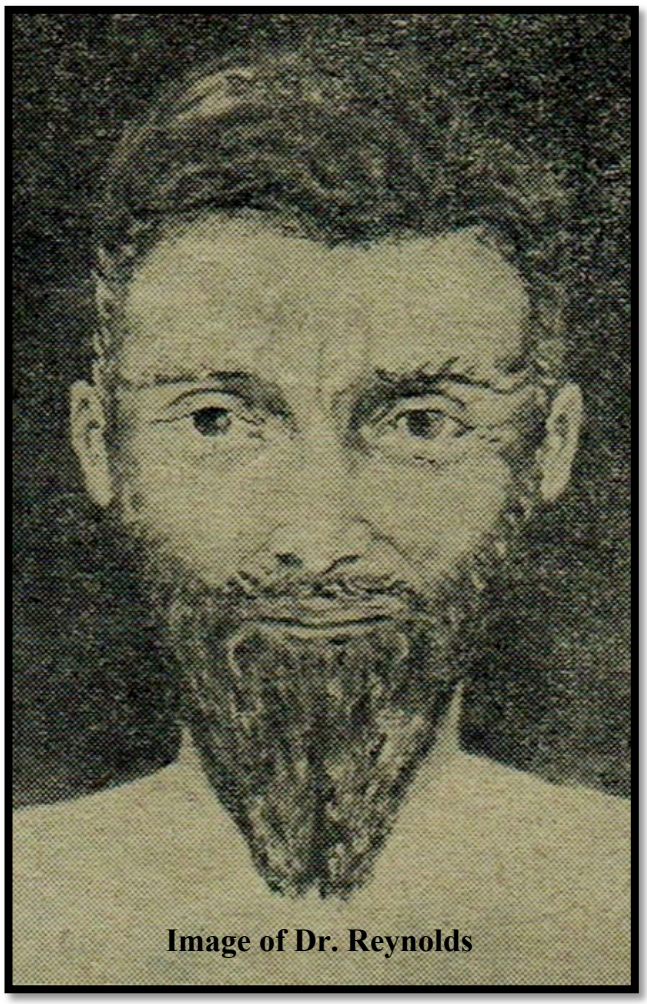


Image of Dr. Reynolds

On one occasion he said:

"When a man fully realises that his every action is being recorded for and against him; when he is convinced that it is not what he professes to do, but what he does of good that matters, and is quite certain that he is his brother's keeper;

"when he knows the truth that he is not on earth solely for his own pleasure and comfort, and can realise that the earth life is but a testing, qualifying span for the development of character and spiritual senses in a world which man has made more difficult than need be;

"when it is recognised that all men, good or bad, of whatever race, colour or belief, are children of the great Creator, then, and only then, will peace and happiness reign on earth, and cruelty, suffering, dread and worry be banished."

Recently, in the Britten Memorial Museum archives (which were transferred from Manchester when the SNU registered office removed to Stansted in 1971) three laboratory slides mounted on a card were found, showing sections of an acute duodenal ulcer removed

from a patient by Dr. Reynolds through the mediumship of Isa Northage. At the March 2016 Study Week[2] at the Arthur Findlay College I came across the images and an account of the operation in the "Two Worlds", Friday June 24th 1946, front page & page 199. Shown below are the *original* laboratory slides, now displayed in the Museum, that were the focus of the article, also republished below:

I saw Dr. Reynolds Operate

Dr. Reynolds, who 'died' more than one hundred years ago, returned to earth, and in physical form removed an acute duodenal ulcer from a patient, in the presence of seven witnesses. THE ULCER WAS LATER ANALYSED IN A LABORATORY BY A HIGH MEDICAL AUTHORITY.

By the Editor:

This is a story without parallel. It is a story of a highly skilled man, who passed from this life over one hundred years ago, and who has been in the habit for several years now, of returning to earth again, assuming a physical form and continuing the kind of work he used to do when on earth. This work is not ordinary labour, but consists of performing skilled operations upon the bodies of patients who have been abandoned as hopeless by the medical profession. He is able to do this astonishing work through the physical mediumship of Mrs. Isa Northage.

Former Case in 'Two Worlds'

On the 11th of March we published an account of how Dr. Reynolds lifted a bone from the brain of a patient, without using any instruments or anæsthetic. It was the convincing testimony of the patient concerned who, after many years of agony has since had no further trouble with this complaint.

On May 21st, I was privileged to witness, in Mrs. Northage's operating theatre, two further amazing operations by Dr. Reynolds and the following is a plain statement of facts concerning the proceedings.

Testimony after Eight Months

On arrival at her home I was introduced to Mr. Newman, a tall and well built gentleman from Northumberland, who was assisting Mrs. Northage for a few weeks in gratitude for his own sensational recovery.

He had been discharged from the Services with an acute duodenal ulcer, his weight had been reduced from thirteen stone to nine and a half stone, his stomach could not retain the smallest portion of food, and he was rapidly wasting away when a friend took him to see Mrs. Northage.

Mr. Newman was operated upon in September, I948, and to-day he has regained his former weight, is happy, healthy and has been able to find employment once more.

[2] The next Study Week at the Arthur Findlay College is in November 2016: http://www.arthurfindlaycollege.org/prog2016/bmmsw2-16.html

After hearing this further testimony of the genuineness of Dr. Reynolds work (there are dozens of such cases), a small party of eight, including Mrs. Northage, assembled around the operating table in the wooden building, used for this purpose, in her garden.

Dr. Reynolds Arrives

Mr. Stocks, her secretary, opened in prayer after the electric light had been switched off and the door secured. Mrs. Northage was now entranced in the cabinet and after a verse of a hymn had been sung, Ellen Dawes, a young spirit girl, picked up the trumpet and said that she had been sent to examine and test conditions.

After the trumpet had been lowered, Dr. Reynold's materialised form appeared and was first discernible as a black silhouette against the red glow from the lamp on a trolley on which were laid forceps, two red electric torches, one white electric torch and two luminous plaques.

Picking up one of these torches Dr. Reynolds switched it on and turned towards the operating table on which lay a patient suffering from an acute duodenal ulcer.

He greeted everyone present and as he did so his face and ectoplasmic draperies were visible to us. He was of average height and shorter than Mrs. Northage.

I was standing immediately opposite to him on the other side of the patient and was able to follow, very closely, the whole proceedings. As two of the party were not wearing masks Dr. Reynolds insisted that we should have these fitted before he commenced the operation. He handed mine to me personally and told me to put it on and watch closely.



We had met before at a previous seance, and so we held a brief conversation before he commenced.

Afraid of Hæmorrhage

Dr. Reynolds then prepared the patient, placing a collection of cotton wool swabs on his abdomen and reassured him that he would feel no pain whatsoever. No anæsthetic was used. The doctor then said he would 'freeze' the portion of the body to be operated upon and then pass his hand, which would become dematerialised, into the side of the body and remove the ulcer.

His hands moved to the side of the body and as he did so he asked the patient if he felt any pain. The patient replied in the negative.

Then I heard a gurgling sound like the passage of wind inside the body. At this stage Dr. Reynolds paused and said that the ulcer

was in a very bad condition and would not come away in a whole piece and that he was afraid of hæmorrhage.

This was apparently overcome and the portions of ulcer brought through, what Dr. Reynolds described as a temporary opening in the abdomen, and placed on the swabs and on the surface of the body. He next cleared an opening amongst the swabs and asked me to look down into it. It was difficult however, in the red light to see anything very definite through this opening.

He then proceeded to remove some of the swabs with the forceps and placed them on a tray which was held by one of his assistants.

Another Doctor Consulted

At this stage Dr. Reynolds told us that he was going to call in another doctor, Dr. West, from the Spirit World, to check up on the condition of the patient. After dematerialising he was soon followed by another spirit. Now whereas Dr. Reynolds has a comparatively large angular face, Dr. West's features were quite different, being smaller and more round. This difference was clearly noticeable when he appeared, because after examining the patient and approving what had taken place, he lifted one of the plaques and held it in front of himself, so that we could see his features and apparel. He was a smaller man than Dr. Reynolds.

Family Reunion

After Dr. West had gone, the patient's 'deceased' daughter, Miss Smith, materialised and came to speak to her father.

Mr. Smith raised his head, as his daughter greeted him. "Hello Daddy, you are going to be all right now," she said, and after speaking a few words she was forced to return to the Spirit World as she was unable to sustain the materialised form for long. Before she returned she kissed her father and spoke to her mother who was also present.

Jim, Mr. Smith's son, likewise in spirit, also greeted his father and mother in the direct voice with the aid of the trumpet. He told his father not to do any more dragging with the garden roller.

Second Operation

Then Dr. Reynolds returned once more to perform a second operation. This patient had recently had an accident in which the bone in his nose had splintered and had prevented him from breathing through his nose. This time the spirit doctor picked up a white electric torch and for a few seconds we saw him in the full glare of white light. He next picked up a red torch and proceeded to examine the patient saying that he would dematerialise his hand, pass it through the back of his head, clean the bone and remove the splinters with a piece of lint.

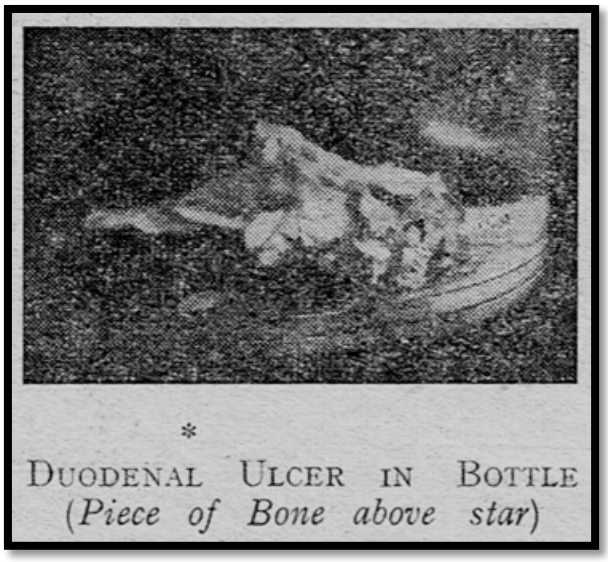
Dr. Reynolds hand was then seen to approach the back of the patient's head and apparently pass into it. When it was withdrawn his hand stretched out to place something in a second dish held by Mrs. Stenson, one of his assistants. Dr. Reynolds stated that he had collected three small pieces of bone.

Light Switched on Medium

Before leaving, Dr. Reynolds discussed another case which he had in hand and asked Mr. Stocks to make arrangements for the next operation. After he had gone, Sambo, Mrs. Northage's guide, asked me to look at the medium still in trance. The electric light was switched on and Sambo continued to talk to me, through Mrs. Northage, as I was looking at her, sitting in the same position as at the commencement of the seance, her green dress, silk stockings, court shoes and her shock of curly hair still undisturbed.

Before the seance ended there were further manifestations, including three other doctors, who said that they had been watching the operations with great interest. Mrs. Stenson closed with prayer.

Patients Testify



*

DUODENAL ULCER IN BOTTLE
(*Piece of Bone above star*)

As soon as the seance ended Mrs. Difford, Dr. Reynold's assistant, and I collected the two containers holding the used swabs, took them into a room in Mrs. Northage's house and with the aid of forceps salvaged the tissues and two pieces of bone, and immersed them in a bottle containing surgical spirit, (see photograph), throwing the blood-stained swabs into the fire.

Before leaving I interviewed both patients, the first stating that he felt quite well and had now no pain whatsoever, whereas he was in great pain before the operation. The second patient testified to the fact that he could now breathe freely through his nose whereas this had been impossible since his accident.

Medical Authority's Report

A few days later I was fortunate in securing the sympathetic cooperation of one of the highest authorities in the medical profession (unfortunately I have not permission to disclose his name), who promised to make an analysis of the ulcer under the microscope in his laboratory, and the photograph of the slide accompanying this article shows a section of it.[3]

His subsequent report was as follows:−It is an acute duodenal ulcer, contains Brunner's glands and shows from its condition that it was about to penetrate the intestine and would have proved fatal at a very early date. He was surprised at the freshness of the tissue which was very soft, and also at the fact that there was no trace of modern surgical methods having been used in the operation. Naturally he was greatly puzzled by all the circumstances of the case.

—~—☼—~—

[3] "Three laboratory slides showing 7/1,000 M.M. sections of unstriped muscle from bowel, showing cellular infiltration, Brunner's Glands and pus cells of duodenal ulcer, removed by Spirit Dr. Reynolds." – "The Two Worlds", June 24th 1949, front page.

ERNEST THOMPSON



The editor referred to in the above article was Ernest Thompson (c.1905-1968), who had succeeded former SNU President Ernest Oaten in 1945 as editor of "The Two Worlds". Thompson had founded the Newcastle Psychical Research Institute in 1945; at this time he was President of Heaton National Spiritualist Church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He was also the founder of the Manchester Psychical Research Institute and founder President of the Spirit Electronic Communication Society.

In October 1946 Thompson instigated a National Education scheme for the Spiritualists' National Union. By July 1949 Thompson had written and completed 150 Lecturettes (approx. 200,000 words) and had also prepared the comprehensive syllabus that provided the framework of the SNU education courses. As editor of "The Two Worlds", then based at Manchester, he also published his Lecturettes in this weekly paper and created a firm public awareness that "Education is the Greatest Need of Our Movement".

In 1950 he marked November 18th as Education Day.

He was the second worker to have earned the highest and most prestigious award by the Union in the form of a Fellowship (FSNU), received in 1949. Mr. A.T. Connor, a leading figure in the Lyceum Movement, was the first to achieve this award in 1948 for his thesis on the Seven Principles; he was the Hon. Secretary of the SNU and BSLU Joint Education Scheme under the style and title of the "National Spiritualist College", which was accepted at the 1925 Bristol AGM and established in July 1926. For further information see "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 4, July 2015: "Early S.N.U Education History".

Ernest Thompson donated numerous items to the Britten Memorial Museum, for example a spirit painting through the mediumship of David Duguid, done in five minutes in complete darkness independently of the hands of the medium. Information on David Duguid can be found in "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 4, July 2015: *Trance & Direct Spirit Art – David Duguid*.

It would appear that the donation of the Isa Northage–Dr. Reynolds laboratory slides was by Ernest Thompson.

CHARLES I. QUASTEL

SNU President 1958-1965 & 1968-1970

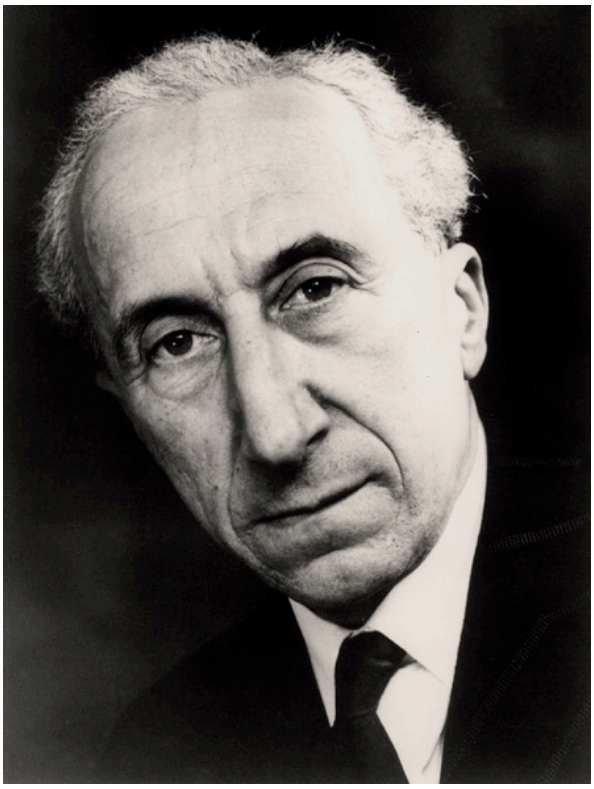
The last issue of "Pioneer" featured former SNU President Charles Quastel, who highlighted the problems between Christian and Rational Spiritualism within the SNU – Quastel made his views quite clear:

Briefly, I believe that one's religious origin or, indeed, the type of church body to which one belongs, does not matter as long as the religious views upheld and expounded by the individual can be fully identified with our Seven Principles.

To add extra principles of belief, such as certain 'Greater World' principles, is a matter for one's conscience, but the S.N.U. church platform must not be used for the expression of these other beliefs.

We have certain beliefs which are fully contained within our Seven Principles, and it is those beliefs and no others which we should officially present.

Thus, I reiterate my opinion that within the S.N.U. there should be no leaders calling themselves Christian, Jewish or any other type of Spiritualist.



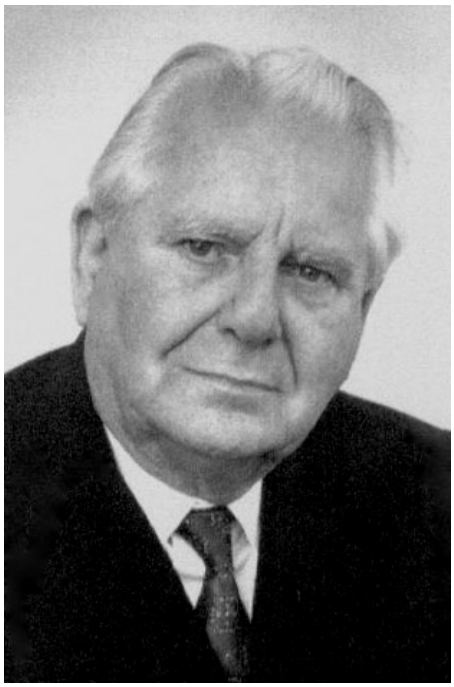
"Pioneer" quoted from the 1950 AGM at Gateshead under the newly-elected President, Percy Wilson: "The long expected battle, between those who favour the propagation of Christian Spiritualism from S.N.U. platforms, and those who wish to keep Spiritualism free from Christian dogmas, broke out at the Sunday morning session."

We can note below from the "Two Worlds", July 16th 1960, that further problems arose at the 1960 Portsmouth AGM under the presidency of Charles Quastel.

SNU Minister Harry Edwards, although not present, caused another storm, as he considered himself to be "a Christian in the fullest sense of the word." Edwards had never made a secret of his religious beliefs but to some Union Spiritualists the question was naturally raised as to why a 'Christian Spiritualist' was an SNU Minister![4]

[4] Spiritualist Ministers go back to WWI or possibly further. Former SNU President Ernest Oaten claimed exemption from military service on the grounds that he was a minister of a religious denomination. He was charged on July 6th 1918 for failing to accept military service; the case was fought through the lower to the High Courts of Justice. The first *official* Spiritualists' National Union Ministers were appointed around 1938; for further information please see "Pioneer", Vol. 1, No. 2, January 2014: "Who were the first Ministers of the Union?"

Behind the scenes in Harry Edwards storm at SNU conference



THE controversial issue as whether you can be a Spiritualist and a Christian flared up again, as we reported last week, at the SNU annual conference. Harry Edwards became the centre of a storm. One delegate quoted a statement made by the world-famous healer six years ago that he considered himself to be "a Christian in the fullest sense of the word."

In this delegate's view, such a belief was inconsistent with the Seven Principles which every individual must accept before becoming a member of an SNU church.

The delegate queried whether Edwards should be allowed to remain an SNU minister. A resolution that the SNU council should reconsider his SNU ministry was defeated in a ballot in which 45 voted for it and 68 against it.

The origin of the six-year-old article in which Edwards had stated his view was given in our last issue. In January 1954 he wrote to "Everybody's" to "take strong exception to the sentence, 'There are non-Christians of whom Harry Edwards is one,' " which had appeared in an article on unorthodox healing.

In Jesus' footsteps

Edwards added: "I do not belong to the Church of England but I am a Christian—a Christian Spiritualist. We try to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and to carry out his commandment to 'heal the sick.' I also believe that spiritual healing is greater than any one religion."

Some years ago it was reported that the healer was offered an important post in the Church of England if he were prepared to repudiate his Spiritualism. He declined.

In all these controversial discussions, like the one that raged at the SNU conference, it is essential that participants should define their terms, for they do not agree on the meanings of the words they use. Do Christians agree on their definition of a Christian? Do Spiritualists agree on their definition of a Spiritualist?

Trouble with pioneers

Without taking any sides in this particular argument, it is not inconsistent, as was stated, and as we understand the position, for an SNU member to accept the Seven Principles and believe in what he regards as "the leadership of Jesus."

The original introduction of the Seven Principles, some 90 years ago, caused a furore. For the purpose of churches owning property it was necessary to define the religious conditions on which Spiritualism was based. The Seven Principles were the answer, but there is even dispute as to who was responsible for them.

Many of the early pioneers were opposed to formulating any set of principles which in time might become crystallised into dogmas and creeds, seeing that they had turned their backs on all conventional theology. These pioneers saw Spiritualism‘s future only if it were a movement which accepted constant inspiration and progressive revelation.

Nevertheless, to comply with the legal requirements, the Seven Principles were finally accepted, with the proviso that every individual had complete liberty of interpretation.

The controversy flared up again in the 1920’s when at an SNU conference, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle pleaded for the addition of an Eighth Principle, one accepting the leadership of Jesus. He was surprised by the vigorous opposition.[5]

Ever since it has been understood that the Seven Principles are a minimum, not a maximum, and that churches could add others if they so desired. Thus within the SNU, there are affiliated churches, like the one at Wimbledon, for example which announce that they accept the leadership of Jesus.

Such additions, it has always been held, are a matter for the conscience of the people concerned.

—~—☼—~—

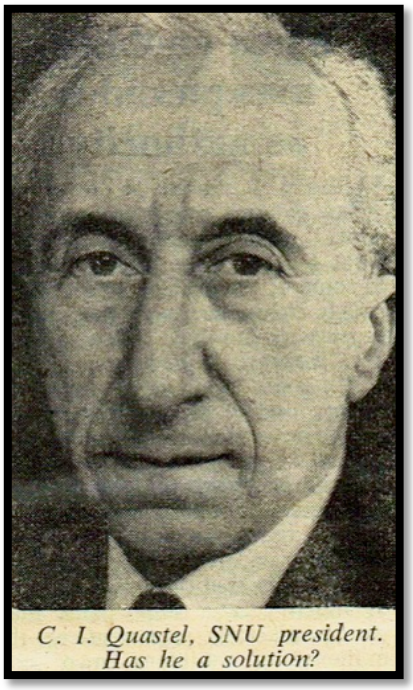
The “proviso that every individual had complete liberty of interpretation” gave SNU Spiritualists the freedom to include a belief in Christianity; liberty of interpretation was not part of the Memorandum or the Articles of Association. The phrase “liberty of interpretation” could be used in such a way as to distort the essence of our Principles and in 1988 the Union withdrew ‘liberty of interpretation’.

The “Union pointed out that ‘Personal Responsibility’ covered each individual’s right to think for his or herself, whereas the Churches did have to stay within the cover of the Memorandum and Articles without personal interpretation.”[6]

Prior to the July 2nd and 3rd 1960 AGM at Portsmouth the “Two Worlds”, June 18th, published a brief statistical account of affiliated churches and membership for the forthcoming conference. In the last issue of “Pioneer” it noted during the WWII years: “Year-end 1939: there were 474 Churches and a 15,000 membership – Year-end 1945: there were 460 Churches and a 14,924 membership – By the end of 1946 there was an increase to 486 Churches and a 16,446 membership.”

[5] See for further details “Pioneer”, Vol. 2, No. 6, November 2015: “Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U. and his Propaganda Work”.

[6] ‘100 Years of National Spiritualism’, by Jean Bassett, published 1990. For further information see “Pioneer”, Vol. 2, No. 2, March 2015: “Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?”



C. I. Quastel, SNU president. Has he a solution?

S.N.U. IS STILL LOSING CHURCHES AND MEMBERS

THE Spiritualists' National Union's annual report, published last week, shows a decrease of 21 churches and 1.311 members.

Affiliated churches totalled 449 compared with 470 the previous year. The 1958 figure of 17,023 church members dropped to 15,712. Numbers have been falling since 1954, when there were 498 churches and 17,211 members.

Church associate members have decreased by over 700, from 2,244 to 1.511—in 1954 the figure was 2,409. There was a slight fall in Class B members, those who subscribe direct to the SNU, from 1,490 to 1,472—the figure six years ago was 1.652. The number of kindred associated bodies reduced from 12 to eight.

Income falls

"Only in South Wales was the membership figure maintained," says the report. The London District Council has the largest number of churches, 75, followed by the Northern DC, 52.

Membership losses are reflected in the SNU's income. Additional work carried out during 1959, involving increased expenditure, coupled with a slightly diminished income, caused a much larger deficit than for 1958.

To make up for last year's deficit of £1,770, as against £1,064 for the previous year, it was necessary, states the SNU, to withdraw a considerable portion of its cash investment in its building fund pool. It records with regret that churches' annual subscriptions dropped by more than £200.

These figures will be considered when the SNU holds its annual general meeting at Portsmouth on July 2 and 3.

One motion to be debated by delegates is directed to improve the platform standard. It suggests an oral test to be made of mediums and exponents who have not passed through the SNU education scheme.

Another motion calls for a research committee to work on scientific lines to bring good repute to psychic phenomena which by their nature have been "much maligned and misrepresented."

The conference will not only have a mayoral welcome but a civic reception on the Saturday night.

—~—☼—~—

We now reach the conclusion of our study of Charles Quastel, born circa 1903, who developed trance mediumship in his twenties. The article published below is taken from the "Two Worlds", July 5th 1958:

Profile of new S.N.U. president

HE MADE HIS NAME AS A REBEL

CHARLES I. QUASTEL, the first Jew to become president of the Spiritualists' National Union, owes his rise to fame to being a rebel. As nobody else is nominated for this office, he automatically becomes the SNU's 22nd president at its annual conference to be held at Norwich this week-end.

For the past six years he has been vice-president, preparing for the highest honour the Union can offer.

Quastel is an example of what in other walks of life would be called the poacher turned gamekeeper. A more fitting comparison is to describe him as a modern Moses who aims to lead his organisation to the promised land.

Quastel made his reputation on the floor of SNU conferences. He first arrived, completely unknown, as a delegate representing his Sheffield church. Soon he was an outstanding figure at these annual meetings.

The reason? His fiery, uncompromising attitude, plus his frank, vigorous criticism of the SNU officers and council where he thought he detected weaknesses in administration or policy.

It is human nature for delegates at annual conferences to enjoy the spectacle of someone from the floor attacking the executive on the platform.

Quastel's annual performance was scintillating. It was never dialetical or done merely for effect. He had something to say. And he said it in a voice which thundered its wrath like the Old Testament prophets.

Indeed, had he grown a long white beard and worn a mantle, it would not have been difficult to regard him as the possible reincarnation of a Bible prophet, or perhaps overshadowed by one of these ancient vessels of God.

It was not surprising that a stir went through conferences, with old hands pointing him out to new ones, as Quastel rose to his feet to make his criticisms with fervour and eloquence.

He always opposed what he regarded as the commercialisation of Spiritualism. He was impatient with those of sectarian outlook who, in his view, were attempting to dilute the universal religious appeal that Spiritualism makes.

Occasionally it seemed as if he were arguing for a "closed shop" in the Union, as for example his forceful plea, "The SNU church platform must not be used for the expression of beliefs other than the Seven Principles."

Later this became modified to urging that Union churches should give preference in their engagements to Union mediums and similarly that these mediums should give priority to SNU churches.

It is not surprising that the man who had embraced Spiritualism largely because of racial persecution in early life should be anti-orthodox in his thinking and a Spiritualist without a qualifying prefix.

Quastel, believing that the SNU is the spearhead of Spiritualism in this country, has pleaded for the appointment of whole-time paid Spiritualist ministers and mediums, a dream that is still far from realisation. Nevertheless, through the years, the visionary has persisted in dreaming dreams.

His great hope, he said, was the establishing of a world Spiritualist union essentially religious in character, with the Seven Principles as its basis. This was mistakenly regarded as criticising the International Spiritualist Federation because some of its member-countries do not accept Spiritualism's religious implications.

Quastel, internationalist in outlook, visualises the forward march of Spiritualism as a universal religion making its unique contribution to the brotherhood of man.

He must have been in a dilemma when he was nominated to serve on the SNU council. After all, it is difficult to be fiery when you have to deal with administrative problems. His gifts were more suitably expressed in the thrust of controversy rather than in the deliberations of the council chamber.

But the call had come. He accepted nomination and was elected. It was obviously irksome for Quastel to sit on the platform with the rest of the council and to be at the receiving end of criticisms from the floor of the conference where he was always more at home.

Destiny, as so often happens, with an ironic twist had placed him in the position of defending the council which he had so often belaboured. His defence was able but never as fiery as when he had been on the other side of the fence.

A schoolmaster by profession it was natural for him to work on committees dealing with education and exponents.

In recent times he has been a critic of some aspects of spirit healing. Few guessed the reason. He has been a practising healer with several striking successes to his credit.

In all the controversies in which he participated with impassioned ardour, even those who differed with him recognised the honesty of mind and singleness of purpose which animated his opinions.

The youth who turned his back on orthodox Judaism will now guide the destiny of Spiritualism's national organisation. When he became vice-president, the writer of this profile, in congratulating Quastel, jokingly said, "Your troubles will begin when you are president."

It is hoped that these words are not prophetic. If they are, Quastel, the man with a mission, will prove equal to the task.



“No World War” predictions

It was briefly mentioned in the last issue of “Pioneer”:

> “Some of the decline would be a result of the “No World War” predictions. Leading spirit guides such as Silver Birch, Red Cloud and others assured Spiritualists there would be no war. Assurances were given, more or less emphatic, that there would be “no European War,” or that there would be “no Great War,” or that there would be “no war for England.” SNU President Frank Blake repeatedly said in public and in the press that “war would not come.”
>
> “These incorrect prophecies from the spirit world dealt Spiritualism a severe blow within the movement and no doubt caused amusement and ridicule from its critics.”

Here is a notable example of such a prophecy. From “Psychic News”, May 20th 1939:

WAR DANGER IS OVER!
Prophecies Of Peace Now Being Fulfilled

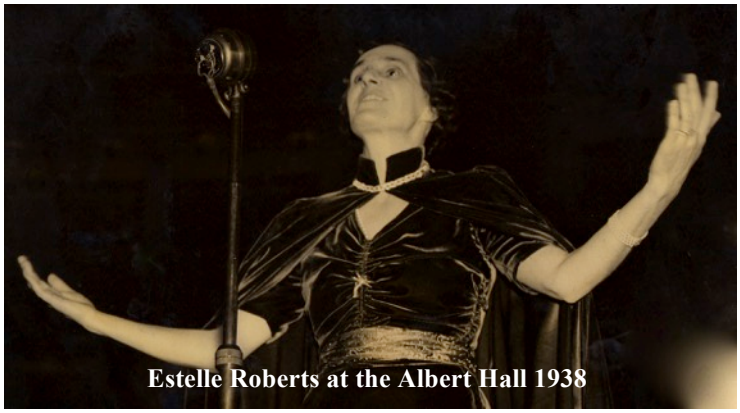
> “Now you are beginning to see the first steps in the fulfilment of those prophecies made in our world many, many months ago,” said Silver Birch, spirit guide of Hannen Swaffer’s home circle, last week.
>
> “You are beginning to see the faint streaks of light as the dawn which heralds peace makes its gradual appearance in your midst,” he went on.
>
> “When with calm assurance we told you in the hours of your blackness and darkness, when hope and reason had fled, that war would not come, it seemed that our prophecy was impossible of fulfilment.
>
> “How could it come about? many asked. Yet they clung to this reed, for they had naught else to support them in their dire extremity. Today you begin to see the promise of better times.

Prophecy for some Spiritualists should remain with the crystal ball and the fortune-tellers’ tents along the promenade, as Spiritualism is to ‘prove the survival of the human spirit’ rather than future events. But nevertheless, leading up to WWII, prophecy was on the agenda, with well-known spirit guides echoing the “No World War” predictions. Even after the Prime Minister’s declaration that a ‘state of war’ existed, some spirit messages continued to affirm that peace would prevail at that late hour.

Two of the biggest named spirit guides were Silver Birch and Red Cloud, though at this time Silver Birch was known only as the guide of the Hannen Swaffer circle. The identity of the medium was a closely kept secret. For further information please see “Psypioneer”, Vol. 2, No. 9, September 2006, A Surprising Jesuit: “Spiritualists and their “No War” Predictions”, & “Spiritualism and the War”, by Herbert Thurston (1856-1939); these were the last articles from the Jesuit priest and were written from his deathbed.

In response, "Prediction", December 1939, published:

Estelle Roberts says



Estelle Roberts at the Albert Hall 1938

"LET THE PEOPLE JUDGE"

What "Red Cloud" said before the War

THERE has been great controversy in the press and elsewhere concerning the apparently incorrect statement of the spirit guides and controls to the effect that England would not be involved in war.

Much has been said both heatedly and calmly; the guides have been denied, condemned and even pitied—those same guides who only twelve months ago were being praised and thanked for the peace of mind that they had given to their hearers.

The question has been asked: "Are the guides, mediums or the Press to blame?" It seems to me that neither the guides, mediums, nor the Press can be blamed. The fault lies entirely with the people, because no one in this world or the next can alter their free-will and personal responsibility.

I am now about to take up the cudgels on behalf of Red Cloud (who in reality needs no defender) in order that people might be helped to judge the question for themselves. I am now printing extracts from the verbatim printed notes of lectures that Red Cloud has given to a certain class that is known as the "White Brotherhood Class" numbering over fifty members. These notes in the usual way are not given for general publication, but it is now apparent that the guides have been concerned and indeed have had their serious doubts that war might come sooner or later owing to the cause of man's free-will operating in this world.

There is no question that I and Red Cloud are being "wise after the event" because these reports are dated and can be confirmed by all who were present at the Brotherhood Classes.

It must be remembered that the guides seldom allow any opportunity to pass to impress upon their audience that every man has free-will and personal responsibility, and that responsibility lies with mankind alone for the chaos that abounds in the world to-day.

In October, 1938, just after the crisis when Red Cloud prophesied that there would be no war involving England he firmly believed this to be the case because he had received instructions from the Masters above him to tell the people so. He foresaw the crises that would arise and even said that the ''worst crisis" would be in August, 1939. But as the months passed, there is proof positive that early in 1939 he began to have forebodings that all was not well and he endeavoured to definitely warn the people that the responsibility of war or peace lay upon their shoulders.

—~—☼—~—

SNU President Frank Blake responded in the "Two Worlds", October 20th 1939:



PROPHECIES

MANY people have written asking if I can tell them why, in spite of many messages from the spirit world and prophecies to the contrary, war has come upon us. The question is not easy to answer. As is well known, I have repeatedly said in public, and published in our Press, that war would not come. My confidence in this assertion was based upon my own vision of portending events and messages received even up to the day before war was declared. I was further sustained in my belief that war would not come, because during the past five years, while war has seemed imminent, and particularly during September of last year, when war seemed inevitable, my prophecies came true.

From messages since received, it would seem that at the last moment the forces working for Peace, both in the Beyond and here upon Earth, were overwhelmed by the intensified momentum given to the evil forces operating from the Beyond as here, and which had their genesis in the embittered hatred and cruel despotism of one man.

Some will say: But why could not the spirit world prevent war; or if not able to prevent it, why did they prophesy Peace?

The spirit world is peopled by those who have lived here upon earth—those who communicate with us are those who, in the main, have passed beyond the veil within living memory. There, as here, their knowledge of life and coming events is limited to their experience and powers of perception and interpretation, and they, like ourselves, with the most honest intent, are liable to make mistakes. Indeed, it is seldom a communicator claims to be immune from error of judgment, though he may maintain a positive opinion upon the trend of certain events. Moreover, we must not forget that while prominence was given to those who prophesied that there would be no war, a very large number of messages came through to the effect that war would be declared; some of these came within my personal knowledge, but they received little or no publicity. If it had been possible to canvass the opinion of our discarnate friends as to whether war would come, it is highly probable that we would have found their opinion as divided as our own. This was borne in upon me when during September, 1938, I persisted that there

would be no war, though a large number of messages were received by others to the effect that war was then inevitable.

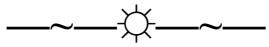
Mediums as a rule are influenced, if not actually controlled, by selected discarnate individuals or groups of individuals. They come under the direction of the individual or group concerned. Just as a student is to a greater or lesser extent influenced by the training he receives, so, too, is the medium. It is probably true to say that complete mental independence is unknown. The mind, mental outlook, and vision are coloured by its training. To accept this is not, as some would have us believe, to deny the genuineness of mediumship, but to recognise and acknowledge the laws controlling it and the methods by which it is rendered active.

Some assert that the cause of Spiritualism has suffered a severe defeat because certain well-known mediums—myself among them—have proved unreliable in this particular prophecy. These critics have ignored entirely the essential facts concerning mediumship and spirit intercourse, also the many true prophecies by other mediums concerning the same event. I would remind these hasty critics that failure is not necessarily a just cause for destructive criticism: it is sometimes a valuable lead for inquiry and adjustment.

The foregoing is not an apology for the failure of myself and others or the spirit friends concerned to forecast with certainty the coming of the present war. I have no such intention, though I deeply regret to have been the means of distressing a large number of people. I gave to the world, as did others who were similarly instructed, the messages received. That our spirit friends worked for Peace and honestly believed their combined labours would not be in vain can, I believe, be accepted. Their disappointment in the failure of their effort is as keen as our own.

I note that some have expressed the opinion that we mediums should cease to prophesy and refrain from giving messages. They assert we should confine ourselves to proving survival, and claim that that is the main and essential mission of Spiritualism. In these claims there is an entire disregard of the instructive and educational value of spirit communion. To contend that a knowledge of survival is all that is necessary is not only to ignore the priceless value of human intercourse between those discarnate and incarnate, but also to assume that nothing of immediate practical value can be received from our discarnate friends.

Those of us who are acquainted with the history and literature of Spiritualism know that numberless prophecies and messages have proved a hundred per cent true. They have been quoted and published times innumerable. Some of them have been quoted and published even by those who now are ready to condemn the practice. One is given to wonder if, after all, they have not been attracted by the “loaves and fishes” rather than by the deeper implications that lie behind mediumship.



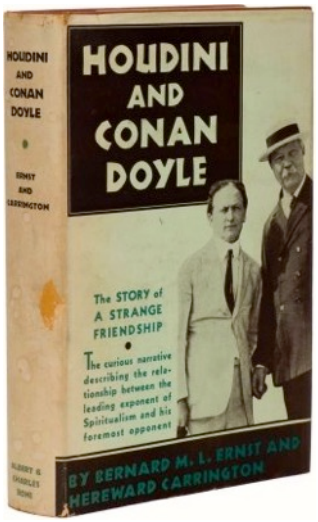
Houdini & Conan Doyle

—~—☼—~—

In the November 2015 issue of "Pioneer" it published "Lady Doyle Was The Family Medium". It would be Sir Arthur's wife's mediumship in 1922 that would instigate an irreparable breakdown in the friendship of Harry Houdini and Conan Doyle.

Sir Arthur himself never gave up hope for a renewal of their friendship even if he had to wait until the next world:

"I write this in bed, as I have broken down badly
and have developed angina pectoris.
So there is just a chance that I may talk it all over
with Houdini himself before very long . . ."



Recently their relationship has been the subject of a ten-part British-Canadian television drama series based on the friendship of "Houdini & Doyle".

A review published in "Light", February 3rd 1933, written by George Henderson Lethem,[7] editor of "Light" from 1931 to 1941, gives an account of the breakdown of their friendship from the 1932 book, *Houdini and Conan Doyle*, co-written by the well-known psychical researcher, Hereward Carrington, and Bernard Ernst, an amateur magician and a lawyer. After Houdini's death on October 31st 1926, Ernst succeeded him as President of the Society of American Magicians:

HOUDINI & CONAN DOYLE

STORY OF STRANGE FRIENDSHIP AND AN HISTORIC QUARREL

"THIS is the story of one of the strangest friendships in history. It is that between Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: physician, author, creator of the world-famous Sherlock Holmes—and Harry Houdini, master magician, escape artist, gaol-breaker, mystifier-extraordinary."

With these words, Messrs. Bernard M. L. Ernst and Hereward Carrington begin the first chapter of the book *Houdini and Conan Doyle* (Hutchinson 12/6), of which they are the joint authors; and when the reader has finished the book—which he is likely to do as nearly as possible at one sitting—he will agree with them.

[7] It is noteworthy to mention that George Lethem for a considerable period was the proofreader for the Union's *first* journal, "The National Spiritualist", 1924-1932; this was under the editorship of George Berry. See the first issue of "Pioneer" for more information.

Curiously enough, the point of attraction for both men was a subject on which they could not agree—namely, Spiritualism. Sir Arthur was convinced beyond doubt that Spiritualism is true; Houdini said he wanted to believe but could not find proof. For years this position was maintained; many visits were exchanged, and Houdini saw Medium after Medium on Sir Arthur's recommendation, seeking always for a message from his mother—his "sainted mother" he usually called her—a message which, as was afterwards divulged, he hoped would contain the word "Forgive." The message never came in the form he expected, and all other forms he rejected; until, in his closing years, he entered upon an anti-spiritualistic campaign that outraged Sir Arthur's feelings and brought the strange intimacy to an abrupt end.



It was a message through the mediumship of Lady Conan Doyle, purporting to be from Houdini's mother, that precipitated the quarrel. Sir Arthur and Lady Doyle were in the midst of a lecturing tour in America and invited Houdini to visit them at Atlantic City. He did so, and on June 17th, 1922, Lady Doyle gave Houdini a sitting [for automatic writing] in which messages were obtained claiming to come from his deceased, or as he would say, his "sainted mother," which at first Houdini appeared to accept as genuine. Describing the sitting in *Our American Adventure*, Sir Arthur wrote: —

"The reason why I refer to my wife's remarkable power, which only came by slow development, is that my friend, Mr. Houdini, the greatest of magicians, sat with us one afternoon, and received a fifteen-page letter from his mother which made him very grave and thoughtful, though he is a most difficult man to convince . . . We asked him to think a question in silence, and a correct name came instantly through my wife's hand. But then occurred the most marvellous thing of all. Houdini sat playing with the pencil, when his hand was suddenly moved and he wrote the name 'Powell.' Now, Dr. Ellis Powell, my dear fighting partner in Spiritualism, had just died in England . . . I was the man he was most likely to signal to, and here was his name coming through the hand of Houdini . . . He muttered something about knowing a man named Powell down in Texas, though he failed to invent any reason why that particular man should come back at that particular moment. Then, gathering up the paper, he hurried from the room."

Houdini's account of the sitting was very different. The message purporting to be from his mother, he said, began as follows: "Oh, my darling, thank God, thank God, at last I'm through—I've tried oh so often—now I am happy." Houdini's comment on this, in a marginal note, was: "Message written by Lady Doyle claiming the spirit of my dear mother had control of her hand—my sainted mother could not write English and spoke broken English."

Regarding the writing of the name "Powell," Houdini asserted that it was that of Powell, the magician, of whom he was thinking, and that he wrote it of his own volition and in full consciousness.

"Nothing further," says our joint authors, "seems to have passed between the two men regarding the incident until the following November, when Houdini published an article in one of the New York papers, violently attacking the subject, in which he mentioned the Doyle sitting in rather uncomplimentary terms." To this, Sir Arthur replied in the following letter (dated November 19th, 1922):

"My dear Houdini: They sent me the *New York Sun* with your article and no doubt wanted me to answer it, but I have no fancy for sparring with a friend in public, so I took no notice. But, none the less, I felt rather sore about it. You have all the right in the world to hold your own opinion, but when you say that you have had no evidence of survival, you say what I cannot reconcile with what I saw with my own eyes. I know by many examples the purity of my wife's mediumship, and I saw what you got and what the effect was upon you at the time. You know also that you yourself at once wrote down with your own hand the name of Powell, the one man who might be expected to communicate with me . . . I don't propose to discuss this subject any more with you, for I consider that you have had your proofs and that the responsibility of accepting or rejecting is with you. And it is a very lasting responsibility. However, I leave it at that, for I have done my best to give you truth."

THE BREACH WIDENS

To this letter, Houdini wrote re-stating his version of what he believed happened at the sitting and concluded by saying:

"I trust my clearing up the seance from my point of view is satisfactory, and that you do not harbour any ill-feeling, because I hold both Lady Doyle and yourself in the highest esteem. I know you treat this as a religion, but personally I cannot do so, for, up to the present time, and with all my experiences, I have never seen or heard anything that could really convert me. Trusting you will accept my letter in the same honest good faith and feeling as that in which it was written."

The correspondence between Sir Arthur and Houdini continued at intervals, but their relations became more and more strained, owing to Houdini's public attacks on Spiritualism and criticisms of Sir Arthur. Eventually (May 24, 1923), from Los Angeles, Sir Arthur wrote:

"Dear Houdini: I must really ask you to deny over your signature three injurious statements which you have made, none of which have the slightest truth in them—so that this denial may be published in the Oakland or any other paper which has contained such statements . . . I am very sorry this breach has come, as we have felt very friendly towards Mrs. Houdini and yourself. But, 'friendly is as friendly does,' and this is not friendly, but, on the contrary, it is outrageous to make such statements with no atom of truth in them. I do not wish to argue the point, but simply that you accept unreservedly my assurance that all three statements are false and that you contradict them."

To this appeal, Houdini apparently did not respond, but, on the contrary, intensified his anti-spiritualist campaign. "Evidently," says our authors, "Houdini's violent

campaign had decided Sir Arthur that further controversy was useless," and in replying to some request by Houdini for information of one kind or another, Sir Arthur (on February 26th, 1924) replied:

"Dear Houdini: I am answering you by the first post. I could not make myself clear in a cable. You probably want those extracts in order to twist them in some way against me or my cause, but what I say I say, and I do not alter. All the world can quote. I read an interview you gave some American paper the other day, in which you said my wife gave you nothing striking when she wrote for you. When you met us, three days after the writing, in New York, you said: 'I have been walking on air ever since,' or words to that effect. I wonder how you reconcile your various utterances? I observe that in your letter you put down my starting my world-mission 'in a crisis of emotion.' I started in 1916. My son died in 1918. My only emotion was impersonal and the reflection of a world in agony."

"And so ended this historic correspondence," we read, "and with it ended one of the most remarkable friendships in history. Henceforth Doyle and Houdini were destined to travel their respective paths alone, and develop their rival propaganda in their own way. Sir Arthur threw himself more vigorously than ever into the Spiritualistic cause, while Houdini similarly attacked it more fiercely than ever. For nearly two years longer Houdini was destined to carry on his activities, when that great avenger, Death, claimed him in the heyday of his energetic campaign. Not long afterwards he was followed into the Great Beyond by Sir Arthur himself, who fully anticipated a renewal of their friendship in the next world, and spoke of it in one of his subsequent letters."

" MANLY WORDS FROM A FINE BRAVE SOUL"

The letter referred to was written to Mr. Ernst and reads as follows:

"I write this in bed, as I have broken down badly and have developed angina pectoris. So there is just a chance that I may talk it all over with Houdini himself before very long. I view the prospect with perfect equanimity. That is one thing that psychic knowledge does. It removes all fear of the future."

"Manly words from a fine brave soul," is the comment of our authors.

It is well known that Sir Arthur believed that Houdini was himself a Medium and that he accomplished some of his more difficult tricks by drawing on psychic power. This Houdini denied; but Messrs. Ernst and Carrington—themselves magicians—suggest that there is at least a possibility that Sir Arthur was right. Of one slate-writing trick performed in private with Sir Arthur as one of the mystified participators, the authors say:

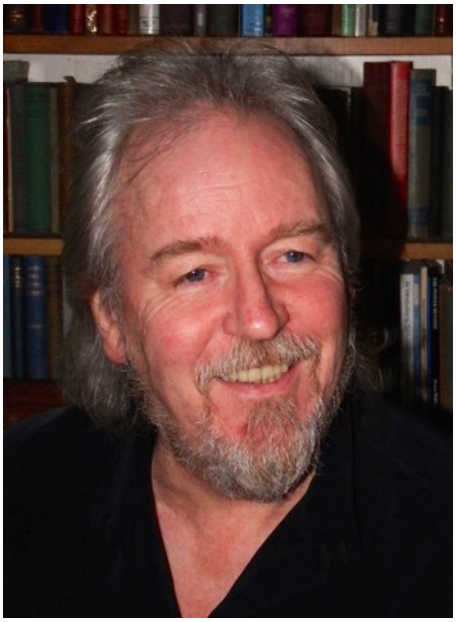
"Bearing in mind all the details of the illusion, it seems indeed incredible that it could have been accomplished by means of simple trickery . . . There are many, doubtless, who will feel as Sir Arthur felt."

The book is a large one, covering much ground and many topics, and from beginning to end it is intensely interesting. Strangely enough, in giving an indication of Houdini's showmanship, and the exciting scenes that he occasionally went through, the authors quote, in the first chapter, a long description of a tumultuous "escape" scene in the

Palace Theatre, Blackburn (October, 1902), written by myself for the *Daily Star*, Blackburn, with which I was at that time connected.



Harry Houdini greeting Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mrs Doyle



Britten Memorial Study Weeks at the Arthur Findlay College

A Unique Opportunity – Exploring Spiritualist History

Britten Memorial, founded in 1899, opens its doors again to researching the Spiritualist movement from its earliest days!

Studying for an S.N.U. Course, a degree, writing a paper or furthering your general knowledge of Spiritualism and our history, etc.

£25.00 per day 09. 30 – 20. 30
Meals and accommodation available if required*

Dates presently available 2016

November 13-19

Your study visit will be supported under the guidance of the Museum Curator and Librarian, Mr Paul Gaunt. Students will have access to the important major Spiritualistic journals of the day, books and the Museum, where you can study the many aspects of our history. Scans/photocopies will be available on some material.

Paul has an extensive knowledge of the history of Spiritualism and has been involved with the movement for 46 years; he is the editor of the SNU Pioneer and Psypioneer Journal.

All those intending to book should contact Paul first to make sure any specialised subject material is available
curator@snu.org.uk

*** Additional costs if required:**

Lunch £10, Dinner £12.50.
Bed & Full English breakfast is £90.00 per room per night for an ensuite room.
Bed & Full English breakfast is £70.00 per room per night.
Alternatively, accommodation is available in the village, list available

Spaces are limited, so book early to avoid disappointment

THE EFFECT OF THE VAGRANCY ACT

THE WORK OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION

—~—☼—~—

Concluded from the February issue:

In the last issue we finished with the Spiritualists' National Union's deputation to the Home Secretary, Mr. Chuter Ede, on 6th March 1946, regarding the operation of the Witchcraft Act 1735 and the Vagrancy Act 1824 in relation to Spiritualists. It was already seventy years since the first prosecution, resulting in the first approach to the Home Secretary, and in 1946 the reply came after another six months of deliberation.

Dated September 9th 1946 it ended with these words:

> I fully appreciate the language of these statutes, is archaic, and that it would be more satisfactory that the law on this subject should be embodied in terms more appropriate to the present day. I cannot, however, hold out any hope of legislation on this subject at the present time. For the reasons which I have explained, it will be necessary when these statutes are amended or repealed, that some new provision covering fraudulent activities shall be enacted.
>
> Yours sincerely,
> J. CHUTER EDE.

The Union's response:

The Fight for Freedom Must Go On.

> Whilst we have the unqualified support of over I00 M.P.'s for our claim that mediumship should be excluded from the operation of both these outmoded Acts, it is clear that a great deal of work has still to be achieved before we can overcome the obstacles that lie before us in our struggle for legal recognition and religious freedom. The work of the Freedom Committee will continue with fresh vigour, and we hope that every Spiritualist will rally to the cause, and enthusiastically support with organised activity our great struggle for FREEDOM.

While awaiting the Home Secretary's reply the fight for legal recognition and religious freedom was secretly infiltrating the House of Commons, with positive effect in persuading willing MPs to learn about the legal disabilities under which the movement had suffered for decades. Secret private dinner parties hosted by Tom Brooks were soon revealed; below is taken from "Psychic News", February 1st 1947:

CLAIRVOYANCE AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ESTELLE ROBERTS AND HELEN HUGHES DEMONSTRATE BEFORE M.P.S

ESTELLE ROBERTS AND HELEN HUGHES—UNDOUBTEDLY BRITAIN'S TWO FINEST PLATFORM EXPONENTS—HAVE MADE HISTORY BY DEMONSTRATING SURVIVAL TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN THE PRECINCTS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

This has been one of the best-kept secrets in Spiritualism. Although the editors of at least three psychic newspapers attended, not a word of it was breathed to the rest of the movement or to the public—until one of the M.P.'s present dropped a hint to a Fleet Street reporter, with the result that accounts appeared first in the "News of the World," then in the "Daily Mail" and again in the "Star."

None of the Spiritualists broke the confidence reposed in them by their host, Mr. T. J. Brooks, M.B.E., Labour M.P. for Rothwell, who is a convinced Spiritualist and has appeared on our platforms on many occasions.

Those Spiritualists to whom we spoke—including Mr. A. H. L. Vigurs (President of the S.N.U.), Mr. John Stewart (Treasurer). Mrs. Estelle Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. Challis and Mr. Brooks himself —were all puzzled by the disclosures. The leakage obviously came from outside the movement.

But now the secret is out, Spiritualists have a right to know something of the events leading up to these remarkable demonstrations—for they were very evidential—as well as the reason why a ban of silence was imposed in the first place.

WHY THEY WERE HELD

In view of the difficulty Spiritualist leaders have experienced in their efforts to persuade Parliament to change the law so far as it affects mediumship, it was felt that an interest in psychic matters must be aroused among Members of Parliament themselves, so that the rank and file of the House of Commons would realise the difficulties under which we labour as a Movement.

And what better way was there of interesting them in Spiritualism than by allowing them to witness demonstrations of mediumship by some of our finest exponents?

Accordingly, then it was arranged that a series of private dinner parties should be held in the House. Mr. Brooks acted as host and the cost was defrayed by private subscription among prominent Spiritualists.

There were four dinners in all, at three of which demonstrations of clairvoyance were given by Helen Hughes and Estelle Roberts.[8] These demonstrations were not really the purpose of the dinners, the main object of which was to interest M.P.s in our case, and to let them know the legal disabilities under which we suffer.

[8] Helen Hughes: see "Pioneer", Vol. 2, No. 3, May 2015: "Helen Hughes Profile & Helen Hughes at Sheffield". Estelle Roberts: see "Pioneer", Vol. 1, No. 5, October 2014: "Estelle Roberts and the House of Red Cloud".

Mrs. Hughes and Mrs. Roberts were really invited to contribute to the speeches, but on each occasion the medium felt impelled to give spirit messages from the loved ones of the members assembled.


Helen Hughes

The first dinner was held on April 11. Mr. Brooks presided and addresses were given by Mr. C. E. Loseby, Mr. A. H. L. Vigurs, Miss Lind-af-Hageby, Mr. Hannen Swaffer and Mrs. Helen Hughes.

It was so successful that it was followed the next month, on May 28, by another dinner at which Mr. J. B. McIndoe, former president of the S.N.U., and Miss Lind-af-Hageby gave addresses. Mrs. Helen Hughes again spoke of her experiences and, as on the first occasion, went on to give clairvoyant messages.

At the third dinner on July 25, Mr. Brooks again presided. Speakers included the Dowager Duchess of Hamilton, Mr. H. F. Bendall (President of the Greater World Christian Spiritualist Association), Mr. John Stewart, Lord Dowding and Mr. Maurice Barbanell. Mrs. Roberts was present on this occasion and she gave a talk on her own psychic experiences.

Then, as had happened with Helen Hughes, the spirits she could see were so insistent that she also gave clairvoyant messages to the members.

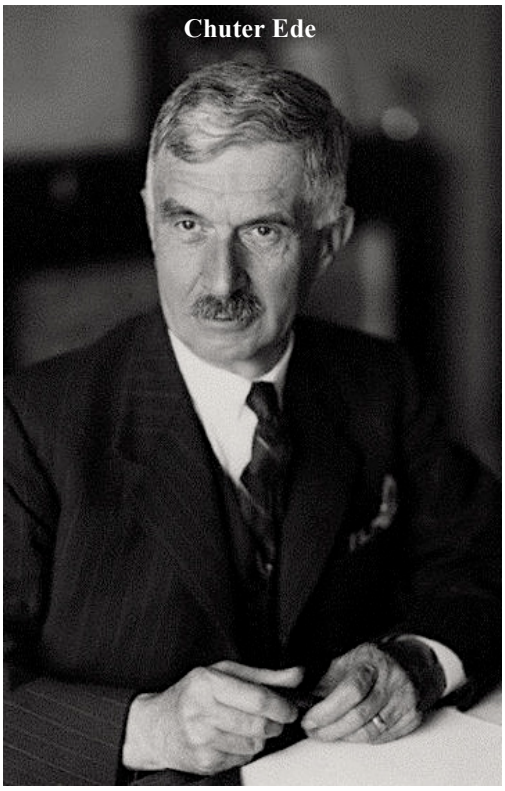
40 M.P.s ATTENDED

At the last dinner, on December 5, no medium was invited to attend. There were only speeches this time by Mr. A. H. L. Vigurs and Mr. Hannen Swaffer.

In all, upwards of forty Members of Parliament have attended these dinners, some more than once, and it is felt that good work has been done in preparation for the next attempt to get an alteration in the law.

Since the Home Secretary‘s reply to the deputation which saw him in March of last year, there has been a further approach to Mr. Chuter Ede and future plans are held up pending his reply.

In 1948 came the first positive move by Mr. Chuter Ede, the Home Secretary, who introduced a "New Clause" restricting the arrest of mediums *only to police officers;* up until this time it was lawful for any person whosoever to apprehend a medium or an associate who was thought to be offending against the Vagrancy Act. Below is taken from the "Two Worlds", Friday March 19th 1948:


Chuter Ede

Criminal Justice Bill Concession

Only Policemen now allowed to Arrest Mediums

Ever since the beginning of the Spiritualist Movement mediums have been liable to arrest for using their natural psychic powers to communicate with those who, having passed from earthly life, now continue their existence in the spirit world. This has always been a potential menace to Spiritualism when taking part in their services.

Mediums have, from time to time, been arrested and Spiritualists have constantly appealed to the legislative authorities to have those archaic Acts of Parliament, the Witchcraft Act 1735 and the Vagrancy Act 1824, repealed on the grounds of religious freedom.

New Clause

The first results of the long years of struggle, though very small, have now been achieved.

Mr. Chuter Ede, Home Secretary, has moved a new clause *restricting* the right of arrest, without warrant, in the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Criminal Justice Bill.

The clause dealt with a person pretending or professing to tell fortunes or using any subtle means, or device, by palmistry or otherwise, to deceive and impose on any person.

Powers of Constable

Under section 6 of the Vagrancy Act, 1824, it is lawful for any person whatsoever to apprehend any person who is thought to be offending against this Act. This power of street arrest, without a warrant, is now limited to a police constable, under a new clause proposed by the Home Secretary, in the following terms: Notwithstanding anything in section 6 of the Vagrancy Act, 1824, a person found committing the offence of pretending 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, shall not be apprehended under that section except by a constable, and shall not be so apprehended by a constable, unless the constable has reason to believe that that person will abscond unless arrested, or is not satisfied as to the identity or place of residence of that person."

Amendment Accepted

This amending clause; put forward by the Home Secretary, was the outcome of a clause tabled by Mr. T. J. Brooks, M.P., Mr. Sydney Silverman and other M. P.'s on behalf of the Spiritualists' National Union, which covered the same ground but with this addition that the officer in charge of the police station to which the person is brought, should have the power to release the person arrested, if in his belief, it would not tend to defeat the ends of justice. The Home Secretary's amendment was accepted on his assurance that he would give further consideration to this aspect of the case and see what could be done to meet it on the report stage of the Bill.

Ruled out of Order

The Union, through its Parliamentary supporters, tabled a number of other clauses and amendments to the Bill designed to remove the unfair restrictions from which we suffer as a religious body, and to prevent the prosecution of genuine psychic mediums under the archaic Acts which make "witchcraft" and "fortune telling" criminal offences. The most important of these made it necessary, in offences with which mediums are charged, for the prosecution to prove intent to deceive. This was ruled out of order, as not coming within the scope of the Bill. When questioned on this ruling, the chairman said the clause related to a new offence, and the Bill did not alter the law with regard to any specific offence.

Home Secretary's Statement

Another clause which the Union was instrumental in putting forward related to evidence by practical demonstration, and after about an hour's debate it was withdrawn, in view of the opposition of the Home Secretary and his statement that he would be disappointed if some opportunity was not given to him, or to an early successor of his, to deal with the question of wiping out, or bringing up to date, archaic Statutes. Another clause dealing with evidence of agent provocateur was also debated at length and negatived when the question was put.

Entitled to Credence

In the committee stage of the Criminal Justice Bill, Mr. Chuter Ede, the Home Secretary said: "On the occasions that I have attended a Spiritualist seance there has been no response, and it has been said that that was because there was an unbeliever present. I have always been under the impression that that was aimed at me . . .

"I am a long way from being convinced that there is any grounds for these things at all, but there are reputable people of high scientific attainments who, on occasions, have said that they have found a response, and they are entitled to credence . . .

"I received a deputation from the Spiritualist organisations, when they laid their difficulties before me.

"I agree that the act under which this prosecution (the Duncan case) took place is archaic. It was passed in a different civilisation from ours, but in dealing with this kind of thing the proper remedy is not this Clause, but the wiping out or amendment of some of these ancient Statutes.

"I shall be disappointed if some opportunity is not given, I hope to me, but if not to me then to an early successor of mine, to deal with the question of wiping out or bringing up to date, archaic Statutes.

"In the meantime the Spiritualist organisations who came to see me made it quite clear that they did not desire to shelter fraud in this matter . . .

"After that interview I renewed previous instructions by sending a circular to the chief constables that no prosecution was to be undertaken—it was advice, not an order, because I cannot give the police an order—until after the papers had been considered by the Director of Public Prosecutions. The advice in that circular has been most scrupulously followed.

No Prosecution

"'I asked the deputation if since the Duncan case, there had been any prosecution to which they could take objection. They said there had not.

"'Since my interview with them there has been no prosecution of any kind. That is an indication that an enlightened view has been and is being taken by those responsible for enforcing the law.

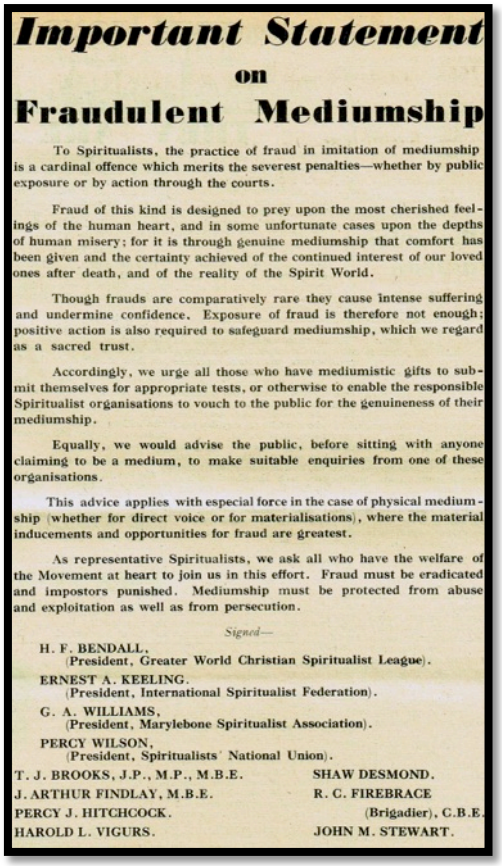
"I hope it may be possible to repeal the Witchcraft Act. It is anomalous that, in these days, proceedings under the Witchcraft Act should be taken against people in this country.

"Any mischief that may be prevented by the continuance of the Witchcraft Act, or the application of the Act of 1824 to this kind of case should be dealt with in the kind of Statute I have mentioned, by some rephrasing of the old law, bringing it into line with modern conditions and modern requirements.

"I desire," Mr. Ede concluded, "that religious opinion shall be expressed, and religious practice be given as free a range as possible, but I ask the committee not to accept this new clause.

"In view of what has been happening during the last two years, I am sure it is not necessary, and I hope that any theoretical case there may be for it will be destroyed by the legislation which I have mentioned."

—~—☼—~—



Important Statement
on
Fraudulent Mediumship

To Spiritualists, the practice of fraud in imitation of mediumship is a cardinal offence which merits the severest penalties—whether by public exposure or by action through the courts.

Fraud of this kind is designed to prey upon the most cherished feelings of the human heart, and in some unfortunate cases upon the depths of human misery; for it is through genuine mediumship that comfort has been given and the certainty achieved of the continued interest of our loved ones after death, and of the reality of the Spirit World.

Though frauds are comparatively rare they cause intense suffering and undermine confidence. Exposure of fraud is therefore not enough; positive action is also required to safeguard mediumship, which we regard as a sacred trust.

Accordingly, we urge all those who have mediumistic gifts to submit themselves for appropriate tests, or otherwise to enable the responsible Spiritualist organisations to vouch to the public for the genuineness of their mediumship.

Equally, we would advise the public, before sitting with anyone claiming to be a medium, to make suitable enquiries from one of these organisations.

This advice applies with especial force in the case of physical mediumship (whether for direct voice or for materialisations), where the material inducements and opportunities for fraud are greatest.

As representative Spiritualists, we ask all who have the welfare of the Movement at heart to join us in this effort. Fraud must be eradicated and impostors punished. Mediumship must be protected from abuse and exploitation as well as from persecution.

Signed—

H. F. BENDALL,
(President, Greater World Christian Spiritualist League).
ERNEST A. KEELING.
(President, International Spiritualist Federation).
G. A. WILLIAMS,
(President, Marylebone Spiritualist Association).
PERCY WILSON,
(President, Spiritualists' National Union).

T. J. BROOKS, J.P., M.P., M.B.E. — SHAW DESMOND.
J. ARTHUR FINDLAY, M.B.E. — R. C. FIREBRACE (Brigadier), C.B.E.
PERCY J. HITCHCOCK. — JOHN M. STEWART.
HAROLD L. VIGURS.

With the Home Secretary's positive comments:

"I shall be disappointed if some opportunity is not given, I hope to me, but if not to me then to an early successor of mine, to deal with the question of wiping out or bringing up to date, archaic Statutes.

"In the meantime the Spiritualist organisations who came to see me made it quite clear that they did not desire to shelter fraud in this matter . . ."

Major organisations like the London Spiritualist Alliance (in 1955 it became the College of Psychic Science), the Marylebone Spiritualist Association (in 1960 it became the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain) and the Spiritualists' National Union all had Committees/Researchers to root out suspected fraud and they would often work in unison. The Spiritualist press publicly exposed fraudulent mediumship; a prime example of this is the exposure of the high-profile physical medium, William Roy, by the editor of the "Two Worlds", Maurice Barbanell. "Psypioneer" gave a full issue on William Roy, Vol. 7, No. 5, May 2011.

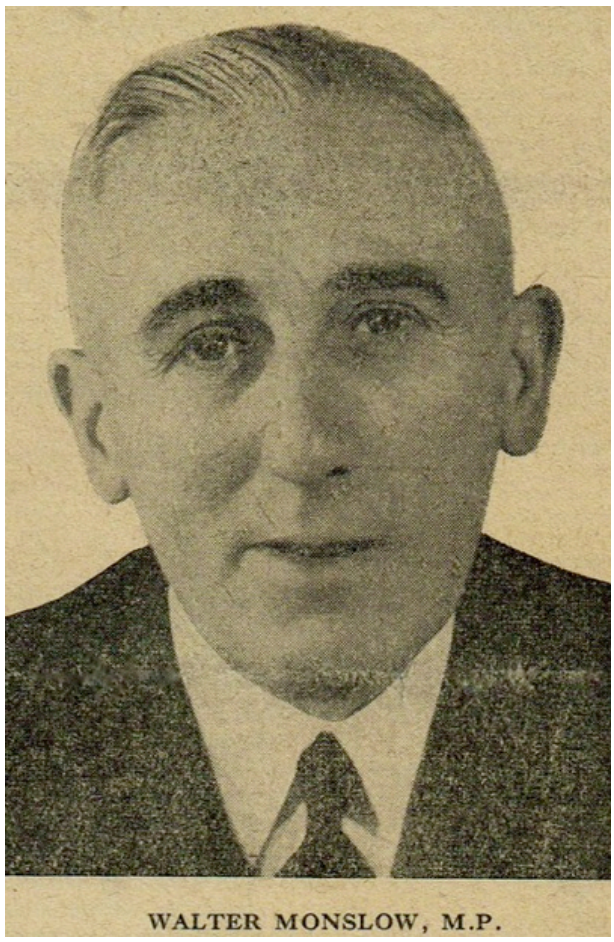
By the end of 1950 a new Bill was ready to be placed before Parliament. There were two principal aspects of the Spiritualists' Bill: the first was its power to free mediums from the restrictions of outmoded legislation; the second was the responsibility – the Spiritualist movement had given its pledge to root out fraud. The "Important Statement on Fraudulent Mediumship" shown, which was published in the "Two Worlds", August 19th 1950, indicates the commitment shown by the various organisations; it is interesting to note that it is also signed by J. Arthur Findlay.

Victory was now on the horizon. Earlier it was noted, in Vol. 2, No. 6, November 2015: "Following the pre-election campaign the bulk of the candidates at the General Election [1945] were approached by means of a Questionnaire and of those elected to Parliament, pledges were obtained from over 100 of full support and about an equal number promised qualified support." Five years later Mr. Walter Monslow, M.P. for Barrow-in-Furness,[9] offered to support the Bill. It was noted in the "Two Worlds", November 25th 1950:

[9] "Mr. Walter Monslow (Labour), M.P. for Barrow-in-Furness, is aged 53, and has his home in Wrexham. A Railway Trade Unionist, he first started work as a cleaner, fireman and driver with the G.W.R. He was adopted as a candidate by the Labour Party in 1943, and was elected a Member of Parliament in 1945, with a majority of 12,000. Under the Government of that time, he held the position of Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister of Civil Aviation, Lord Pakenham. He was re-elected during the election of 1950, and is now Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister of Food, Mr. Maurice Webb. He successfully presented a Bill last year to increase the Married Woman's Maintenance Allowance to £5 per week." Taken from the "Two Worlds", November 25th 1950.

A Member of the Barrow Spiritualist Church, Dalkieth Street, wrote to Mr. Monslow on the occasion of his first election, asking his views, and his attitude to Spiritualism. He received a very liberal reply that Mr. Monslow was all out for freedom of thought, and would give his support in any way possible.

Mr. Monslow, himself a Methodist, has certainly proved himself to be a man of his word.



WALTER MONSLOW, M.P.

The "Two Worlds", November 25th 1950:

SPIRITUALIST BILL GOES BEFORE PARLIAMENT

Brooks's efforts bear fruit at last—colleague Walter Monslow, successful in Private Members' Ballot, sponsors Bill in the House of Commons

From A PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY

WALTER MONSLOW, M.P., HAVING BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN THE BALLOT FOR PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS, INTRODUCED THE SPIRITUALISTS' BILL TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS LAST FRIDAY FOR ITS FIRST READING.

This is the first opportunity that has occurred in the last twenty years of bringing our Bill before the House, and is largely due to the strenuous efforts made on our behalf by Mr. T. J. Brooks, M.P. for Normanton, and Mr. John M. Stewart, S.N.U. Freedom Committee Secretary.[10]

Our correspondent in the House of Commons, a Parliamentary Secretary, expressed the opinion that this is the best chance our Movement has had in the last thirty or forty years, of getting a Bill successfully passed into law.

[10] John Stewart SNU President 1941-1943

KEPT HIS WORD



John Stewart S.N.U. Freedom Committee Secretary

Mr. Monslow, it is understood, had been strongly pressed by other Members (including some of the Labour Whips), to put forward measures in which they were interested, but had refused, saying that he had promised to introduce our Bill and intended to do so.

He is, thus, obviously a person of both character and determination. Labour Member for Barrow-in-Furness, he is, himself, a Methodist.

The Bill which, briefly, seeks to repeal the Witchcraft Act of 1735 and introduce changes into the Vagrancy Act of 1824, is to receive its second reading next week, the date having been fixed for December 1st.

The first reading of the Bill, more or less a formality constituting an announcement that it is to be presented to the House, took place last week, on Friday, November 17th. This, in effect, provides the authority for the Bill to be printed and distributed to Members.

SUPPORT

Sponsoring the Bill, which will be the first of twenty Private Members' Bills to receive a hearing, Walter Monslow is assured of the support of at least ten other Labour Members. Seconding the Bill will be Mr. T. J. Brooks, M.P.

The Rev. Gordon Lang, Dr. Sidney Silverman, Mr. Leslie Heal, Mr. John McGovern, Mr. W. Blyton and Mr. Viant, will be among the speakers for the Bill, which, drafted with the help of the Home Office and with the goodwill of the Home Secretary, Mr. Chuter Ede, has every reasonably chance of a successful passage through the House.

When it comes up for the second reading next week, the Home Secretary will first give the Government's view on the Bill, after which it is expected that there will be about three hours discussion on the matter.

FOUR MONTHS

The Bill will then go before Committee, before being turned to the House for its third reading. It is estimated that the Bill will take about four months to reach the Statute Book should it achieve a smooth and successful passage through the House.

A full draft of the Bill as prepared with the good-will of the Home Secretary appears on page 1046 of this issue.

There were 300 M.P.s concerned in the Private Members' Ballot: the Spiritualist Bill was the first one out. It had 12 sponsors.

Page 1046:

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM for SPIRITUALISTS

New Bill Drafted with the Good-will of the Home Secretary

The story behind the story

FROM A PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY

A LETTER was sent to a large number of Labour M.P.s by Mr. T. J. Brooks, J.P., M.B.E., M. P. for Normanton, asking them to sponsor a Bill he had drafted for the protection of genuine mediums in the hope that he himself, or some other co-operative colleague, would be successful in the ballot for Private Members' Bills.

Mr. Brooks's letter to his Parliamentary colleagues was as follows:

"For the past 30 to 40 years many unsuccessful attempts have been made to get the question of Religious Freedom for Spiritualists before the House of Commons, and another opportunity is afforded by the ballot which is to take place within the next few days.

"If I am successful, I shall put forward the enclosed Bill, drafted with the help of the Home Office, and the good-will of the Home Secretary. The short title is still under consideration, because if a person is fraudulent, he is not, in my view, a medium. I should prefer something like 'Mediumship (Punishment of Fraud) Bill.'

"I am most anxious to get other sponsors for the Bill, and as you have previously expressed your sympathy, perhaps you will kindly let me know if you also would sponsor the Bill, should you secure a place, after having signed the book for the ballot."

The text of the draft Bill is as follows:—

"To repeal the Witchcraft Act, 1735, and to make, in substitution for certain provisions of section four of the Vagrancy Act, 1824, express provision for the punishment of persons who fraudulently purport to act as spiritualistic mediums, or to exercise powers of telepathy, clairvoyance, other similar powers.

Clause (I) *Subject to the provisions of this section, any person who—*

(a) with intent to deceive purports to act as a spiritualistic medium, or to exercise any powers of telepathy, clairvoyance or other similar powers, or
(b) in purporting to act as a spiritualistic medium, or to exercise such powers as afore-said, used any fraudulent device, shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) *The aforegoing, subsection shall apply only where a person acts for reward; and for the purposes of this section, a person shall be deemed to act for reward, if any payment is made in respect of what he does, whether to him or to any other person.*

(3) *A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding £50, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding four months, or to both such fine and such imprisonment, or on conviction on indictment to a fine not exceeding £500, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or to both such a fine and such imprisonment.*

(4) *No proceedings for an offence under this section shall be brought except by or with the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions.*

(5) *Nothing in subsection* (I) *of this section shall apply to anything done solely for the purpose of entertainment.*

(6) *The Witchcraft Act, 1735, is hereby repealed, and in section four of the Vagrancy Act, 1824 (which provides* inter alia, *for the punishment of persons pretending or professing to tell fortunes or using certain devices to deceive or impose on any of his Majesty's subjects) the words from "or using" to "subjects" are hereby repealed.*

Clause 2.—(I) *This Act may be cited as the Fraudulent Mediums Act.*

Clause 3.—This Act shall not extend to Scotland or Northern Ireland."

Second Reading, Friday December 1st 1950:

"Two Worlds", Saturday 9th December 1950

NOT ONE SPEECH OPPOSED SPIRITUALIST BILL!

OVERWHELMING SUPPORT IN HOUSE OF COMMONS

Triumph for Spiritualists

Friday, December 1st was a day of triumph for British Spiritualists. For four hours Members of the House of Commons spoke, without exception, in favour of giving Spiritualists the right to hold their religious meetings and services, and for genuine mediums to use their psychic powers without legal restriction. Not even the most optimistic Spiritualist could have anticipated such generous support from all parts of the House.

We pay tribute to our national legislators for such a wonderful demonstration of British justice. For this great step forward in the progress of Spiritualism great honour is due to Mr. John Stewart who has so ably looked after the interests of our 'Cause' in the legal field, and to Mr. Walter Monslow, M.P. for Barrow-in-Furness, Mr. T. J. Brooks, M.P. for Normanton, Mr. Leslie Hale, M.P. for Oldham West, and last but not least the Home Secretary himself, all of whom proved themselves to be valiant champions on our behalf.

The question of giving freedom to Spiritualism in this country became, during the Second Reading of the Fraudulent Mediums Bill on December 1st, an issue of national

prestige and honour. It was stated that the debate provided an opportunity for Great Britain to "proclaim to the world our own British way of life—our sense of respect for the religious beliefs of others. I am certain that this proclamation to-day, when the world is so sorely troubled, in so far as freedom is concerned, will enable the British people once again to give a lead to the world, and enable us to play a worthy role in the counsels of the nations." (L. M. LEVER, M.P.)

Most Important Subject

Not for many years has the subject of religion evoked such vital and sincere concern from members of the House of Commons. Tolerance in religious matters, it was stated, was one of the most important subjects that had to deal with.

The Home Secretary, Mr. Chuter Ede, considered that our Bill represented "a considerable advance in the direction of religious toleration. "No one," he added, "has the right to make people, who hold certain views very sincerely, feel that their views are affronted by conduct either of the State or their fellow citizens."

All M.P.'s present showed a lively and enthusiastic interest in this "Great Spirits' Debate."

Work of Spiritualists

It was clear as the debate went on that Spiritualists had themselves won this memorable fight for freedom by their untiring work and propaganda over the years, for it became obvious that their activities had made a deep impression upon the people, which was reflected by their representatives at Westminster, and had at last won a considerable degree of respect which manifested in a very conspicuous manner in this, the highest level of British social life.

Those Spiritualists who have given their active support to our Freedom Campaign are justified in feeling a sense of satisfaction, for every word spoken and act undertaken by them was reflected in this great triumph for Spiritualism.

A Humble Contribution

Particular mention was made by M.P.'s to those Spiritualists who had approached them for support. A typical case cited was that of a lady Spiritualist who had attended a political candidate's meeting. When the candidate had asked for questions, the first he received from the entire meeting was from a "very earnest lady" Spiritualist who had asked if he was willing to remove the *Witchcraft Act* from the Statute Book. Expecting questions on broad National issues he was amazed, yet deeply impressed, by this lady's concern over this issue, for he had no idea that it had meant so much to the spiritual welfare of a section of his constituents. He spoke at some length about the matter and the House, in turn, was also obviously impressed by the incident.

The Reward

What a reward for that lady Spiritualist to have her small contribution to the 'Cause' brought before the notice of the entire nation in such a manner. Indeed it was a reward for *every* Spiritualist who had gone out of his or her way during our Freedom Campaign to help in the great fight, and a strong incentive to others to do likewise in other fields of labour in the future. This small question, put at a public meeting somewhere in England,

eventually became an important factor in this vital debate, during which members demonstrated their very sincere concern over the question of religious liberty in this country.

The issue at an early stage of the proceedings was raised to a higher level than merely the interests of Spiritualists. Our Bill, it was claimed, brought an important fundamental issue before the Nation, and it became clear to those Spiritualists who witness it (the Gallery was full) that there was no doubt regarding the issue, for the general opinion was that the *Witchcraft Act* was a "blot upon the Statute Book."

Moved by Methodist

The debate was opened by Mr. Monslow, M.P. for Barrow-in-Furness, who explained that he was not a Spiritualist but a Methodist, but his sincere desire was to clear away a great injustice and a restriction on religious freedom for Spiritualists.

Two hundred M.P.'s had given their unqualified support for religious freedom for Spiritualists, and he was certain that they had not done so for electoral advantage. The Spiritualist Movement, consisting of 1,000 churches and 50,000 members, on the other hand, had given a pledge to expose charlatans.

Basis of Religion

The Bill was seconded by Mr. Brooks, M.P. for Normanton, who said, "I feel I am justified in asking every one to recognise that mediums and Spiritualists believe intensely in communion with the Spirit World, through mediumship, as the basis of their religion. More that this, we claim that in this we are restoring a basis which as been fundamental to all religions in their beginning, Christianity included. Immortality is the basic principle of all religions."

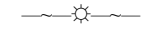
Both Monslow and Brooks are to be congratulated on an excellent resume, not only of Spiritualism's case for freedom but on Spiritualism's role in the spiritual life of the nation. They were, it should be recorded well supported by their Socialist colleagues both in numbers and in sympathy. It was obvious that Spiritualism is very fortunate indeed to have a Spiritualist member in the House, for without Mr. Brooks' efforts we would not have secured such a great victory.

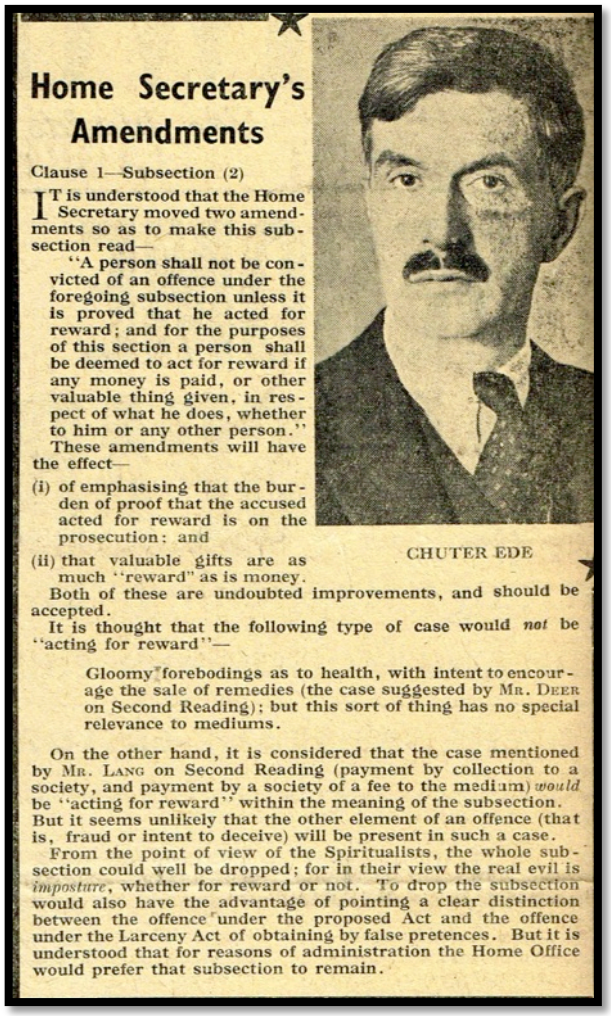
Fine Example

The fact that their colleague Brooks was an ardent Spiritualist carried a considerable amount of weight in this debate, for he is obviously held in high regard in the House.

Thanks Mr. Brooks! Spiritualism owes you a great debt of gratitude.

The Bill will now be considered in committee before its Third Reading in the House.





Home Secretary's Amendments

Clause 1—Subsection (2)

IT is understood that the Home Secretary moved two amendments so as to make this subsection read—

"A person shall not be convicted of an offence under the foregoing subsection unless it is proved that he acted for reward; and for the purposes of this section a person shall be deemed to act for reward if any money is paid, or other valuable thing given, in respect of what he does, whether to him or any other person."

These amendments will have the effect—

(i) of emphasising that the burden of proof that the accused acted for reward is on the prosecution: and

(ii) that valuable gifts are as much "reward" as is money.

CHUTER EDE

Both of these are undoubted improvements, and should be accepted.

It is thought that the following type of case would *not* be "acting for reward"—

> Gloomy forebodings as to health, with intent to encourage the sale of remedies (the case suggested by MR. DEER on Second Reading); but this sort of thing has no special relevance to mediums.

On the other hand, it is considered that the case mentioned by MR. LANG on Second Reading (payment by collection to a society, and payment by a society of a fee to the medium) *would* be "acting for reward" within the meaning of the subsection. But it seems unlikely that the other element of an offence (that is, fraud or intent to deceive) will be present in such a case.

From the point of view of the Spiritualists, the whole subsection could well be dropped; for in their view the real evil is *imposture*, whether for reward or not. To drop the subsection would also have the advantage of pointing a clear distinction between the offence under the proposed Act and the offence under the Larceny Act of obtaining by false pretences. But it is understood that for reasons of administration the Home Office would prefer that subsection to remain.

At the Committee stage (after the second reading) the Bill was accepted, with just two amendments by the Home Secretary; the changes were accepted by the Spiritualists.

A full explanation of the Bill, fully elaborated clause by clause, was published in the "Two Worlds". The SNU President, Percy Wilson, and his son Laurie compiled the statement on the interpretation of the Bill (a PDF copy is available from the editor).

The third reading is the final chance for the Commons to debate the contents of a Bill; further amendments cannot be made to a Bill. At the end of the debate the House decides (votes on) whether to approve the third reading of the Bill; the debate is generally short and limited to what is actually in the Bill.

The third reading took place on April 20th 1951; below are three quotes from Hansard, "a substantially verbatim report of what is said in Parliament. Members' words are recorded and then edited to remove repetitions and obvious mistakes, albeit without taking away from the meaning."

For the full report search: HC Deb 20 April 1951 vol 486 cc2163-9 2163.

FRAUDULENT MEDIUMS BILL

11.24 a.m.
Mr. Monslow (Barrow-in-Furness)

11.26 a.m.
Mr. T. J. Brooks (Normanton)

May I be allowed to support the Third Reading of this Bill, and to add my sincere thanks and that of the whole spiritualist movement to my hon. Friend the Member for Barrow-in-Furness (Mr. Monslow), who sponsored the Bill at our request? He honoured his promise to do so if he was successful in the Ballot. The presentation of his case was most efficient, proving beyond doubt his breadth of mind, deep religious feelings and his candid opinion that religious freedom should be given to the spiritualist movement. He has earned the thanks and admiration of a great number of people. His name will be remembered and revered for the great service which he has given to the spiritualist cause. No one could have done it better or more effectively.

May I also be allowed to say to the Home Secretary how much we appreciate the great help that he has given us? He has been exceptionally helpful in every way. His kindly

advice and courtesy to myself and my friends, both on deputations at the Home Office and in correspondence, has been most friendly and encouraging. The promise which he gave to us on the Committee stage of the Criminal Justice Act has been fully honoured. He gave the assurance that he would give every assistance if and when such a Bill as this came before the House.

My right hon. Friend has carried out that promise in a most kindly and sympathetic way, and we thank him sincerely for his realistic and effective help in what we hope will be the removal of a real grievance and indignity suffered by the spiritualists for many years. I hope he will forgive me if I have appeared to be a little insistent in my many calls on him during his period of office as Home Secretary. If he has been in any way put out, he has concealed it very well, for I have not been able to discern it.

I would also like to thank the Home Office officials and, in particular, the Parliamentary draftsmen, whom we met several times, for all the help which they have given us in framing the Bill, and for the cordial way in which they received us and the willing and helpful suggestions on which agreement could be reached.

I would also express my deep gratitude to my friends in every part of the House who have helped me to achieve one of the dearest ambitions of my life. When I became a Member of this House, nearly nine years ago, it was my resolve to spare no effort to secure the removal of the disability under which my spiritualist friends have been labouring for many years. I have never made any secret of my hopes, and the kindness and sympathy which I have received has moved me more than I can say.

I thank hon. Members for their excellent speeches in support of the Bill on Second Reading; the kind references they made about me and the broad picture they painted, not merely of spiritualists, but of that religious freedom and tolerance which is the right of every law abiding citizen. It may be unusual but I would like also to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your very patient hearing of our case. When the British House of Commons takes time to discuss a Bill of this character it expresses real democracy and toleration. Democracy may convey a different meaning to each of us, but to all it must mean freedom, opportunity and happiness. We accept freedom of religion as a divine right under the proposition that all men are created equal before their God. Today, by this Bill, we are giving freedom to hundreds and thousands of loyal citizens in this country, and I have pleasure in supporting its Third Reading.

11.31 a.m.
Mr. Sorensen (Leyton)

11.36 a.m.
Mr. Arthur Colegate (Burton)

11.37 a.m.
Mr. James Hudson (Ealing, North)

11.39 a.m.
The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Ede)

I share the feeling of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing North (Mr. J. Hudson) about the Home Office. Certainly, I have never heard such eulogies bestowed on it during my period in the House, no matter what my personal relationship with that Office may have been. But at last we have been found out. I most heartily congratulate my hon. Friend the

Member for Normanton (Mr. T. J. Brooks) upon the success he has achieved for the people of his own faith and order in securing the passage of this Bill through the House with so little opposition. In fact, the only matter that may have caused a moment's perturbation was the fact that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary moved two Amendments in Committee to the Bill; but as they were disposed of in six minutes, I cannot help thinking that that was a help rather than a hindrance.

The passing of this Bill marks a further stage in the recognition in this country that what we need in religious matters is not uniformity but unity. We are all striving for the same end, but we are so constituted that one thing appeals to one man as the best approach to the common end, and another man finds his help and spiritual sustenance, and his opportunity for service, in another approach. It is the combination of all those efforts that will enable us to make the world a better place in which to live and to realise the highest ideals.

I belong to a denomination, like my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton (Mr. Sorensen), which was excluded from the Act of Toleration. In fact, I know of one famous Huguenot family who came from France after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and immediately they landed they declared themselves Unitarians, so that they lost the benefit in this country of the Act of Toleration. Of course, there are some people who are determined to be persecuted no matter what may be the place in which they live.

But all that has now gone. The one remaining blot on the Statute Book was the possibility that sincere, honest, religious people might find themselves the subject of prosecution under the antiquated Witchcraft Act. That now disappears. There are adequate provisions in the Bill, agreed by my hon. Friend the Member for Normanton and the people whom he represents, which prevent the use of this freedom for fraudulent purposes by charlatans or others. I commend the Bill to the House, and I hope that when it gets to another place it may have a speedy passage so that it may soon be incorporated in the Statute Book.

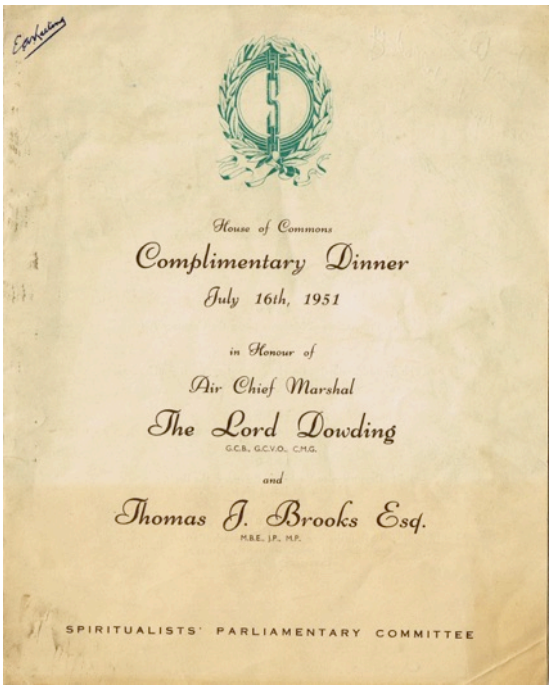
Question put, and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.

—~—☼—~—

Royal Assent was given to the 'Fraudulent Mediums Act' on June 22nd 1951.

Victory – Religious Freedom for Spiritualist movement is at long last won, which brings us to the end of this serialisation of events. We are sorry that some of the work over the long decades of persecution by the laws of the country, of those pioneers who contributed so much to the long fight, has not been mentioned, as their numbers are so great!



House of Commons

Complimentary Dinner

July 16th, 1951

in Honour of

Air Chief Marshal

The Lord Dowding

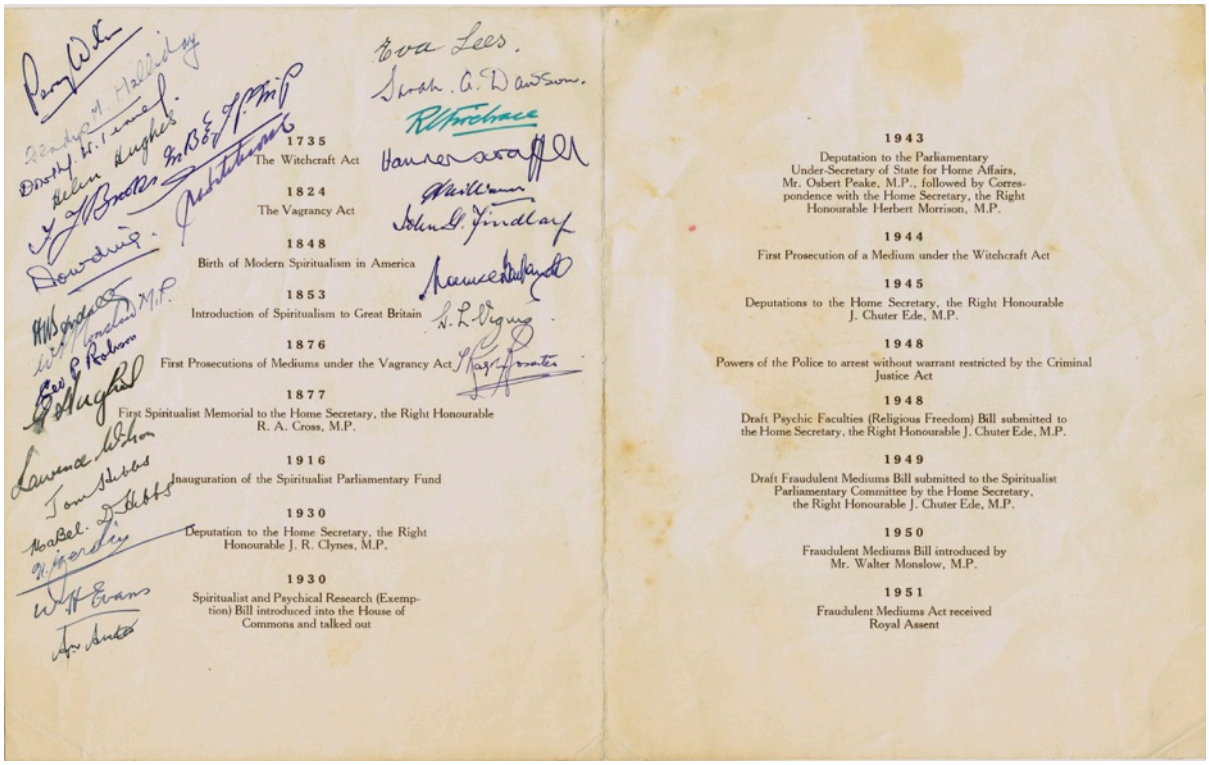
G.C.B., G.C.V.O., C.M.G.

and

Thomas J. Brooks Esq.

M.B.E., J.P., M.P.

SPIRITUALISTS' PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE



1735
The Witchcraft Act

1824
The Vagrancy Act

1848
Birth of Modern Spiritualism in America

1853
Introduction of Spiritualism to Great Britain

1876
First Prosecutions of Mediums under the Vagrancy Act

1877
First Spiritualist Memorial to the Home Secretary, the Right Honourable R. A. Cross, M.P.

1916
Inauguration of the Spiritualist Parliamentary Fund

1930
Deputation to the Home Secretary, the Right Honourable J. R. Clynes, M.P.

1930
Spiritualist and Psychical Research (Exemption) Bill introduced into the House of Commons and talked out

1943
Deputation to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Home Affairs, Mr. Osbert Peake, M.P., followed by Correspondence with the Home Secretary, the Right Honourable Herbert Morrison, M.P.

1944
First Prosecution of a Medium under the Witchcraft Act

1945
Deputations to the Home Secretary, the Right Honourable J. Chuter Ede, M.P.

1948
Powers of the Police to arrest without warrant restricted by the Criminal Justice Act

1948
Draft Psychic Faculties (Religious Freedom) Bill submitted to the Home Secretary, the Right Honourable J. Chuter Ede, M.P.

1949
Draft Fraudulent Mediums Bill submitted to the Spiritualist Parliamentary Committee by the Home Secretary, the Right Honourable J. Chuter Ede, M.P.

1950
Fraudulent Mediums Bill introduced by Mr. Walter Monslow, M.P.

1951
Fraudulent Mediums Act received Royal Assent



Photograph is taken from the "Two Worlds", February 9th 1952

Movement Says Thanks to T. J. Brooks for his outstanding services to Spiritualism.[11]

—~—☼—~—

[11] For further information on Thomas Judson Brooks (1880-1958) and his Castleford National Church see "Psypioneer", Vol. 7, No. 9, September 2011.