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the PIONEER

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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

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Leon Isaacs

Pioneer of infra-red séance photography

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



Leon Isaacs, a self-portrait

BRITAIN'S GREATEST SEANCE ROOM PHOTOGRAPHER

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

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

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

Tragic passing

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

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

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

Because of accident

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

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

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

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

This convinced them

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

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

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

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

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

Disaster averted

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

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

He heard a voice

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

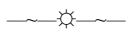
“Shortly afterwards, at a sitting with a clairvoyant, my wife told me she had materialised, but I couldn’t see her face clearly and she seemed to fade away. Since then, at odd intervals. I have heard a few words spoken, in an objective voice, beside my bed. Sometimes, there has been a weight as though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

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

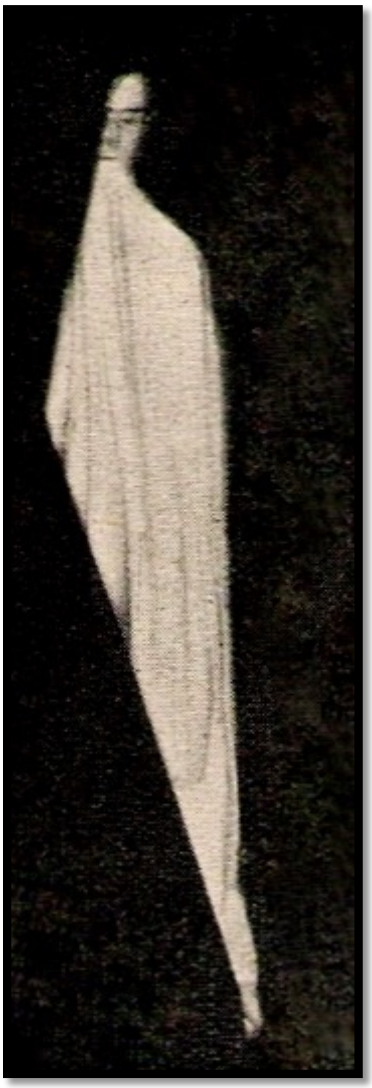
When we research

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

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



Looking back at infra-red in Psypioneer:



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

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

INFRA-RED RAYS IN THE SEANCE ROOM

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

In the 1956 article on Leon we can note:



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

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

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

Ronald Cockersell committed suicide in 1968





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

Colin Evans



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

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

Image below:

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

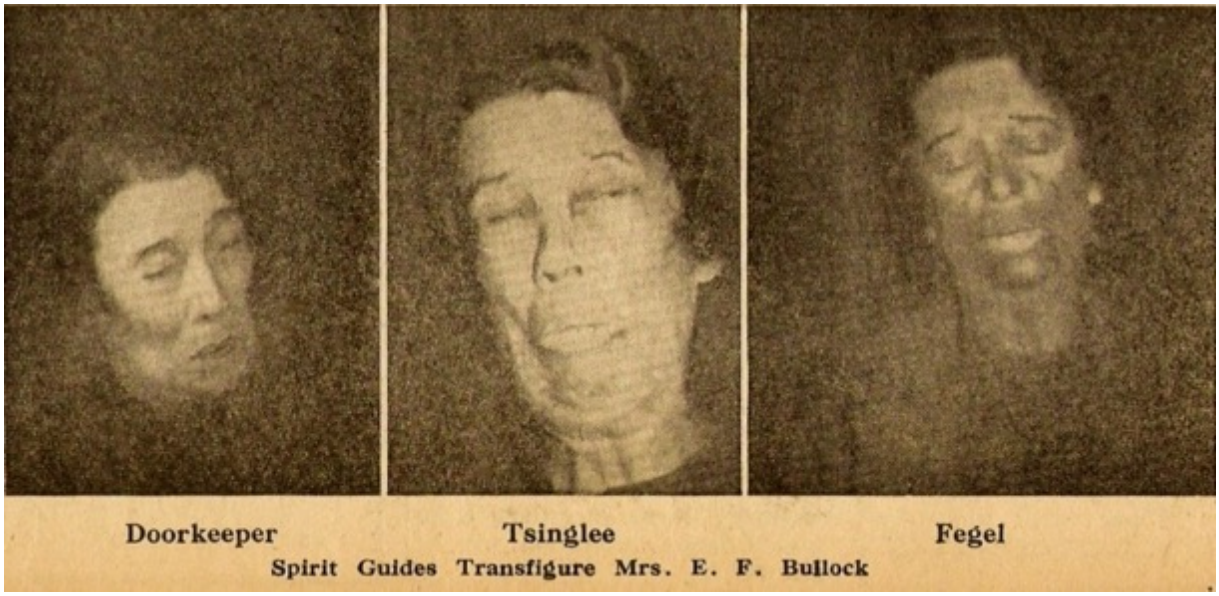
The only complaint made by "Mooney" was about the whirring of the cine-camera, which caused the Medium discomfort, but she stood the trying moments with admirable courage.

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

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

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



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



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



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

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More on our Seven Principles

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Hold fast to the grand and glorious ship of immortality, and beware, oh, beware! lest you be led away or turned aside from these divine truths, and the duties you owe to God, the angels, and humanity – Emma Hardinge Britten

The early District Councils may have been considered *the lifeblood of the Union*; equally, the early Lyceum may also be considered as *the lifeblood in the formation of National Spiritualism* as an integral part of its progress, resulting in the formation of the Union in 1890. In the previous issue of Pioneer we published some of James Morse's glass lantern slides, showing the Lyceum marches and how they played an important part in our early yearly 'National Conferences', later called Annual General Meetings (AGMs). We also noted that many of our Federation/Union Presidents were also Lyceum Presidents, sometimes at the same time.

It is often overlooked that our Principles in the original format were in fact being used by the Lyceum Union before the Spiritualists' National Union was founded in July 1890.

Emma Hardinge Britten addressed the 'National Conference of British Spiritualists' held on Sunday July 6th (in three sessions). In the second session at 2 pm Emma offered her resolution to the Conference.[4] To my knowledge, Emma's reported resolution has not been republished since it was *originally* published in the "Two Worlds", July 25th 1890, page 434:

> (3) "That the time has come for a greater unanimity of opinion concerning the fundamental basis of our philosophy, so that the terms "spiritualism" and "spiritualists" may be associated with an accepted and definite significance." Moved by Mrs. Hardinge Britten.
>
> The mover of this resolution said the true significance of what she asked for, consisted in the actual definitions which could be rendered of what modern spiritualism was. As Mrs Britten claimed to have had over 27 years' experience of spiritualism, and that, chiefly in the land where it originated, and in intimate social relations with the first investigators and propagandists of the movement, she ventured to think that such of her own views as a ten minutes' speech would allow, might be taken as representative of tens of thousands who were not there to testify. Impelled by curiosity, the speaker had attended her initial spirit séance 27 years ago. At that time her mind was pervaded by the doctrines of the Church of England, in the tenets of which she had been educated. Her only ideas of Deity were drawn from the "jealous, angry," changeful God of the Bible; her only ideas of religion from the half savage, often impossible, and still oftener horrible narratives of the same book, to doubt, question, or reason upon which, was to incur the doom of eternal perdition. Her only ideas of life beyond the grave were a *physical* resurrection of the disintegrated body at some unknown period, perhaps millions of years hence, with a fiery hell of eternal torture for the unbelieving, and a scarcely less dreadful Heaven of isolated, unloving, and unloved eternal psalm singing; and this for the surrender of all reason, science, morality or justice, in the mere attempt to believe the story of vicarious salvation, equally impossible, repulsive, unjust, and immoral in all its details! . . . In spiritualism we had for the first time in human

[4] The following year the Spiritualists' National Federation was founded – later in 1901 it was reconstituted, becoming the Spiritualists' National Union.

history a religion FOUNDED ON FACT; not given by men or individual reformers however good or holy, but by the beings who were in the actual realization of the life hereafter, living in the country and conditions they described, and whose communications were corroborated by tens of thousands of other spirits in various countries and languages and through tens of thousands of independent sources. In this revelation mere human beliefs, opinions, and sectarian dogmas, were all thrown aside as worthless and unproved. It was shown that death was only of the body and the release of the spirit to the life beyond. That as the all of the intelligence that had ever lived, moved, and laboured was SPIRIT, so the author and finisher of Being, the great, eternal and infinite workman, He, whom men so vaguely called God, and so presumptuously pretended to talk of as if her were their intimate acquaintance, was SPIRIT—"God the Spirit;" the Alpha and Omega of Being. After a rapid and eloquent speech, condensed to suit the exigencies of the time, Mrs. Britten said she could not then transcend the summary of religious faith her spirit friends had given her when she had to lay the foundation stone of the Oldham Spiritual Temple—namely, that religion consisted in the doctrines of: —

"The Fatherhood of God,
"The Brotherhood of Man,
"The Immortality of the Soul,
"Personal Responsibility,
"Compensation and Retribution hereafter for all the good or evil deeds done here,
"And a path of eternal progress open to every human soul that wills to tread it by the path of eternal good."

And as all this had been reiterated by beings in the actual experience of what they taught, through her own mediumship, and that of countless other independent sources, she rejected every human idea, opinion, or dictum that opposed it. Again and again she would insist it was a super-human, not a human, revelation, and there was nothing so well proven or widely corroborated in the world's history. Modern spiritualism, with its religious affirmations and scientific demonstrations, stood alone, and therefore she asked that it should neither be affiliated with man-made creeds, labelled with simply human beliefs, opinions, or *unproved* revelations, nor be confounded with any sect in existence that did not offer similar and equally incontrovertible proofs of a super-mundane origin and revelation.

She concluded an impulsive and most earnest speech with the following *ideas*, though the words might, from the rapidity of their utterance, be misunderstood. "We need no books to learn out facts from; we can gather them ourselves; we want no 'beliefs' but truths; and whilst we may extend the hand of fellowship to every one, our religion must now be recognized as founded on fact, not merely theory or speculation. Hold fast to the grand and glorious ship of immortality, and beware, oh, beware! lest you be led away or turned aside from these divine truths, and the duties you owe to God, the angels, and humanity."

Mr. Newton (Leeds) rejoiced in the honour of being permitted to second this resolution. Mrs. Britten had made him a spiritualist, and he might almost call her his saviour.

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In November 1890, *under spirit impulsion* James J. Morse founded what would become the official organ of the Lyceum Union, "The Lyceum Banner". The article below is taken from the July 8th 1951 (monthly) issue, which gives us a good overview as to how the Principles were used in the Lyceum Union before and after the formation of our Union in 1890. It is interesting to note that the summary of principles started out as Emma gave them at the Oldham Spiritual Temple on April 9th 1887, then underwent various changes/additions, as they would also do later within the SNU.[5] For further information on the above topics please see the first issue of Pioneer, August 2013.

Lyceum Banner, edited by George A. Mack:

"In Things Essential, Unity—In things Doubtful, Liberty—In all Things, Charity"

EDUCATION NEWS

Some Lyceumists have been somewhat perturbed by the fact that the wording of the Seven Principles as printed in the Education Handbook is not the same as that to be found at the end of G.C.R. 136.[6] May I give you some of the known facts of the Seven Principles of Spiritualism and the *Lyceum Manual*?

The first edition of the *Lyceum Manual* was published in 1887; and the Principles are NOT included, as the G.C.R.'s finished at number 133.

In the second edition, published in 1888, G.C.R. 136 appeared, concluding with the simple summary—

"I believe in the Fatherhood of God,
The Brotherhood of Man,
The Immortality of the Soul,
Personal Responsibility,
Compensation and Retribution hereafter for all the good or evil deeds done here.
And a path of eternal progress open to every human soul that wills to tread it by the Path of eternal good."

The third edition, published in 1889, was similar in text to the second edition; but when the fourth edition was published in 1894 there were additions to the Principles. The conclusion of G.C.R. 136 read:—"Spiritualists have no creed but mostly unite in affirming the following simple summary of principles—

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Immortality of the Soul, and its personal characteristics.
The Proven Facts of Communion between Departed Human Spirits and Mortals.
Personal Responsibility, with Compensation and Retribution hereafter for all the good or evil deeds done here.
And a Path of Eternal Progress open to every human soul that wills to tread it by the Path of eternal good."

This wording of the fourth edition was used in the sixth edition, printed in 1898; but when the Harmonised edition was printed in 1917 there was a slight alteration in the

[5] See Vol. 2, No. 2, March 2015: "Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?"

[6] G.C.R. refers to a section of the Lyceum Manual, "Golden Chain Recitations": No. 136 is titled "The Teachings of Spiritualism".

wording. The fourth principle read—"The Proven Facts of Communion between Spirit People and Mortals."

You will find that the ones at present in use in the *Lyceum Manual* are similar to those in the fourth edition.

In the National Spiritualists' Propaganda Penny Hymn Book, published by the Two Worlds Publishing Co. under the editorship of Mr. Will Phillips, you will find on the inside front cover this summary of Principles—

I believe in the Infinite Spirit Intelligence called God.
I believe in the Brotherhood of Man, the immortal and progressive life for all.
Personal Responsibility: compensation and retribution hereafter for good or evil motives and deeds here.
The innate divinity and perfectibility of every spirit, and a path of progress open to every spirit that will to know and do the right.

When the S.N.U. was incorporated in 1901, the Principles read as follows, and are the ones to be found in the S.N.U. Memorandum of Association:—

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Communion of Spirits and the Ministry of Angels.
The continuous existence of the Human Soul.
Personal Responsibility.
Compensation and retribution hereafter for all the good and evil deeds done on earth;
And
Eternal progress open to every human soul.

So that when the B.S.L.U. became a Department of the S.N.U. on January 1st, I948, it was felt that there should not be two ways of expressing the Principles. As it would have been a costly business to change the wording in the Memorandum of Association, it was decided to use that wording in the new Education Handbook, and for examination purposes; but it was hoped that Lyceumists would learn the two sets, and become familiar with them, and realise wherein they are different. Children will have no trouble in memorising the two sets, but we older ones, who do not take kindly to changes, will no doubt find difficulties.

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It can be noted in the official Lyceum publications, as far as I know, that there is no mention of Robert Owen. It states clearly (as it did at Oldham) that the summary of principles was "given by the Spirits through Mrs. Emma H. Britten". In October of 1946 Ernest Thompson (c.1905-1968) instigated a National Education scheme for the Spiritualists' National Union. By July 1949 Thompson had written and completed 150 Lecturettes (approximately 200,000 words) and had also prepared the comprehensive syllabus which provided the framework of the SNU education courses. Unfortunately, within this it stated that Robert Owen gave the Seven Principles. We know by looking at the original material at the time that the Principles were not given in a single outpouring, as incorrectly put into our education system. For around six decades the incorrect information remained in our education syllabus, until this was updated and corrected a few years ago.

During the life of the Spiritualists' National Federation Emma's summary of her principles given by the spirits at Oldham was never used, possibly because it was being used by the Lyceum Union, which was interwoven with the Federation, and no doubt these would have been recited by the Lyceum children from their Manual. During the long process of reconstituting the Federation, mainly so that it would be able to legally hold property, the

question of some form of principles was broached and this was met with some opposition. The Principles which were considered at different stages were not those given by Emma.

The Seven Principles were added almost right at the end of the legal process by the Spiritualists' National Federation President, William Johnson, a longstanding Lyceumist, becoming their President 1905-1907. This possibly prompted the choice of Emma's statements, which were adapted for the Spiritualists' National Union. Please see Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 1, February 2016: "National Federation to National Union".



Emma Hardinge Britten

One of the most outstanding platform mediums of the twentieth century



WILLIAM "BILL" REDMOND MSNU

WILLIAM REDMOND was born in Gateshead, but only just. His parents were in show business. It happened that, at the time of their son's arrival, they were playing in Newcastle. So it was that William left his birthplace while still rather less than two weeks old.

His earliest memory of the theatre concerns an occasion when he occupied a front-row seat to watch his patents perform in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." His pleasure was marred by the fact that he was suffering from a raging toothache.

Tragedy struck his Irish father when, during a performance, he was accidentally shot in the eye. Within a comparatively short period, the sight of the other eye failed. Slowly but surely, his health deteriorated until, finally, he died.

Nurse shows the way

William was only 15 at the time of this sad blow, but he paid close attention to the advice of an old German nurse who had tended his father in his illness. The thing to do, she counselled, was to take up Spiritualism.

This, in due course, William and his mother did, by visiting a small meeting at Upper Norwood. They were impressed by a remarkable message they received and maintained their attendance at the meetings.

Then William received a further message, from a medium named Ronald Brailey, to the effect that he would be a medium and would demonstrate at large meetings all over the country.

"The man must be mad!" said William's mother after the service. "Fancy telling a boy of your age things like that!"

"Inner conviction"

But William had achieved his own philosophy, by the simple expedient of "trying to imagine a state of complete unconsciousness after death. There came into my mind a realisation that one goes on after death."

Alas, this highly satisfactory conclusion did not absolve him from the necessity to earn his living. He worked in the catering department of several hotels and a large store.

Then he began sitting in a study circle, despite the fact that "to me, survival was an inner conviction. I never needed any proof."

Possibly for this reason, most of his development as a medium took place during solitary periods of meditation. He was, and is, passionately fond of music. His collection of classical records aided him in his quiet musings.

The time came when he was asked to give his first public demonstration – in Brighton. "I lay awake all night wondering what I was going to say," he recalls. "I was not so much worried about the clairvoyance, but I was terribly anxious about the address."

He need not have worried. His success there brought more success and has led to his prominence on today's Spiritualist platform. He joined the Marylebone Spiritualist Association's panel of mediums 20 years ago and was serving the London Spiritual Mission before that. He has worked in Brussels, Liege, Antwerp, Ghent and Paris as well as in most of Britain's large towns.

"Underneath it all," he remembers. "I was aware that I was uncovering within myself something that I had already learned. I am sure that reincarnation is true."

All his experience does not exempt him from "butterflies in the stomach" before taking a meeting. He has two ambitions – to travel round the world, principally to hot countries, for he is a sun-lover (has anyone ever seen him without his tan?) and to reach "that degree of spiritual unfoldment" which W. T. Parish had. "Billy Parish was the saintliest man I ever met.[7] I was always uplifted for three or four days after being in his presence. He was a man far removed from this world. He had the true spirit of humility."

The know-alls

His dislikes, in a nutshell, are cold weather, jazz music and "people who think they know it all." This latter goes particularly for people in Spiritualism – people who say they are fully developed. "There is a no medium on earth who is fully developed."

Redmond joined the Royal Signals in 1942 – and caused consternation when he wrote his profession as "Spiritualist medium." "You'd better fall out and have a séance!" said a sergeant on parade. But slowly the fun-making subsided and soon a trickle of requests for private sittings from fellow soldiers grew into a steam … "You have done great good here," an officer told him when he was invalided out in 1944.

He was married three years ago to a member of Birkenhead Spiritualist Church.

Among prominent personalities who have sat with him are Sonia Dresdel and Enid Stamp Taylor. At one period of his career he gave clairvoyance at the famous meetings organised by Mrs. St. Clair Stobart and the Rev. G. Maurice Elliot.

He is well known for his candour. On several occasions he has told audiences and private sitters: "I am sorry. I hear nothing and see nothing. You must get your money back."

Redmond is a man who has found his vocation.

—~—☼—~—

[7] Billy Parish. One of the movement's finest spiritual healers of the twentieth century; please see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 5, October 2014.

The profile above is taken from the "Two Worlds', circa 1956, by Philip Paul. Bill Redmond was born in Gateshead in 1908 and at the age of nineteen he began his work in Spiritualist churches, He then became involved with the Spiritualist Mission in London. Redmond met Mrs St. Clair Stobart, who worked closely with the Rev. Maurice Elliott, who was so impressed with his high standard of mediumship that she more or less launched his career. He demonstrated at Wigmore Hall and the Grotian Hall to packed audiences. The name of Mrs St. Clair Stobart may not be familiar to some readers but most who attend Spiritualist churches will know the healing hymn she wrote:

Gracious Spirit, of Thy goodness,
Hear our anxious prayer!
Take our loved ones who are suffering
'Neath Thy tender care.
Loving Father, hear us, hear us!'



For more information on Mabel Annie St. Clair Stobart (1862-1954) please see Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 8, August 2013. Much of Redmond's work from around 1936 centred around the Marylebone Spiritualist Association or MSA (today it's the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain), as a staff medium spanning over three decades. Under the auspices of the MSA, Redmond, then a full-time medium, demonstrated at the most famous and largest halls, e.g. the Queens Hall and the Royal Albert Hall. The photograph shows Bill Redmond at the Albert Hall in 1963.

Earlier, in 1959, Redmond was appointed a Minister of the Spiritualists' National Union. At this time there was no examination but a distinction of excellence, a decision and an appointment by the National Executive Committee of the Spiritualists' National Union.

In 1980 the SNU gave Redmond his fifty years Long Service Award. The photograph shows Redmond receiving the award from Joan Adams of the North Lancashire & Cumbria District Council. Bill Redmond also held the SNU award of DSNU, awarded to him at the AGM held at Leicester on July 2nd 1944, under the presidency of Harold Vigurs.





Bill's DSNU award, Minister's regalia and Long Service badge are now in the Britten Museum & Library.



Sir Oliver Lodge has been quite clear on his relationship with Spiritualism. In an interview he gave to *The Strand Magazine*, Vol. LVI, July-Dec 1918, we read:

"WELL, Sir Oliver," began the interviewer, "I have been instructed to ask you how Spiritualism stands to-day?"

"I can't answer for Spiritualism," Sir Oliver replied. "I don't much like the word myself, except as a term in Philosophy. In so far as Spiritualists constitute a sect, and hold religious services, I don't belong to it and have no sort of connection with it; though doubtless it attracts many good people."[8]

Sixteen years later Lodge was asked a similar question, published in the "Quarterly Transactions, British College of Psychic Science", April 1935:

A SYMPOSIUM

WHY I BECAME A SPIRITUALIST

SIR OLIVER LODGE

You ask why I became a Spiritualist. It is not a title that I use for myself, because I don't belong to any Spiritualist body, nor attend any Spiritualist Church. But if the name is intended to signify a belief in the spiritual world and in our access to it and communion with it, I may say that I was introduced to the subject in the '70's' of last century by Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Edmund Gurney and Professor Barrett. In '83 or '84 I became convinced of the reality of experimental telepathy, by verifying the direct transmission of ideas and pictures at Liverpool. And in '89 I became practically convinced of survival and communication through experiments conducted with Mrs. Piper in my house. Since then the evidence has gone on increasing in cogency, so that the fact of possible communication became a scientific certainty early in the present century. I have expressed this in several books, and am glad to think that they have been a help to people in distress. The knowledge was a great help to me and my family in the war-time, when Raymond was killed.

OLIVER LODGE

9 February, 1935.



[8] The full interview can be found in Psypioneer, Vol. 4, No. 8, August 2008.

James Arthur Findlay also expressed his views:

MR. J. ARTHUR FINDLAY



Spiritualism to me stands for the knowledge I have obtained in the Séance Room that mind, life and substance exist beyond the range of our physical sight and touch. Before one obtains this direct evidence the natural conclusion is that only what we hear and see exists in the universe. Spiritualism, therefore, stands for an addition to our knowledge of the universe and in no way upsets or contradicts the knowledge so far acquired by physical science.

This addition to our knowledge opens out before us a wonderful vista because we can now obtain such an extended view of the universe that our philosophy undergoes a complete change. Instead of feeling that we are solely material creatures with our short lives bounded by the cradle and the grave, we have opened out before us an enlarged panorama in which we see ourselves playing a part throughout the ages. We seem to go from strength to strength, to increased heights of wisdom and understanding and what seemed to be death on earth and the end of all things, is nothing worse than a door through which we enter to a larger and fuller life. Instead of death being the end it is just one of many similar experiences we shall have to go through in our journey through the spheres until the time comes when we shall reach at-one-ment with the Infinite, where time and space cease to be and we have reached Reality. We shall have BECOME.

All this I have learned from conversations I have had with friends who have spoken to me from the next order of existence. I have therefore no need for creeds and dogmas as I have a complete philosophy without them, which to me is called Spiritualism, though the name is of little importance, what is of importance are the facts.

J. ARTHUR FINDLAY.



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MADAME VICTORIA DUNCAN

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

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

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

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

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



Artist's impression of Albert Stewart

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

My First Experiences in Trances

By Madame Victoria Duncan

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

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

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

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

Trumpet's Peculiar Movements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Joyful Answer.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lifted from the Floor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Went into Trance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“What has been happening?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

First Real Trance.

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

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

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

Visitors from the "Other Side."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Visited by Investigation Committee.

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

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

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

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

"It is rather strange," I replied.

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

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

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

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

A New Controlling Intelligence.

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

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

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

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

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



SPIRITUALIST HEALERS OF THE PAST

Gordon Alan John Turner



In previous issues we have looked at the 'Psychic Surgeon', Jesse J. Thomas, whose healing guide, 'Dr. Robert', operated on the etheric bodies of sick patients. Similarly, Frederick Joseph Jones was claimed in the Spiritualist press in 1933 as "the most remarkable psychic healer known to Spiritualism in recent years". In the last issue we featured animal healer George Tomkins, who was well-known in the 1950s, achieving remarkable success.

In this issue we are featuring Gordon Turner. Below is taken from the "Two Worlds", March 8th 1958, page 7, by Philip Paul; the photograph is by Leon Isaacs.[10]

> "I THINK Spiritualism has still got too much superstition. I think we have taken the service of Primitive Methodism and attached clairvoyance to it. I think we have got to get something more vital to attract the new generations. One of the truest forms of worship is the expansion of one's own mind. I don't think we have enough psychic research. There is still a lot to learn."
>
> Such are the views of 31-year-old Gordon Alan John Turner, who began healing five years ago and has since progressed to the front rank of Spiritualism's workers of mercy among animals.
>
> Born in London of a Scots father and Welsh mother, he is a vigorous young man with an athletic figure and a nimble brain. Spiritualism has need of men like Turner.
>
> His story really begins when he was nine. Then, there used to be secret sittings with a brother at a ouija board in their bedroom. The results were interesting but had no definite outcome.
>
> **End of writing career**
>
> Having left school, he spent four months as "a very unsuccessful drapery salesman." Next he tried the role of a writer of fiction and was, in fact, carving quite a career in that connection when he was drawn into psychics.
>
> It came about from a visit to Kings Cross Psychic Centre. He joined a home circle and became well known for his transfiguration seances. Then he was asked to heal—and his present reputation has been achieved through the accumulation of results that have followed.
>
> The other aspects of his mediumship have, naturally, dropped into the background. Three years ago, however, he suffered a severe shock when, as the medium in a

[10] Leon Isaacs, who is mentioned elsewhere in this issue, took many of the well-known portraits of our mediums, for example Gordon Turner, William Redmond, Bertha Harris, J. Arthur Findlay, SNU Presidents Harold Vigurs and Harry Dawson, etc.

transfiguration circle, a hæmorrhage was brought on as a result of a sitter prematurely switching on a light. “Since then,” he says. “I have given very few sittings of that sort.”

Bringing them in

Married and with a stepdaughter, he is aided in his healing endeavours by an enthusiastic band of helpers, led by Mr. and Mrs. William Prince—the Olive and George Burton of Turner’s world.

At present, the “contact” patients seen by Gordon and his assistants number some 200 a week. There is an absent healing list amounting to 2,000 names. “A lot of our patients are not Spiritualists,” says Gordon. “We have brought a lot of people into the Movement by this means.”

In 1953, he launched his own magazine, “Global Light.” It survived until last year, when economic factors killed it. The effort cost Gordon £500.

There are humorous memories too for this coming young star in the psychic firmament. He recalls, for example, the arthritis victim whose locked arms he freed at a demonstration meeting. Noticing that the spine was also affected, he began work on that part of the man’s anatomy, whereupon the patient protested violently and begged him to stop.

Asked the reason for this strange request, the man said: “My wife’s in this audience. If she sees you free my spine as you‘ve just freed my arms, she’ll have me scrubbing the floors!”

Then there was the cat who, having been brought to Gordon’s healing clinic two or three times, acquired the habit and arrived on its own for treatment at the correct time each week. Dogs, cats, tortoises, fish, rabbits, guinea pigs, birds and all sorts of other animals take their turn with human patients.

“There is no differentiation,” says Gordon, “they all sit in the waiting room together and they are all good for each other. In my years of healing, I have had only one protest, from a woman, about receiving healing at the same time as animals.”

In the matter of finance, he says it has been a struggle. “We have been dipping into savings for some time now.” Disliking the idea of introducing money into his sanctuary, he leaves a bowl for voluntary offerings in the hall of his Clapham home. Twice, its contents have been stolen.

“I should be better off financially if I took a job,” says Gordon—his wife goes out to work—‘‘but then I shouldn’t be able to carry on with the healing. My average day is from 8 am. to 1am.”

As a hobby, he is engrossed in his collection of tropical birds. Under his care, they have grown accustomed to living without special heating in London’s uncertain climate. And we mustn’t forget Jack—a jackdaw found as a stray in a local market who was given to Gordon and has made his home with the healer ever since. He could scarcely have chosen a better place.

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The National Federation of Spiritual Healers (NFSH) Chairman Gordon Turner in 1960 persuaded the medical authorities to allow spiritual healers to visit and give healing in hospitals. It is noted on the NFSH website: "Three years later it is recorded that 249 medical authorities governing 1,560 hospitals were allowing Spiritual Healers to practise."

Published below is the run-up to this, where Gordon Turner appeared on television with Henry Langston, a surgeon and a member of the BMA Council and Chairman of its Central Consultants and Specialists Committee. The comments at the end of the article by the "Two Worlds" are particularly poignant. The report was published by the "Two Worlds" on its front-page issue, July 9th 1960:

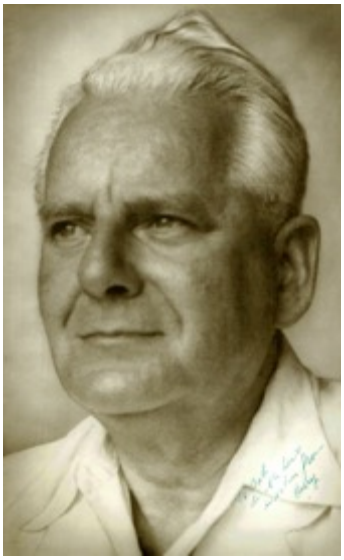
Medium in TV debate with surgeon over healers in hospitals

"TRUTH has always prevailed over prejudice," was the perfect parting shot made by Gordon Turner when this leading healer argued last with a surgeon about the admission of healers into hospitals. Their discussion occurred in the popular programme, "This Week," ITV's news magazine, watched by millions of viewers, which specialises in probing beneath the surface of the week's headlines.

Daniel Farson, well-known television interviewer, was first seen in a flashback when he had interviewed Harry Edwards, who said that he derived his healing powers from God. Then Farson stated there was a conflict between the BMA and the National Federation of Spiritual Healers as to whether patients benefited.

Living testimonials

He introduced on the screen two women who owed a debt to spiritual healing. Five years ago, said the first one, a Mrs. Collett, her second child was born with brain injuries and after a hæmorrhage was not expected to live.



Harry Edwards

The mother sent a message to her husband to get a healer to christen the child before she died. The healer—it was Harry Edwards, though his name was not mentioned—arrived. The oxygen tent was opened for a few moments, and he blessed the child.

Despite the noise made by 30 babies in the ward, the mother said she had an extraordinary sense of peace, a feeling that no matter what happened all would be well with her baby girl. "She got better from that moment," said the mother.

"Would you regard this as a miracle? asked Farson. "Yes," was the reply.

The second testimonial came from Mary Martin, the medium, who said, "I owe my life to spiritual healing." She detailed the many illnesses from which she had suffered—arthritis, complete blindness in her left eye, with the right eye expected to follow suit, were some of them—from which she was now free.

Farson asked if she had received medical treatment. "Yes," she answered. When it was unsuccessful. however, she turned to healing.

"Why then does the BMA object?" asked Farson.

He introduced Henry Langston, a surgeon, who is a member of the BMA council and chairman of its Central Consultants and Specialists Committee. He is the man who attacked spiritual healers at the BMA annual conference at Torquay last month.

There he described them as "self-styled healers," adding disdainfully: "We believe the majority of them to be Spiritualists or Spiritists. They have nothing in common with ministers of religion."

Farson also introduced Gordon Turner in his capacity as liaison officer of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers.

Langston now said, "We have not passed judgment on spiritual healers or on the federation"—this contradicted what he had said at Torquay. "Spiritual healing," he added," should not be permitted in hospitals."

Farson: "That is passing judgment."

Turner, who made all his points with dignified composure, said, "The crucial issue is the need of the sick."

Langston stated that hospital treatment was the responsibility of medical men, all of whom had qualifications, whereas healers had none. Doctors were responsible to the law.

Farson: "If a patient requests a healer to come, do you object?"

Langston: "No, but we object to treatment by the healer."

"Could it do harm?"

"Every treatment is our responsibility."

Turner calmly pointed out that the federation had asked for an impartial investigation into healing.

Langston ignored this statement and said, "Treatment must be by qualified people."

Turner pressed his point: "Is it not the BMA's duty to conduct this inquiry to see if healing. helps the sick?".

Langston: "We cannot take the responsibility for what unqualified people may do."

Turner: "Surely treatment of the sick is more important than professional prestige."

Farson asked what would be the position if a patient asked for a healer to treat him. Langston replied that the patient would be told, "If that is what you want you must leave the hospital."

Farson: "He might not be fit enough."

Turner reminded Langston that the Minister of Health had said this was a question to be decided by hospital management committees.

Farson introduced the question of absent healing, saying Edwards had told him that he gave thousands of these distant treatments every week.

Turner said that absent healing was being given to hospital patients, but there was also merit in personal treatment.

Here "Farson asked" Langston if he thought that this would come about. It was doubtful, answered Langston, because all the churches were against it.

It was here that Turner made the masterly reply, "Truth has always prevailed over prejudice."

SIGN OF THE TIMES

Comment by "Two Worlds."

It is a tremendous tribute to the impact made by healing that this subject should be discussed on television and that a leading healer should be asked to participate.

And it is a sign of the times that Orthodoxy's stranglehold on television has been so broken that the case for healing can be presented by a healer in this uncensored fashion.

Viewers must have been shocked by the monopolistic, dictatorial attitude revealed by Langston when he said that patients who asked for healing would be told they must leave the hospital.

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In an earlier article published in the "Two Worlds", March 8th 1958, the healer talks of his earlier days, explaining his initial trance experiences, the auric field, etc.

During the treatment the colours become heightened and much deeper as they flow into the patient's body

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WHY DOES HEALING WORK—AND FAIL?

"But how does spirit healing work?" Everyone is interested in the answers to this oft-asked question. One of our great healers is examining some of the implications. Here is the first of two articles.

The second time that I sat ever sat in a Spiritualist circle I went into trance. About 14 people were gathered in a cold, pitch dark room singing hymns vigorously. Gradually I felt my self-control slipping from me. Voices started to buzz in my head. and then . . . suddenly . . .I was stood in the corner looking at my body slumped forward in its chair.

I remember it all quite vividly. My first reaction was surprise that I could see clearly even though the room was dark. It then occurred to me that I had died. Very frightened I tried to make my way back to what I believed to be my earthly remains. It was like trying to walk in the deep end of a swimming pool. The atmosphere felt terribly heavy. Every movement was difficult. Foot by foot I edged towards my body.

Was he lucky?

As I got close, there was a rushing sensation, and everything was normal again. Dry-mouthed. A little sick . . . but back. "You've been into trance." I was told. "And so quickly. You are lucky." I wasn't so sure.

Travelling home on the bus that night my mind was in a turmoil. There must be some logical explanation for what had happened and I meant to find it. Question after question ricocheted across my head.

Eventually, like so many before me I settled for self-hypnosis. The atmosphere of expectancy, the singing, the darkness, all had combined to bringing about a state of coma in which I had suffered a delusion.

Late as it was on arriving home, I was determined to reproduce similar conditions. With the help of a gramophone, a blue light and a hastily constructed pendulum, I sat until 4 a.m., trying and trying. The only results were a stiff neck and a splitting headache. With the dawn I tumbled into bed, a confused and desperately worried man.

Psychic from his cradle

This was my baptism into the Spiritualist movement. Although psychic from birth, I had never before felt the need to face up to the implications of the occasional visions and feelings to which I had been subject. But here was a question with which I felt myself forced to grapple. Since that time the whole course of my life has been changed.

Each day the vast new horizon, which this event opened to me grows broader and the problem of appreciating its complexities becomes greater. I am convinced there is no place for blind faith in the Spiritualist movement. If we are to prove worthy of the great trust which has been placed in us, then it must come about through the action of intelligent service, rather than mechanical dogmatism.

It is upon this principle that my work as a spirit healer has been based. I am not ashamed to admit that I still find it impossible to answer many of the questions that are constantly posed. Nevertheless certain ideas emerge which suggest probability rather than possibility.

I am, however, certain that the influence of spirit intelligence in healing is now beyond dispute. I am equally certain that spirit intelligence is too frequently blamed for superstitious antics which have their origin entirely within our own minds.

Needless passes

As a "trainee healer" I was taught that successful healing could come about only through the ability to control breathing and carry out simultaneously certain complicated passes. Every healing session was a personal nightmare. If my hands did it right then my breathing didn't; if I concentrated on my breathing my hands started to flutter about like a seagull with a broken wing.

Reluctantly I was told: "You'll never make a healer. The power is there but your co-ordination is all wrong." Travelling about the country I often came across healing bands employing methods similar to these.

Several times I have looked for the youngest healer and asked, "Why are you doing that particular movement?" The answer is invariably, "This is the way that I was taught to heal by the circle leader." I am often tempted to wonder whether healing comes through because of or despite these movements.

Wise advice

I was once advised by a spirit teacher to analyse every one of my movements during the healing sessions and discard every action which originated in vanity or self-

satisfaction. This is the best advice that I have ever been given as a healer. It is also, incidentally, the hardest to follow.

One feels instinctively that healing is an active thing, physically and mentally. There is nothing worse than standing with one's hands on a sick person's head, knowing there is something to be done but not knowing what. In the early days of healing this is one of the hardest problems to overcome, but eventually the hands will begin to work genty and deftly under the guidance of an outside force and mind.

Normally I am a very clumsy person. The works of a clock or a car engine have seldom, if ever, been improved by my touch. But in the sanctuary I am able to watch my hands move painful joints and touch diseased and inflamed tissue with a sureness which, under other conditions, would terrify me. There is a happiness here beyond any other that I have known.

It is not easy to understand the laws that govern healing. I have seen the most unlikely patients get better in a matter of minutes, and the very person that you would expect to respond most rapidly makes many visits before any change becomes visible.

I am fully convinced there is a perfectly logical explanation for everything which happens in healing. The great difficulty is to take into account the enormous number of varying factors involved. Healing appears to function on many different levels at the same time. The person being treated for what appears to be a purely organic disorder may also be in need of mental and spiritual help. The healing power will not ignore one disorder solely because the patient is being treated for another.

Guided by light

One of my first psychic memories is of floating bands of intermingled coloured light surrounding different people. I have always seen this. Although it is not visible all the time, I am always most conscious of it whilst doing healing. As soon as the healer's hands are placed on the patient this light appears to vibrate much more quickly and to expand. In some cases I have known it to fill almost the whole of the room.

During the treatment the colours become heightened and much deeper as they flow into the patient's body. It is extremely revealing to watch the changes when two people meet for the first time. The two surrounds seem to "feel each other out," coming into contact, recoiling and finally gradually intermingling.

I am positive that all disease is contagious through this auric field. Similarly it acts as a protective shield, constantly repelling harmful vibrations. Trouble appears to occur when either the mind or the body allows weakness to occur in this armour.

Revealed by the aura

Frequently I have watched the healing force overcome the auric disharmonies, surrounding the blemishes with a bright cloud of light and then dispersing them, for all the world like spiritual penicillin. All this would be much easier to appreciate if the reactions were always identical, but they never are.

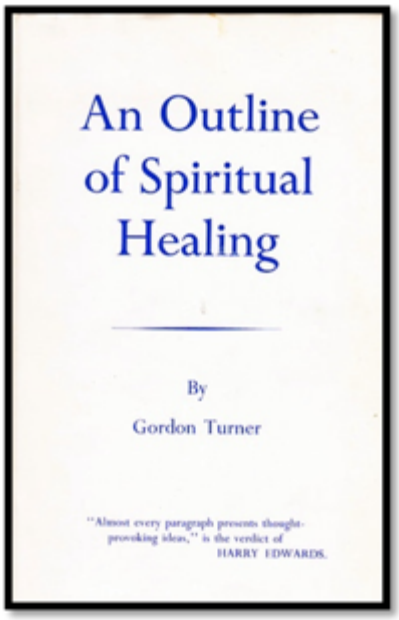
There does not seem to be any consistency either of pattern or of colour. I have studied other peoples' researches into the auric field, but their teachings never seem to concur with my own experience, nor yet indeed with one another's.

Two people of similar age and complaint will show two entirely different auric fields.

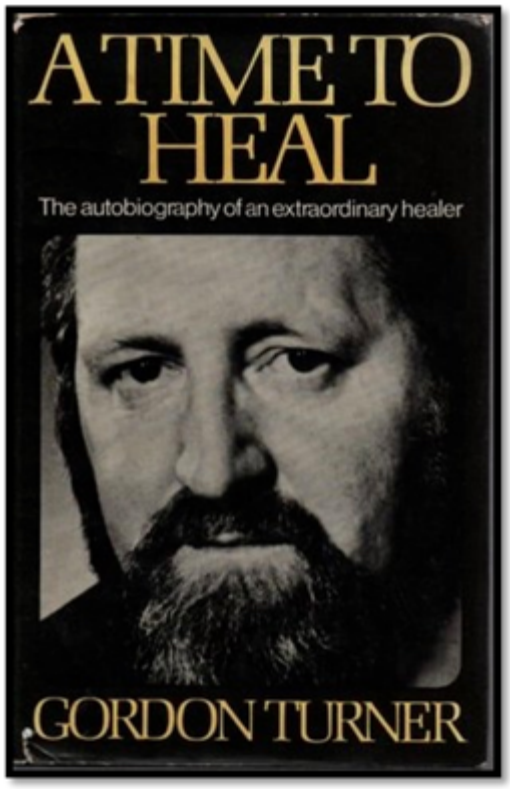
It is conceivable that the colours thus observed are merely mental symbols for something which the mind, with its faculties adjusted to the understanding of a physical universe, has no mechanism to convey.

So it is that spiritual healing still presents a multitude of mysteries and complications. There is a tremendous need for continuous research in this field if we are ever to understand its true significance. Many questions must inevitably take years of continuous study before any light is liable to emerge. But I, for one, hope for the privilege of devoting the rest of my life searching for some of the answers.

Gordon Turner published two books on healing.



First published in 1963 by Max Parrish and Co. Ltd., London



Autobiography, first published by Talmy Franklin in 1974

Psypioneer: New Website

It was announced in the last issue of Pioneer that I was stepping down as editor of Psypioneer and the position was being resumed by its founder editor, Leslie Price. The front index page of this issue gives the updated contact information.

Leslie notes:

> "It is daunting to take over from Paul, who built the direct circulation from 100 to over 750 (with hundreds more at SNUi), but I know he will still be available at Stansted to advise. There will be no change in the nature of Psypioneer, which will continue to appear every other month. While Pioneer will focus on the history of the Union and its pioneers, Psypioneer will cover the wider psychic field. All Psypioneer subscriptions will automatically continue. After twelve years' faithful service from the team at Woodlands Sanctuary Foundation Inc. in Melbourne, Australia, who are retiring, we are delighted that Marc Demarest of the International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals (IAPSOP) will take over as Psypioneer webmaster."

Below are Leslie Price and Paul Gaunt, photographed by Janette (Jan) Marshall last May outside the College of Psychic Studies, where Leslie is the College archivist.

