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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All references to Psypioneer in this issue are archived at http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/

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Visit to the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain



In November 2018 SNU President David Bruton, Arthur Findlay College tutor Janette (Jan) Marshall and myself took a trip to the oldest surviving Spiritualist society in England, the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain. It started out its life as the "Marylebone Spiritualist Association" (M.S.A.), London, and was founded in 1872, being one of the earliest societies in London.

Below is a quote published in Psypioneer, Vol. 2, No. 12, December 2006, by Leigh Hunt in 1928:

> On February 7th, 1872, about a dozen friends met together at 16. David Street, Marylebone (on the site of which now stands Portman Mansions), and discussed the question of forming a Spiritualistic Society. It was then decided that a few informal meetings be arranged, and one of these took place at Mr. James Burns's Progressive Library, 15, Southampton Row, W.C. Mr. Burns, Editor of *The Medium and Daybreak* (a spiritualistic journal long since defunct) and others, spoke at this meeting. Further meetings were held at the Hall of Progress, Church Street, Marylebone. But it was not until July 10th of the same year that the Marylebone Association came into being as an organised body. My father had been doing most of the clerical and other work entailed during the period between February 7th and July 10th, but from the latter date the following officers were appointed:—President: Mr. W. Cowper; Hon. Treasurer: Mr. C. I. Hunt; Hon. Secretary: Mr. C. White; and Hon. Librarian Mr. W. Maynard.
>
> Meetings were held during the next few years at various halls. Sometimes the Association went as far as Notting Hill before being able to find a meeting place, for opposition was met with everywhere, especially from proprietors of halls, etc.—this 'thing' called Spiritualism was taboo to so many folk in those days! So great was the prejudice then existing that even the name of the Association had to be changed (unofficially, of course) at times, so that a hall might be hired. (It was for a considerable period known as "The Spiritual Evidence Society.") One day, however—it was in 1879 after a long period of uphill work and intermittent and oft-times noisy meetings,
>
> QUEBEC HALL, GREAT QUEBEC STREET, MARYLEBONE,
>
> was obtained, and here took place many quite notable meetings, and some remarkable seances with several then well-known physical mediums, including Mr. Cecil Husk, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Herne and Mr. Charles Williams.

On March 4th 1955 a contract was signed for premises situated at 33, Belgrave Square, London. On February 24th 1960 the M.S.A. changed its name to the 'Spiritualist Association of Great Britain' (S.A.G.B.).

Today it has splendid new premises in an old converted bank in Battersea, as shown at the head of this article. We were met by General Manager Annie Blair; just above Annie's head is a photograph of her mother, Stella Blair. Annie kindly gave us a detailed tour of the new premises, assisted by Karl; the floors contain some historic treasures.



The chair shown below was used by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; it is said that he wrote some of his books from this chair. Doyle was a former Vice-President of the Association.

The framed photographs show the images of Mr and Mrs Thomas Everitt in 1890. Mr Everitt became their President and remained so until his death in 1905; he put the Association on a firmer footing. Everitt, incidentally, was a well-to-do Pentonville tailor; his background was well suited in the early days of the MSA.



The Everitts were on the Spiritualist scene as it was starting to blossom in England in the mid-1850s. They moved in distinguished and aristocratic circles of the metropolis and by the mid-1860s Mrs Everitt was a well-known non-professional medium, supported by her husband, who was also to make a distinguished mark in the promotion of the early Spiritualist movement in London.

The Everitts were good friends with Dawson Rogers, through whose instrumentality, it is generally accepted, founded the "British National Association of Spiritualists" (B.N.A.S.) in 1873. Dawson Rogers makes a brief reference to Thomas Everitt's involvement, which is not generally printed and to which I draw attention:

> I think I told you that I took up business in London in January, 1873. Shortly after that time a conference of Spiritualists was held in Liverpool, at which Mr. Thomas Everitt was present. At that meeting a resolution was passed, asking Mr. Everitt to endeavour to form a National Association in London. In compliance with this expressed wish, Mr. Everitt called a meeting of a few friends, including myself, the outcome of which was the establishment of the British National Association of spiritualists.

Thomas Everitt became Vice-President of the B.N.A.S. in 1874. Although the Society was successful and became the dominant society in its promotion of Spiritualism in Britain, with an impressive membership, it was soon to become crippled with internal quarrelsome members of the Council; Rogers points this out:

> The fact was that a great mistake had been made in appointing so large a council; it numbered about fifty. The Association was broken up in consequence, and was merged into a society which was called 'The Central Association of Spiritualists' but the

discouragement of the recent collapse was too great, after a short time this society also was disbanded.

The Central Association of Spiritualists (C.A.S.) survived between 1882 and 1883; from this we see the beginning of "The London Spiritualist Alliance" (L.S.A.), which was started at the suggestion of Stainton Moses, with the first meeting being held on May 5th 1884. Thomas Everitt continued with his support in the L.S.A. and for some time he was a member of the Council.[1]



An impressive library was still being put together under the watchful eye of Karl, who is most dedicated to his work (photograph shown with David Bruton).

I have touched only on the more historical aspect of the long, rich history of the SAGB. Psychic News editor Tony Ortzen interviewed Annie shortly before and this is available online.[2]



Jan Marshall is relaxing under the images of trance mediums Ivy Northage and Ursula Roberts, who was a Minister of the Spiritualists' National Union. Ursula was married in 1946 to former MSA President (1956-1959) Sydney Richardson; a stained-glass memorial window is displayed and can be seen on the website. Both mediums were chosen "Spiritualist of the Year" by Psychic News.



We were invited to a demonstration of clairvoyance by international medium Pauline Mason; prior to the demonstration Pauline had coffee with us and offered President Bruton a donation of a suit Gordon Higginson wore for some of his demonstrations.

A great day was had by all at the

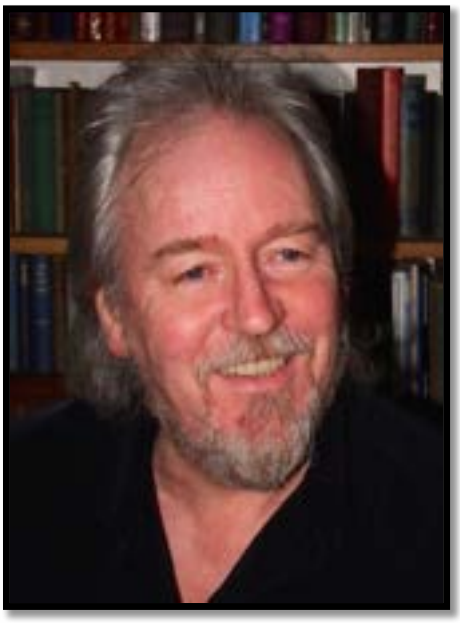
Spiritualist Association of Great Brittain

https://sagb.org.uk

Thanks are due to Janette (Jan) Marshall for the excellent photographs supplied.

[1] The L.S.A. was supportive of organisation in the Spiritualist movement. In September 1889 Thomas Everitt was to represent the L.S.A. in Paris at the "Spiritist and Spiritualist International Congress".

[2] https://sagb.org.uk/SAGB%20Psychic%20News.pdf



Britten Museum & Library

Research - Study Weeks at the Arthur Findlay College

2019 Dates

February 16th — 22nd

July 13th — 19th

September 7th — 14th

A Unique Opportunity Exploring Spiritualist History

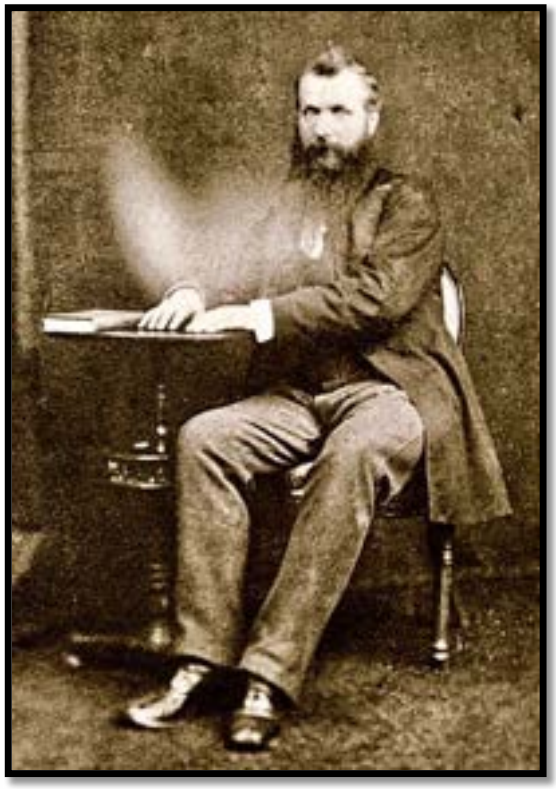
Studying for an SNU Course, a degree, writing a paper or furthering your general knowledge of Spiritualism and our history, etc.?

Your Research study visit will be supported under the guidance of the Museum Curator and Librarian, Paul Gaunt.

Students will have access to the important major Spiritualistic journals of the day, books and the Museum, where you can study and research the many aspects of our history.

£25.00 per day
09.00 - 17.30

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



Meals and accommodation depending on availability
Lunch £10, Dinner £12.50

The following prices include all meals and accommodation.

1 or 2 nights £90.00 bed and breakfast
3 nights £235.00
4 nights £285.00
5 nights £300.00
6 nights £335.00
7 nights £360.00

Alternatively, accommodation is available in the village; a list is available on request.

JOHN BRUCE BEATTIE



The name John Beattie (left in the photo) today appears to be long forgotten, with very little available information on him. In the early 1870s he was a powerful advocate in spirit photography, to some extent bringing serious doubt on the first British commercial spirit photographer, Frederick Hudson. His intention was not to discredit the possibility of spirit photography, being himself a committed Spiritualist, but he claimed that Hudson's alleged spirit photographs were nothing more than superimpositions, i.e. double exposures, showing the image had been exposed twice, so much so that in some images the background, sitters, etc. could be seen through the ghost. Given Beattie's reputation as a retired professional photographer (living in Clifton, a suburb of Bristol) and a respected active Spiritualist, much credence was given to his allegation against Frederick Hudson.

It was further claimed that the ghost images were in fact Hudson himself dressed up. The editor of the "Spiritualist" weekly journal, William Harrison, himself an experienced photographer (mentioned in the last issue), who photographed the spirit of Katie King with the medium Florence Cook (the photographs previously thought to have been taken by William Crookes), raised doubts of serious signs of superimpositions in Hudson's images.



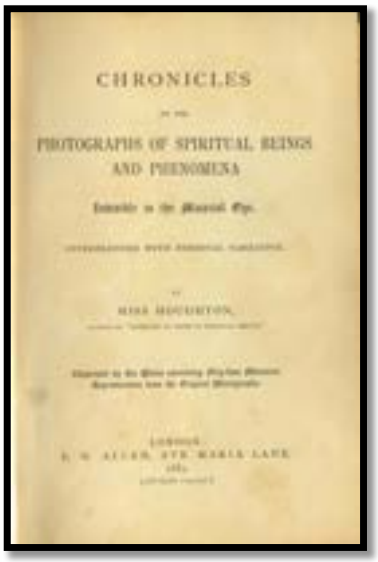
Hudson, it appears, especially in his earlier work, was not directly the medium. For behind his photographic backdrop in his studio, a glass house in his back garden, there was a two-foot gap (a dark cabinet), where a medium would sit to produce the power for the spirit photographs; Hudson would operate the camera, do the development, etc. At the commencement of his work the mediums were Agnes Guppy and Georgiana Houghton, later joined by Charles Williams, Frank Herne and Florence Cook. One photograph shows that the sitter, Frank Herne, is in fact both sitter and ghost image, as shown.[3] More problems arose for Hudson, as it was revealed that some of his spirit forms were found to be images of *living people* who had previously sat at his studio.

However, on the other side of the fence there was much support for Hudson – the evidence was in the recognition of the alleged spirit images. It should be noted that regardless of some allegations many of the images photographed were in fact *solid forms* – these could not be double exposures. Some well-known Spiritualists strongly supported Frederick Hudson, e.g. Stainton Moses, Alfred Russel Wallace.

[3] This photograph does not necessary imply that it was Herne dressed up: other explanations are that it was Herne's spirit double, i.e. his etheric body. There was also some suggestion that it was Herne's brother Willie.

Hudson began his work in March 1872; shortly after, in June, John Beattie began a series of experiments. A brief quote can be noted in "The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult", a well-presented book on the history of spirit photography and beautifully illustrated (from page 32):[4]

> John Beattie meanwhile took advantage of the revelations about Hudson to carry out his own photographic experiments. These were regarded as being "of prime importance" by many contemporaries, one of whom, Alexander Aksakov, described them in his book Animismus und Spiritismus as "the foundation of all the phenomenology of mediumistic materializations in general and of transcendental photography in particular." [page 67] As a result of Beattie's experiments, specialist photographic magazines moderated their negative attitudes toward spirit photography.


CHRONICLES

PHOTOGRAPHS OF SPIRITUAL BEINGS AND PHENOMENA

Georgiana Houghton[5] was instrumental in Hudson's work and development in the early days, along with Agnes Guppy. In 1882 Houghton published "Chronicles of the Photographs of Spiritual Beings and Phenomena Invisible to the Material Eye";[6] this details their work with Fredrick Hudson. Houghton also gives a fair amount of space to John Beattie, publishing his letters originally published in the "Spiritual Magazine", etc.[7]



Below, some of Beattie's research, etc. is quoted, albeit rather long; the images shown are part of the Britten Museum and Library archives from glass lantern slides. It should be noted that these are randomly placed in the article, as I have no way of knowing their order in relationship to the order of séances. The Museum holds a substantial amount of material on this subject, along with other major photographers such as William Mumler, William Hope, etc. Much of this collection was from the Lyceum Union donation: see Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 4, August 2017: "British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union – Lyceum Archives Moved to Stansted Hall".[8]

[4] Authored by Clément Chéroux, Andreas Fischer, Pierre Apraxine, Denis Canguilhem and Sophie Schmit, published by Yale University Press, 2005.

[5] Georgiana Houghton with the alleged spirit form of her sister Zilla on her sister's birthday, May 1872.

[6] "Chronicles of the Photographs of Spiritual Beings and Phenomena Invisible to the Material Eye" is available as a free download.

[7] The *Spiritual Magazine* (1860-1877) was started in January 1860 under the editorship of Mr William Wilkinson, its originator and proprietor, with Mr Thomas Shorter, best known at the time by his *nom-de-plume* of Thomas Brevior (a Latinised version of his name), as sub-editor. William Howitt and Benjamin Coleman were well-known contributors. Later editors in the last years were Dr George Sexton, followed by J. Enmore Jones.

[8] The donation has been put to good use in a PowerPoint showing the early development of psychic photography, a term I believe more apt for the phenomena. The term "psychic photography" was introduced by Trail Taylor in March 1893.

Below quoted from pages 43-48:



In the September number appears a long article from Mr. Beattie (who is a retired photographer at Clifton), with an account of his experiments, which after very many unsuccessful attempts, resulted in their (a circle who sat for the purpose) obtaining some curious photographs which seemed more like spirit-lights shaped into form than anything else. A series of them were sent to me at the time, by a friend to look at, but I regret that I have not any of them in my possession. I will extract a few paragraphs. But no, I think I had better transcribe the whole, as another evidence that spirit-photography needs an expenditure of patience, as well as of time and materials.

"In the experiments I am about to describe, you will find a great part of the evidence required exists in the registered results, and does not altogether depend upon the testimony of witnesses to one or more of the experiments. I will now give the history of these experiments, and how I was led to make them. I was convinced by the American evidence that there was truth in the statement that photographic impressions had been made through the instrumentality of invisible, intelligent beings. We generally find, if credence is given by many people to a statement, it may nevertheless contain much falsehood, but it must have had some root in truth. A falsehood, wholly as such, cannot live unless it draw nutriment from some hidden truth.[9]

"I resolved to try if any result could be obtained in my own experience. I called upon an intimate friend (Mr. Butland), a good trance-medium; his duties allowed him but little time, nevertheless, I was successful in getting him to try the experiments with me. Two other gentlemen, Dr. Thomson (I believe *I* am correct as to the spelling of the name) and Mr. Tommy, agreed to assist me. I next went to Mr. Josty, a professional photographer, and arranged with him for the use of his studio, glass, instruments, and such assistance from himself as we might require. The studio is lighted from nearly north. The camera takes three pictures or exposures on one plate, 8 inches by 5 inches in size; lens, Ross's 6½ inches in focus; all other conditions as usual, only *no dipping bath used, but a flat porcelain tray instead*, with a lid to it, called by some, a developing tray.

"Time of day 6 p.m.; light 'well curtained,' and lens stopped down to lengthen the exposure to about two, and sometimes four minutes. The background was a common one used in everyday work, dark brown in colour, *and standing close against the wall*. The medium sat with his back to it, with a little table in front of him, Dr. Thomson and Mr. Tommy sat on one side, and I, during exposure, at the other.

[9] "Chronicles of the Photographs of Spiritual Beings and Phenomena Invisible to the Material Eye" is available as a free download.



"First séance—nine exposures and no result. Second one, a week after, on the ninth exposure;[10] if nothing had then taken place, we were resolved to give the matter up. We were pleased, however, to find, on the developer *touching* the plate, that an appearance leaped *out at once*. After long discussion, we found that the effect could not be classed in any category of ills that photography was heir to. This induced us to make farther trials. Let me mention that Mr. Josty, up to this point, was laughing at the mere idea of the experiments, although the results in the second séance had staggered him a little. In our third sitting, on the first the first plate no result, on the second plate a manifestation on each exposure; the first two like a luminous bust, with the hands crossed and raised; in the third the same form, but the figure elongated; above and in front of the figure is a strange angular form, differing in size and position in each exposure on the same plate. In the next the figure changes nearer to the human form, and the other image above has grown like a star. This seeming evolution goes on for three more exposures, until the star assumes the outline of a head. While we were exposing one of this series, Mr. Josty uncapped the lens, and was sitting by the camera on a chair. We heard the cap of the lens fall out of his hands; on our looking he was in a deep trance, from which he awoke greatly excited and frightened. After he calmed down a little, he said the last thing he saw was a white figure in front of us, like his wife. After that took place, for the rest of the evening, he could not be induced even to touch the camera or slide, he was so superstitiously afraid. He did not laugh any more that evening.

"In the third series of experiments, the results took other forms more wonderful. First, we got a cone about three-quarters of an inch long, with a shorter cone above it; both like sections of a wax candle. In the second, these forms radiate light laterally; in the third, the cone is changed into a form like a Florence flask, and the short one into a shape like a star; on the fourth the same forms appear, with a duplicate of the star given in addition. On the fifth, the effect is exactly as if an ignited magnesium wire had been dropped into each; the star is now like an illuminated flying bird, and the flask shape has burst into light.

"At our next séance we had eighteen exposures and no result; but the day was very wet. Then on Saturday, the 15th, we had most strange effects both physically and spiritually. I will try my best to give a truthful description. Twelve exposures, and no result. Then Mr. Butland and Mr. Josty were both entranced, and from that trance Mr.

[10] The first manifestation was, therefore, on the eighteenth exposure.



Josty never entirely recovered for the whole evening. He kept saying, 'Fat is dis? I feel queer! I am *tied*! (we smiled at the expression) Fat you say in England when you too much beer?' In fact, he felt the stupid sensation of semi-trance. On the next exposure his duty was to uncap the lens. When he had done so, he walked quickly and stood behind us, at which we were surprised. When the time was up, he ran and replaced the cap. Observe—on this one came out a white form in front of him, just leaving his head exposed. Now, to this hour, he will not believe he went and stood there; he evidently was guided to do so in the trance state.

"Next experiment, Mr. Josty sat with us, and Dr Thomson uncapped the lens. During the sitting, Mr. Josty said, 'I see what looks like a London fog.' On the next part of the plate going on, he said, 'Now I see nothing—all white,' and he stretched out his hands to convince himself we were there. On the third part of the plate going on for exposure, he said he saw a fog again, and Mr. Butland said, 'I see a figure before me.' Now, *observe, these statements were made during the exposure*. When I touched the plate with the developer, the result was most, nay, inconceivably strange. The first came out covered by a semi-transparent veil, and the natural images neutralised, or destroyed; not only was an effect produced, but one prevented. On the next one was complete opacity. On the third a thin veil and figure, as seen by Mr. Butland.



"Next séance, only one result out of fifteen exposures. A figure like a dragon: I can attach no meaning to it. This was followed by an interesting session, in which the plates were covered with strange flames, in each case minutely described by both mediums as to number, position, and brightness during the exposure. One last trial on the 22nd, Mr. John Jones from London present. Mr. Josty was suffering from a severe headache, and Mr. Butland was much fatigued by other duties. Twenty-one exposures, and only three results: one a luminosity only the other two forms like trusses, well rounded, with a clear line in front, and light radiating from behind.



"In this report I have given as well as I can a sort of skeleton of these experiments. During their progress much occurred that required to be seen and heard. The experiments were undertaken for our own satisfaction only. We closed every door from which there was the remotest suspicion of wrong getting entrance. Having done so, we commenced our work earnestly, hopefully, but truthfully. The results have well repaid us, even if we get no more. I enclose you for inspection a set of these results. I am sure you cannot fail to see their immense value in a scientific sense. During the whole of our experiments we have had explicit directions given us as to light, time of beginning and stopping of the lens. Before we begin our work, the table comes round and individually salutes us I do all the photographic manipulating. The images jump out at once, long before the normal images, and this shews the great energy at work. The negatives require no intensifying, a wash with iron solution being all that is required. The invisible friends never know whether they have been successful or not until we tell them. They often express great disappointment at there being no result, saying they tried their best.

"These experiments, if they have been rightly conducted, in my opinion tend to prove that the luminous substances, said to have been seen by sensitives, arising from magnets, crystals, shells, &c., have a positive existence in an objective sense. These substances when condensed exert powerful chemical force; and the energy thrown off from them strikes the plate with an impact equal to that of strong solar light. These substances are taken up by invisible intelligent beings and moulded into shapes, like clay in the hand of the artist, which shapes, when exposed through a lens, can be photographed, whether they be likenesses of human beings or otherwise. By people whose retina can be impressed by these forms, they can be described exactly, before they are made visible to the common eye by development.

"I may be wrong, but I again repeat that these things have a value not easily described. To the purely physical philosopher they reveal a mode of action confirming his notion of the subtle nature of force. And if the doctrine of the unity of force is true, then this is but another mode of the manifestation of force. To the Christian and spiritual philosopher, the experiments confirm their leading idea of the persistence of life, and the existence of unseen intelligent beings, who, though freed from material bodies, are yet working with and for those they care for on this plane of earth.

"The photographs ought to be seen in the series to be fully understood: it is the process of growth that is so strange.

"There is no doubt whatever, taking all into consideration, these pictures—or more correctly speaking, manifestations, for they are not pictures—are the strangest that have occurred. They may be imitated but never would be conceived of.

JOHN BEATTIE.

"WESTBOURNE PLACE, CLIFTON."

A year later John Beattie arrived unannounced at Frederic Hudson's studio under the name "Mr Bruce" in order to catch Hudson out,[11] as recorded on pages 149-155:



> The origin of the storm that burst so early on Mr. Hudson's devoted head was that a gentleman who had published, in April, 1872, his recognition of a spirit-portrait, took the said photograph to Mr. Beattie of Clifton, who, *ipse dixit*, pronounced it a fraud, and shewed how spirit-photographs could be simulated (very inferior to the real thing, be it said), thus bringing on all the trouble that I have very faintly shadowed forth. Mr. Beattie afterwards tried experiments of his own, to which also I have slightly alluded in the previous pages, but still, like many other Spiritualists, his *faith* in the unseen powers could only reach as far as his own *experience* had gone. Fortunately, however, he came up to London in the month of June, 1873, and on the 9th, a gentleman, giving the name of Bruce, went to Mr. Hudson for a photographic séance, asking permission to go through the whole process himself with test conditions, to which Mr. Hudson was spiritually impressed to accede, and the result was fully satisfactory. A few days after, much to his surprise, he received a letter with the full signature "John Bruce Beattie," to say how much pleased he had been, and that he should write an account of the séance for the *Spiritual Magazine*. In a later letter he says he believes the spirit to be his nephew, and that he has sent a photograph to the mother for identification. Such is the statement I had written at the back of the picture on plate VI. No.51; and I will now give his own account at full length as it appeared in the *British Journal of Photography* and in the *Spiritual Magazine* for August.
>
> "If our senses perceive any phenomenon we do not understand, and so strange that our reason at first refuses to enquire into the likely causes of it, it is, in such a case, manifestly our duty to see, first, that the new appearance is not opposed to the known and clearly demonstrated truth we are already acquainted with; and secondly, to make careful note of all relating to such appearance, in order that if it re-occur a sufficient number of times, and at the same time under the observation of a strict and free mind, facts will become plentiful enough to point the way to the law or laws upon which the strange phenomenon depends. It must be obvious that if we refuse to sift and record appearances which take place, on the ground that they seem to go against our experience, then little fresh ground will ever be broken. But what have the brains of our scientific men been employed in during this century? Why, they have been making revelations, bringing to light, and reducing to law and usefulness, principles that seemed opposed to all past experience and knowledge. As, for instance, look at the deep-sea sounding: the men so employed have brought to light facts that have completely upset the notions held of organic life in the sea even a few years ago.

[11] Image of Frederick Hudson and Thurston his alleged spirit helper.

"I make these remarks as an introduction to some statements I am about to make relating to some experiments in a new branch of photography,—namely, the power or possibility of photographing forms invisible to ordinary eyesight, and which forms indicate the presence of unseen intelligent beings of some sort controlling the forms so photographed. photographed.

"Last year, at this time, I made a long series of experiments of the same kind. The results of these experiments have astonished many scientific men both in this and other countries. Many smiled, and said I was self-deceived; all gave me credit for truth, but few for brains. I can assure my readers that one thing is true of me—I always look right into everything. I am pledged to nothing but truth, and if I see a thing is straight, I will not say it is crooked. Similar experiments have been made by many men in various parts of America and Europe. Some have been successful, some have failed, and some, I believe, were guilty of deceiving in the matter. My last year's experiments I recorded at the time. I will now give briefly an account of my first experiment this year.

"I, accompanied by a friend, called to see a professional man, whom we did not find at home. Being disappointed, I observed, 'I have long wished to see Mr. Hudson, who is said to have produced "spirit-photographs."' My friend agreed to accompany me, and in a minute's time we were in a cab on our way for Holloway Road. I fully instructed my friend as to keeping my name unknown to Mr. Hudson. My companion being an amateur photographer, he was easily coached up on that point. In a short time we were at our destination, and, cabby discharged, we entered a respectable-looking house. The reception-room seemed as usual in ordinary establishments A lady remarkable in appearance attended to us. She was most civil, modest, and unassuming in her bearing. The head was broad set, indicating considerable balance of character. After some talk I asked if her father ever made experiments in spirit-photography. She replied, 'Yes, sometimes.' Was he successful? 'Only occasionally.' She had just taken from a drawer some samples to shew us when Mr. Hudson came into the room. I scanned him over from head to foot.

"He seemed about fifty-six years of age, of a sanguine nervous temperament, much like a retired actor; he possessed a good frontal brain, but low in all the executive organs; self-esteem, firmness, and the instinct of persistence being all defective—a man you would not take for a deceiver, yet one you might suppose would be easily led.

"But I find I must be brief. After sufficient conversation for us to understand each other, he said—'Do you know my terms?' I answered, 'No.' He replied, 'They are one guinea, and I make these experiments. If nothing comes on the plates I cannot help it.' The daughter had told us that Mr. Young had tried, and had a complete failure.

"I then said, 'I suppose you will allow me a full chance, along with my friend, of investigating the experiments as they proceed?' He answered, 'Yes' freely. We then went out to a garden and into as common a glass-house as any I have been in for years. It had an A shaped roof, with light on both sides. The side and roof lights were curtained with what once had been white but were now yellow curtains. At one end was a background painted seemingly in oil colour, of the usual tint. This stood about two feet from the wall, leaving room for a person to sit or stand in a partially dark place behind it. At the other end the usual operating room, freely lighted with yellow light. The bath was a common one, made of porcelain without case or lid. The camera was a well-worn bellows one, about 10 by 8, drawn in to suit a portrait lens of about six inches back focus. All the machinery I most scrupulously examined, and at the same time had the use of my friend's eyes and other senses. I asked for the glass to be used, and I secretly marked it. We saw it coated and prepared.

"The daughter was to sit as the medium. I said I would rather she would stand by me than sit behind the background, which was agreed to. All being ready, I sat profile to the background, in order that I might see it, my friend at the same time controlling the exposure.

"The sitting occupied about one minute. The result was a failure, no ghost being in attendance.

"In the next experiment all was the same, except that the medium sat behind the background. On the picture being developed, a sitting figure besides myself came out in front of me and between the background and myself. I am sitting profile in the picture; the figure in three-quarter position, in front of me, but altogether between me and the background. The figure is draped in black, with a the white-coloured plaid over the head, and is like both a brother and a nephew of mine. This last point I do not press, because the face is like the face of a dead person and is under-lighted.



"In my last trial—all, if possible, being more strictly attended to than before, and in the same place, relative to me—there came out a standing female figure, clothed with a black skirt, and having a white-coloured, thin, linen drapery, something like a shawl in pattern upon her shoulders, over which a profuse mass of black hair loosely hung. The figure is in front of me, and, as it were, partially between me and the camera.

"I wish, if this business be all deception, some one would 'make a hole' through it for me. Mr. Hudson was exceedingly careless as to my doings. He left me in the dark room many minutes together, and there was nothing I left unexamined. Besides, in my own town, on Tuesday last, in making a series of experiments, I got results of a singular character, but which I will not publish till they are a little farther advanced.

"Now to conclude: if the figures standing by me in the pictures were not produced as I have suggested (remembering their possibility has been otherwise proved), I do not know how they were there; but I must state a few ways by which they were not made. They were not made by double exposure nor by figures being projected in space in any way; they were not the result of mirrors; they were not produced by any machinery in the background, behind it, above it, or below it, nor by any contrivance connected with the bath, the camera, or the camera slide.

"I apologise for taking up so much space with this matter, but I hope the enquiry will interest some of your readers. lt may not appear to be capable of commercial application at once; but surely we are not to measure all knowledge by that standard. If there be truth in this matter, there is no truth so important to our race.

CLIFTON, BRISTOL JOHN BEATTIE."

The editor of the *Spiritual Magazine* adds the following extract from a private letter from Mr. Beattie to himself:—"Since my return home, I have been going on with our experiments. The results are most startling. To write a report of them will require much time and care, they are so completely strange and bewildering. My reason is crushed into submission to what she staggers and rebels against—there seems to be no escape from the consequence. One thing I do thank God for, and that is, I have no bias of any kind; my mind is free to examine, and come to true conclusions. I never feel to have anything at stake as to how the conscience will lead me. I must write carefully a statement of our present work. I cannot go on long with it; the manifestations are so strange, independent of the photography, I cannot rest for thinking about then.

JOHN BEATTIE."

The same magazine contains also the following testimony of Mr. Traill Taylor, editor of the British Journal of Photography, which had appeared in his periodical in the same week as the previous article. "In another column Mr. Beattie has described some photographic experiments of an extraordinary nature which have been conducted in his presence, and has hinted at others which have been conducted by himself under other circumstances. Every one who knows Mr. Beattie will give him ample credit for being a thoughtful, skilful, and intelligent photographer, one of the last men in the world to be easily deceived, at least in matters relating to photography, and one quite incapable of deceiving others; and yet Mr. Beattie comes forward with a statement resulting from experiments performed by himself or in his presence, which, if it means anything at all, means that there is, after all, really something in spirit-photography—at any rate, that figures and forms which were not produced by the operator have been developed upon the plate with quite as much, and in some instances more, vigour than the visible sitter.

"The main facts once admitted, the question arises: By what means are these figures formed upon the collodion film? The first impulse is to attribute it to a double exposure on the part of Mr. Hudson the photographer.[12] But here a difficulty interposes—Mr. Hudson need not be present at all, indeed it is but an act of justice to that gentleman to say that, when we were trying experiments in his studio to determine the truth of the so-called 'spirit-photography,' we obtained entire possession of his dark room, employed our own collodion and plates, and at no time during the preparation, exposure, or development of the pictures was Mr. Hudson within ten feet of the camera or dark room. Appearances of an abnormal kind did certainly appear on several plates, but by whatever means they were caused—and on this we do not intend at present to speak—the photographer had nothing whatever to do with their production. Neither will the 'previously-used plate' theory apply in this case, for the plates were quite new, and were obtained from Messrs. Rouch and Co. a few hours before they were used, and apart from the fact of their never having been out of our possession, the package was only undone just before the operations were commenced.



[12] "Alas! for human nature! should the *first* impulse always be suspicion of fraud?"—G.H.

MRS HELEN HUGHES



Helen Hughes was well-known for her demonstrations of clairaudience at some of the largest venues in the U.K., often with Maurice Barbanell, Hannan Swaffer and Ernest Oaten, etc. as the speakers. The photograph shows Barbanell with Helen Hughes sitting behind him in Edinburgh in 1942. See Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 6, November 2015: "Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U. and his Propaganda Work".

Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 3, May 2015, gives a profile of Hughes; also reprinted in this issue is a full report of her remarkable mediumship at Sheffield in 1941 (brief quote):

> Mr. Oaten, in a short address, outlined the claims of modern Spiritualism and emphasised the value of its message in the difficulties of the present times.
>
> Then followed a torrent of evidences by Mrs. Helen Hughes. Pointing to the gallery, she said, "There is someone up there who knew Tom Parker. He says: I have tried very hard to get back. There is Tom Parker, Mrs. Parker and Aunt Annie. Tom says: I have met Mary Wilson; she was your Godmother. Let them all know at home."
>
> Pointing to another lady, Mrs. Hughes said: "Do you know Mrs. Holland? I think she knew something of Spiritualism, for she says it has helped me considerably to know about this. She says that you are her Sister. There is John and William Holland, and they send love to Margery, —tell Margery to stick to Aunty."
>
> Mrs. Hughes continued: I hear someone say "if this is what angina does, it is good." It is a Spirit named Nelson; there is Mr. Nelson and Mary Nelson, who died of angina. She tells me that she has met Tommy; she has got him with her. He went down in the 'Hood.' And it was his first boat."

Further, in Vol. 4, No. 3, June 2017, Frank Leah – Psychic Artist: "First-ever attempt at public post-mortem portraiture by Frank Leah partnered by the clairvoyant Helen Hughes".

Helen Hughes, together with Estelle Roberts, *secretly* demonstrated survival to Members of Parliament in the precincts of 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. See Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2014: "The Effect of the Vagrancy & Witchcraft Act – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union".[13]

Below is published a rather interesting article written by Helen Hughes on her own mediumship, "How I Demonstrate Survival"; this was brought to my attention by David Rogers, who had asked me about material on the development of clairaudience. David came across this article in his research: "Light", March 12th 1936, published on the front page, continued on page 162:

[13] This is in six parts.

HOW I DEMONSTRATE SURVIVAL

FAMOUS CLAIRAUDIENT MEDIUM DESCRIBES HER EXPERIENCES

By MRS. HELEN HUGHES



IN the work of demonstrating the survival of human personality after physical death, numerous facts and data have been accumulated, proving our case to the satisfaction of many of the world's greatest minds.

As regards knowledge of the exact processes employed by those on the Other Side to convey their messages, we know very little. The Psychic just knows that certain things happen. We can attempt to diagnose our feelings in the various phases of demonstration, and yet know very little of the forces in operation, and how they are being employed.

It seems that, in psychic demonstration, we are being introduced to a wider range of human faculty, and what is now peculiar to the few will be common to the races of the future; it belongs to a further phase of progress. Not all will specialise in the use of psychic faculty, even in the distant future, but it will be recognised as a natural endowment of human personality. By then, a corresponding development will have taken place in the general sciences; the map of the human body and its functions will have been revised and enlarged, helping us to an understanding of the exact *modus operandi* employed in psychic demonstration.

There are different types of mediumship; but, for simplicity, we divide them into two broad classes—*viz*., physical mediumship and mental mediumship. Physical mediumship is that which produces results which have direct appeal to the physical senses; such as the movement of objects without physical contact, raps, and levitation; the passing of solid matter through solid matter; writing and painting without physical contact; materialisation or the temporary building up of a human form; the direct voice, where the voice speaks from space independent of any human agency. These phenomena only occur in the presence of a person possessing the qualities of physical mediumship.

In automatic writing, the Medium's hand produces the writing, but independent of his own volition. This seems to be a gift that contains elements of both physical and mental mediumship.

Then we come to the class known as mental mediumship. In this class we have clairvoyance, clairaudience, psychometry, inspirational writing, painting and speaking, and trance mediumship.

My own mediumship includes Clairvoyance, Clairaudience and Trance.

In Clairvoyance, I see a spirit form as naturally as if I were using the physical eye. I am not aware of any abnormal sensation until I begin to respond to the feelings or characteristics of the spirit that appears to me. These sensations may be of happiness or sorrow, anxiety or peace, according to the feelings and characteristics of the spirit appearing to me. Sometimes I find myself responding to the last sensations the spirit experienced before leaving the physical body. It appears that by coming into contact with the earth atmosphere, there is an association of the old ideas and impressions, causing the last earth experiences of the spirit temporarily to recur.

All these feelings seem to be under the control of my will—that is, I can "close up" or "open out" at will. If a sensation is too unpleasant, I can "switch it off." I can often get a clear understanding of the mission and message of the spirit by interpreting these feelings that impinge themselves on my psychic sensitiveness.

GIFT OF CLAIRAUDIENCE

But it is on my gift of Clairaudience that I mostly depend in my demonstration of survival. In Clairaudience, or clear-hearing, I hear quite naturally, as though I were using the normal ear. The voices sound quite normal. I can tell if it is the voice of a man, woman or child, or if it is a loud voice or a quiet one. Even the characteristics of intonation and modulation are quite noticeable.

It is listening to the "Voice," that enables me to understand all other feelings that come to me, and to gather the facts by which I demonstrate survival. It is listening to the "Voice" that enables me to give the names, facts and details, that provide the evidence.

You may ask: "If there is such a clear means of communication as this listening to the 'Voice,' why are mistakes made? Why is each message not perfect and conclusive?" The answer to this is: the imperfection of the receiving instrument. The spirit-people may be "broadcasting" the most conclusive evidence and yet the Medium hears nothing, or only part of what has been spoken. It is due to the imperfection of the human "receiving instrument." We are dependent on laws of attunement of which we know little. Even our telephone system has its temporary disconnections. Can we wonder at the difficulties encountered in trying to communicate with a world of a different dimension?

QUICKENING OF PERSONALITY

I have said I am not aware of any abnormality when demonstrating Clairvoyance or Clairaudience. But I must mention that when these faculties are working strongly, especially in a large and enthusiastic public meeting, I experience a quickening of my whole personality which at times amounts to a feeling of exaltation. It is as though I am flooded with abnormal energies. This energy has been called "power" by Spiritualists. When this "power" is strong, my faculties of Clairvoyance and Clairaudience are accelerated. I can best describe it as a lifting of my vibrations to meet the vibrations of the Spirit-World. This "power" seems to form the means of contact. It is the bridge between the two worlds. In a sympathetic audience the "power" is strongest; music and enthusiasm stimulate it.

A cold and unsympathetic person defeats his own purpose by closing the avenues he seeks to explore. Yet I can recall occasions when my demonstrations have been at their best in what appeared to be most uncongenial conditions. Scepticism and opposition sometimes call forth an additional effort from the spirit-friends, But demonstrating in uncongenial conditions leaves me feeling more tired than usual, as though an extra strain had been made on my energies.

Demonstrating in private circles has certain advantages over public meetings. In public, there is the obvious difficulty of "locating" whom the message is for, and of the fact that there are so many eager spirits seeking to communicate.

When giving Clairaudience in large gatherings, I am generally able to "locate" whom the message is for by seeing a Clairvoyant light resting on the person. This light varies in colour and intensity according to the characteristics and development of the person communicating. The purpose of the Spirit-World, when giving a clairaudient message, is to give certain small details which form links in a chain of evidence which precludes all suggestions of fraud or telepathy.

Now I come to the third and last branch of my mediumship, by which I demonstrate the survival of personality—my trance mediumship. I do not usually go into trance in public. I prefer the normal state. While in trance, I am unaware of my surroundings as if in a sound sleep. Just preceding trance, I experience a feeling of sleepiness. For knowledge of what happens while in the trance, I am dependent on my friends. I am told there is a complete transformation of my personality. Facts and proofs of survival are given of which I could have no previous knowledge. My friends listen to talks on life and man's spiritual destiny that far transcend my knowledge and intellect. Subjects are dealt with of which I have not thought while in my normal state.

It appears that, while in trance, my active consciousness is held in temporary abeyance and the spirit-friends can use my powers of Clairvoyance and Clairaudience with great facility. Sometimes my spirit-guides will allow a spirit seeking to prove his survival to enter my, body and speak direct to his loved ones, but this is left to the discretion of my two main spirit- guides and protectors. One I know by the name of "Mazeeta," an Indian girl who specialises mainly in giving messages that prove survival; the other is ''White Feather," who, though at times he gives proofs of the continuity of life, is more concerned with the greater truths of man's spiritual destiny. "Whita" is the leader of the unseen powers behind my work. He is the philosopher, the teacher and the comforter. Many hearts have been healed by his kindly words. He builds the glorious superstructure of spiritual thought on the proven facts of survival. Tolerance and love are his greatest ideals. He is the great moulding influence in my life.

All these gifts seem quite natural to me. They came unsought by me. At first I did not understand them. I was afraid for my sanity. Thinking I must be losing my reason, I prayed that the phenomena would cease; but now I realise they have been the greatest blessing in my life. Since giving full expression to these gifts, I have experienced much better health. Spiritually, mentally and physically I feel a better woman.

My parting advice is: Seek the advice of the spirit-people in purity of motive. No matter who you are or what you have been, they will not turn you away. Their love and their tolerance are fathomless. They will lead you gently by the hand to pastures of peace and open for you the springs of Eternal Life. They are the harbingers of the better world that is to be when men inspired by the truths of immortality shall live harmoniously in the fold of universal peace.

HISTORY OF THE SNUi

The history of the SNUi was kindly sent to Pioneer by its Secretary, Angela Foster CSNU, which is in two parts as published below; Angela informs me:



She is a podiatrist, a mum of a daughter and son with two grandchildren. She has been married to Richard for nearly 40 years. Angela joined the SNUi in 2013, having developed a love for working with the spirit world in a couple of development groups in her own area in Cambridgeshire, England. The fact that all she needed to do within the SNUi family was to find a quiet spot in the house, study what the spirit world introduced her to and strengthen her connection within a safe environment was too attractive.

Since joining, Angela has been through the PAS scheme (2016) and was awarded the Arthur Conan Doyle Prize in 2017 and, in 2018, the CSNU in Speaking and Demonstrating. She is sitting her assessment this year for the DSNU in Speaking and Demonstrating and the DSNU (Advanced) on the history of the SNUi, the first eight years from which these articles have been taken.

Angela is keen to give back to the SNUi by giving feedback to the students coming through the PAS online through the SNUi and also acting as tutor for several of the SNU courses.

In 2018 she was invited to join the SNUi Committee as Secretary. This, Angela finds, is particularly rewarding, as she is keen to be involved in the decision-making process which helps to develop the future direction of the SNUi for the benefit of its members.

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The Introduction of the SNUi to the SNU family

The SNU (The Spiritualists' National Union) has not been slow to recognise that church attendance is falling and not reaching a big enough audience worldwide. It had understood that there is another way of attracting members to Spiritualism and worshipping together. In particular, a large number of people living abroad cannot access and take part in Spiritualist activities and worship, although we know that many people in this country do not have access to a local Spiritualist church either. In 2008 there was a strong move to give Spiritualism an internet presence. In response to this need the SNUi, the Spiritualists' National Union International, was born.

This second wave of missionary work matched, in many ways, the early efforts of the Pioneers in the mid-to late 19th century and the impact on the numbers of those actively declaring themselves as Spiritualists has been no less dramatic. The use of the internet to continue this work for those unable, for whatever reason, to attend a local church is so appropriate in this day and age. It is more than due to one of the founding Pioneers of the SNUi, Violet Kipling FSNU, TSNU, who has already passed to spirit, and Minister Steven Upton.



Vi Kipling had, due to her experience with the use of the Internet as a teaching medium with another on-line organisation, felt convinced that Spiritualism could be taught through the SNU. Her sister, Minister Doris Smith, recalled that one hundred people attended the on-line courses by another on-line group she had connections with, and Vi felt passionately that the SNU could offer the same to its members in the same way. She decided to take her idea to the SNU National Executive Committee. She faced much opposition until she teamed up with Minister Steven Upton. Once on the NEC, he was able to work on this idea, with Vi coming on board immediately. 2008 saw the idea formally raised at the NEC as giving the SNU an on-line presence in the form of a Branch; it was to be called the SNUi. This was to provide a route to finding out about Spiritualism without commitment. An internet presence would also be the best publicity for future students and encourage new followers to adopt Spiritualism.

Vi had meanwhile, with her sister, also set up 'Rainbow's End', a charitable organisation which enabled those from all over the world to come together to learn about Spiritualism. She had also seen that a South African student who was computer-literate had travelled all that way to attend the AFC for a course. Her sister remembers that she felt the internet was the virtual place to extend teaching to all students wherever they lived in the world, not an easy task at the time when dial-up connection was noted for its unreliability.

Minister Steven Upton recalls that he was asked by the SNU to come back with proposals as to how this might be implemented. He had created and worked on the SNU and, later, the Arthur Findlay College websites. He said that the first version was unfit for purpose and so he was given the task to create the second-generation version. At this stage it was decided to bring in a professional website designer and to this end three companies were approached, with 'Moovin on up' (now Cozy Digital) given the contract with a budget of £2,000. Minister Upton drew up the specification and it was planned to go live on 1st January 2009; it eventually went live six days later with the first on-line platform, with those involved communicating by typing only.

On a more formal note, the SNUi was to be set up as a Branch within the SNU company structure. This would put it on a par with the Lyceum Union. This also meant that the SNUi Committee would be appointed by the SNU. The requirement to appoint the Committee ensured that its members were declared Spiritualists and therefore would run the Branch in accordance with declared SNU spiritual values. In order to be as attractive to as many as possible with an interest in Spiritualism there was a deliberate decision made that members did not have to be Spiritualists. It was decided to keep membership open to all, as the idea was to attract new members. People come to Spiritualism from all religious backgrounds, so there should be no pressure to become a

Spiritualist. That decision could be made on an informed basis, with membership only necessary once formal studying took place for CSNU qualifications and above.

Members of the SNUi at that time had to be over sixteen, though this was later changed to eighteen due to protection and Safeguarding issues for the under-eighteens. It was important in the early stages to decide exactly whom the SNUi should reach. There were not the resources to be multi-lingual in delivery. It was also considered important that the quality of tutors could be assessed by the Committee to ensure that all tutors had received formal training to teach within the SNU structure and guidelines.

It was absolutely appropriate to set up the SNUi at this time. The membership pool of Spiritualists belonging to the SNU was strong but there was an overriding need to connect with Spiritualists in other countries. However, the golden age of chatrooms was over owing to the introduction of Google's ranking and those directed to the various sites due to the search engines and its dominance in the internet marketplace. This adversely affected all on-line communities. SNUi was to see a steady but well-maintained rise in membership. Its resilience and the way it was set up would see it weather the storm. It also attracted UK members who chose to work and study on-line either solely or side by side with bricks-and-mortar practice.



Minister Steven Upton was appointed Chair for the first three years of the SNUi and granted unilateral power by the SNU to establish a strong framework. Membership reached one hundred in a matter of a few days, two to three hundred within the first month, reaching eight to nine hundred within a few months. However, the magic one thousand members was not reached until March 2016.

Each of the appointed Committee members had areas of responsibility, chairing, Vice-Chair, website and conference call issues, secretariat duties, programme, newsletter, liaison with the NEC and SNU, etc. This structure continues today.

Minister Upton remembers that the decision for member interaction was to be audio only and, initially, was made because most people using the internet could only access a dial-up connection and the broadband width was not appropriate to run visual meetings. In addition, using video was too expensive at this stage, taking up too much bandwidth. The use of jack plugs made connectivity complicated when it came to personal settings. Megameeting was not to be introduced for the first two years and even then did not provide a video option. Once available, only one tutor refused to use audio, instead wanting to stay in typing-only mode. This saw a temporary decline in the number of tutors available.

Minister Upton recalls that it was decided quite early that all classes would be interactive and none would be recorded. To record the classes would not guarantee a good live attendance. A student and teacher, he felt, helped feed a great energy and allowed students to ask questions in an interactive real-time manner. To bring in speakers and then expect them to interact with a handful of people if many more were 'time-shifting' could be demoralising for the tutor. However, if a need were expressed by members it was hoped that lectures could be repeated in different time zones but still as a live feed only, in order to encourage members to take part. This would create an interactive event

in order to ask questions. In addition, SNUi had no facility for storage of recorded events in those days.

To help members get as much as possible from the SNUi, National Representatives were appointed where a country had ten or more members. They would act as liaison and familiarise new members with how to use the meeting-rooms in their own language as well as act as a first line for any queries. They were appointed on the understanding that they would stay within the framework on the SNUi and not start their own national groups, which could have fragmented membership. A newsletter would enable communication with members. This would ensure that all representatives worked together under a single banner within the SNU family and ethos.

With regard to classes offered, it was hoped that by the end of three years there would be at least one open access class available daily to SNUi members.

Minister Steven Upton stood down at this point, owing to having other work to do. The administrative duties were initially carried out by the SNU Trust; this eventually passed on to head office. He had changed his role within the SNU National Executive Committee and was assigned to deal with the development of special projects; this included the setting up of SNU Pioneer Centres. He also continued in his position as Public Relations Officer. Sian Wilson DSNU took over the chair the following year. Her strength was to bring in work study groups for many of the SNU education courses and concentrate less on practical courses. Minister Steven Upton then came back on board as Chair in January 2013, as membership had declined. Ilona Mulock Houwer CSNU worked closely with him to create an integrated learning programme. He then handed over the helm to Ilona.

The tuition programme on offer at this time covered beginner, PAS, CSNU and the on-line versions for those taking assessments (designated by 'I' after the letters). Decisions had been made by the SNU to initiate, in the near future, on-line study groups leading to PAS, PASi, CSNU and CSNUi. The levels of award were slightly different between PAS and PASi and CSNU and CSNUi because there could be no assessment of deportment and platform presence. There could also be no assurance that students would not use notes inappropriately during their address or interview. Students could upgrade to PAS and CSNU by travelling to the UK at a later date and having a face-to-face assessment on one of the many days put aside by the Training & Awards Committee of the SNU, hosted by churches all over the UK. Minister Steven Upton was responsible for writing the criteria for the courses for tutors to follow.



Ilona Mulock Houwer

An updated website was introduced at this stage, too, with additional links on how to use the website for new members; this was presented with a very visual format. Once he became Vice-President of the SNU, Minister Upton remained a further year as Chair and was not reappointed. Ilona took over the chair in August 2014; he remained as Vice-Chair to assist as appropriate. The programme evolved further, with classes continuing to be added, along with special services. On January 24th 2017 an experimental demonstration was held with Minister Steven Upton. Live College links were used, as the College had some experience with this already.

Ilona remained as Chair despite ill-health until February 2017, when she handed the helm over to her Vice-Chair, Minister Arthur Plumpton. Her health was not to improve and she returned to spirit in April 2017.

The SNUi and what it can offer you

The SNUi has been in operation now for ten years, with an increasing and loyal membership year on year. Above all there is the desire to put spirituality first in our service to Spiritualism. It can also become the point of reference on matters of Spiritualism and spiritual philosophy over the internet.

So how does the SNUi operate today? The SNUi will, in many ways, resemble any bricks-and-mortar church. The programme includes Divine Services, demonstrations of mediumship and the sharing of Spiritualist philosophy, all very familiar to regular church visitors. You will find a varied and progressive teaching programme. This can take students through a formal training scheme in speaking, demonstrating and healing. The courses follow and support the Exponents Committee's formal programme from PAS through to CSNU. There are assessments, too, on-line through the 'I' PAS and CSNU schemes. This designation shows the different requirements for working via the internet. More information for this can be sought through Redwoods or the PAS/CSNU Co-ordinator on the SNUi. There are also discussion groups, development groups, practice groups in art and other subjects, meditation opportunities and invitations for invited speakers to speak on their specialist subject. We are now also encouraging committees to hold meetings on-line to reduce travelling. Some very special events from the Arthur Findlay College and the Barbanell Centre can be recorded and shown to members using the conference platform in their time zones. There has been a charity event on-line, which was very successful! Hopefully this year, the AGM will be broadcast. Technical difficulties prevented this last year, which was a great disappointment to many. In addition, as part of the community ethos many of our members help to give back to the great experience by taking on chairing duties and, once qualified, leading discussion groups and helping with the new students coming through.

There are increasing opportunities to hold activities in the mother tongue of overseas members and not just English, as Italian and German have been introduced recently. But even more changes are coming in the future. Initially, as has been stated, there was no voice, just real-time communication by typing. The speech was incorporated and, having recently started using the video function via Megameeting, our current conference call platform, the next move is being organised. There will be a move to using Zoom, which is a popular conference call provider and should improve dramatically the user experience. All this will support a full programme to support members in all the time zones.

To support all these activities there is a dedicated Committee, who work really hard to support our members. For example, there has been a great effort to update and increase Facebook presence, as well as Twitter and, of course, email. We want to hear from you; get the chat chatting!

The internet can be used as it currently is or it can expand to meet the increasing demands of its membership by not being slow to respond to new technology and the increasing savvy of members. Although many aspects of the bricks-and-mortar religion can be imported, many of the protocols are possibly irrelevant and inappropriate, as they can stifle the emerging pioneering vanguard of modern, 21st-century Spiritualists. This is vital in an age of high expectations in every area of life. The SNUi could become as much a shop window of Spiritualism as the bricks-and-mortar churches are currently,

especially to the younger generations, whose appetite for connecting in this way covers all aspects of modern life, including worship.

No organisation should stand still and the SNUi is no different; with over 1,300 members worldwide, it now serves the needs of members in forty-one countries. Four hundred are not 'from abroad' from the UK perspective but live in the UK. The SNUi has become a community, often the only contact with other Spiritualists. It has become more than just a learning environment. It has become so much more to so many. There are many reasons why people can't or won't attend: no church nearby, health issues, personal reasons.

One question which must be asked on a regular basis is, does the SNUi offer its membership what it wants or needs? It would be arrogant, to say the least, not to ask the membership how it wants to engage with the Branch. Two-way communication is even more important in this technological age. It was noticed that if we wanted more interaction with the membership we needed to open a dialogue. So in June 2017 a major questionnaire was put together by the author and dispatched to all members. This was to better understand current members' use of the internet to connect with other like-minded Spiritualists. It also asked for feedback so that future programmes could be designed to suit the needs of the members in terms of what was on offer and in the time zones most appropriate for members to participate. Replies were compiled, evaluated and recommendations put forward. Questions from members were followed up by National Representatives and offers of help acknowledged. It is hoped that this exercise will be repeated from time to time.

Many will not just examine the growth in membership but look to see the quality of the emerging mediums from the SNUi, as education was Vi Kipling's primary focus of intent and inspiration. On-line cold reading by the mediums is minimalised, as visible clues are not possible. There is the opportunity to work in small study groups, which has been shown to be the most successful model for students to complete required elements of courses and succeed in assessments. Yet the demands of using the on-line format demand a certain skill. It is not just a matter of understanding how the conference call system works. It has idiosyncrasies – it suffers from poor, intermittent internet connection, poor sound and its own unique room protocol. This should be dramatically improved once Zoom comes on board. It is nearer to the qualities demanded to do a telephone reading than that of a platform demonstration. Mediums have to use the voice instead of relying on body language and speak clearly, with good intonation and pausing techniques. Every bad habit is magnified and there are other distractions very specific to the internet apart from the ones where the medium is broadcasting from: the author, for example, was called away while chairing a service, as her pet cat was dying downstairs.

Of course the SNUi is not just made up of mediums. There are many who are starting on their journey of personal discovery, introduced by a friend or acquaintance who hold a similar belief. It is, as was intended, a safe place to discover and grow. Whether this is a short acquaintance or a lifelong friendship, each can take as much or as little as needed. We know that the best way for any community to be sustained is if people can find some way to contribute back. But even if this isn't possible they may well go on to 'pay forward' in their local community.

All this is understood; life continues in tandem, but spirit understands the very fragile way in which this structure works. It more closely resembles the world of spirit. We have no body, just our voice. We may never know what the people look like whom we read for, share their stories, speak from inspiration, which brings emotion and connection, comfort, communication and sometimes closure. Sharing our time and ability in equal

measure, we learn from each other; one minute we are tutor, the next student, one minute medium, the next recipient. The success of the SNUi has been shown to be unprecedented in the history of Spiritualism. Credible research provides the science as to why this has occurred; this will be examined in the third part. The current President of the SNU, Minister David Bruton, said in his address given to the 2017 AGM:



> 'While some may claim that social media is the scourge of the modern age, others will claim it is a powerful channel for expression'.
>
> He also said:
>
> 'Through social media ideas are formed, opinions are shared and if we still claim to be the thinking person's religion is it not time for us to share our thinking on a larger platform?'

The platform used by the SNUi is another way of connecting with those engaging actively in a digital age through a virtual reality, no less powerful and no less influential.



Where does the SNUi go from here? What may the next ten years bring? Our current Chair, Minister Arthur Plumpton, is intent on having a programme which is accessible to all wherever they are in the world at appropriate times. He is keen that members leading groups and tutoring are appropriately qualified. A new website has better met the needs of its members. The SNUi Committee is forever mindful that the technology improves at a very fast rate both for the members using the latest computer systems and with conference call platforms. This will require constant monitoring. People's expectations are high these days in all areas of modern technology. The questionnaire has given the membership a real voice and that momentum should not be lost. Dialogue is important: it creates a healthy environment for the Committee to be both leader in what it puts on and receptive to what the members need. If this dialogue is not maintained, then we will lose members who, once they have their curiosity met, move on. Perhaps it is as simple that the process of living in the real world gets in the way and the internet can never replace life!

However, in support of the SNUi, as Minister Arthur Plumpton said in the newsletter in November 2011:

> 'We, the SNUi, have the ability to talk across time zones and seasons and around the world'.

Minister Steven Upton wrote in May 2013:

> 'My vision for the future of SNUi is that you, the membership, increasingly contribute and make it your local Spiritualist church or centre, a place where you can go to meet like-minded people to discuss matters spiritual and a learning centre of excellence. For as long as you have electricity and an internet connection you know that you are not alone. Almost every day, if you wish to, you can go on-line and join up with other like-minded people, attend

a class, listen to a demonstration or a lecture, but, most importantly, feel that you are part of something that circles the entire globe - the SNUi family.'

These may be mission statements by two of our Chairmen within the SNUi but this is what the members find in abundance when they join. My mission statement would be:

'As a SNUi member you need never be alone. We have our global Spiritualist friends and spirit supporting our intent.'

Angela Foster CSNU

—~—☼—~—

SNUi

https://www.snui.org.uk/index.php



Monday, May 20th 2019 at 8pm (UK time)

Monday May 27th 2019 at 8pm (UK time)

Monday June 3th 2019 at 8pm (UK time)

—~—☼—~—

Ernest Oaten

If someone had desired to give me evidence which excluded all possibility of my mind influencing the result, what better test could there be than that of a relative who died before I was born?



Former SNU President Ernest Oaten has featured in the pages of Pioneer in numerous issues, for example Volume 1, No. 2, January 2014: Ernest Walter Oaten (1875-1952) – His contribution to Spiritualism was long and notable, giving almost 60 years' service – The History of The Two Worlds – Twenty-one Years. Oaten tells us how through spirit guidance his position as editor was orchestrated by the spirit of Emma Hardinge Britten.

We can note in the John Beattie article that psychic/ spirit photography varies considerably: like an artist, each can generally be recognised by their work.

A professional photographer who lived in Bridgwater, Somerset, England developed his own distinctive style of psychic photography circa the 1920s; his name is little known – Mr M. J. Vearncombe.

Below, Oaten tells the story of his meeting with Vearncombe; unfortunately, age has partly destroyed the quality of the image. The Vearncombe collection is part of the archive previously referred to at the "Britten Museum & Library," Stansted Hall. The article is taken from "That Reminds Me", by Ernest W. Oaten, published by the Two Worlds, Manchester in 1938:[14]

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY

My interest in spirit photography dates back to actual experiments tried—not without success—with a few friends in 1896.

Such experiments need very careful precautions if you are to be sure of your evidence. Amongst the many mediums with whom I experimented was Mr. Vearncombe, of Bridgewater, then living at Cardiff. He was a professional photographer, and his plates were continuously interfered with, so that he had to persistently ask his sitters to re-sit. This was bad business. He lost his connection and failed. He had never heard of Spiritualism until he was showing a friend some of his spoiled plates, and it was suggested that the effects were psychic.

In consequence, his mind was all against Spiritualism. However, he subsequently found that if he did not handle the plates, but used rubber-tipped nippers, the interference ceased.

I called upon him, without prearrangement, and asked him to try an experiment. He was then in business again. His terms were exactly those he charged his clients for an

[14] Available at the Arthur Findlay College bookshop directly by calling the College on 01279 813636 or from the SNU website: https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/that-reminds-me-ernest-w-oaten

ordinary sitting. He took me to his stockroom, which contained many dozens of unopened packets of plates for use in his business. I selected one packet from the centre of a pile. I examined the half-plate slide, and went into the dark-room alone, opened my packet, selected a plate, and loaded the slide. I initialled the plate, wrapped the slide in a black cloth and brought it into the studio. Here, he and I held it between our hands in the usual way, to "magnetise" it.

I then examined his camera—a fine portrait type—and took out and cleaned the lens. I loaded the camera, after focussing it, and took my seat whilst he made an exposure. With the slide in my pocket we went to the dark room—he mixed the developer and I developed the plate and saw it fixed. There were *two* extras.



When I received the print, one face showed a family likeness, but I could not place it. The other was an elderly lady, also unrecognised. I was quite sure I had genuine extras, but was disappointed at lack of recognition. The matter was dismissed from my mind until some months later, when I visited Glasgow. At the conclusion of my service, Mrs. Laird described to me an old gentleman, short, clean-shaven, who had a short leg. He used a stick and answered to the name of Tom. It was my grandfather.

"He is talking about a photograph of his sister which you have," she said. I replied, "You mean my sister?" "Look here, young man, I know what I get! He says '*his sister*,' and I can't alter it." "Well, he's wrong," I replied. "He never had a sister." On inquiring from my mother, I found, however, that my grandfather had a sister who died at least two years before I was born. On showing the photograph to my great-aunt as a photo of myself, she instantly recognised the extra as my grandfather's sister, without any suggestion from me. It was the sister of her brother-in-law. There is no photograph of her in existence.

If someone had desired to give me evidence which excluded all possibility of my mind influencing the result, what better test could there be than that of a relative who died before I was born?

—~—☼—~—

Taken from the same book is a rather amusing memory from Ernest Oaten with the direct-voice medium John Sloan, whose name is generally closely associated with J. Arthur Findlay; see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1, August 2013: "John Sloan – James Arthur Findlay". The image of Mr and Mrs John Sloan is taken from the article cited.

CORONA, CORONA!



THOUSANDS of people will be familiar with the name of John Sloan, of Glasgow, a most versatile medium, who is the central figure of that fine book by J. Arthur Findlay, *On the Edge of the Etheric*.

I was privileged to have several sittings with John, and cherish happy memories of a direct conversation I had on one occasion with Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, O.M.

The trumpet was at the other end of a large circle of some twenty sitters when, immediately behind me, I heard a voice calling my name. It proved to be the famous Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace. He spoke to me concerning my public work, and when questioned showed a complete familiarity with correspondence which had passed between us when he lived at Wimborne.

The seance ended, we adjourned to another room while Mrs. Sloan made some coffee. Some of the sitters had departed, but a few of us still remained and sat round the fire chatting. When coffee was served William Jeffries remarked, "There is only one thing needed to complete a pleasant evening." "What's that?" asked Galloway. "A good cigar!' In a few seconds Sloan was under control and the voice of "Whitey" said, "Just dim the lights and wait a minute or two, and I will see what I can do."

In a few minutes there dropped at the feet of Mr. Jeffries a cigar, with a glowing lighted end. "There you are, Jeffries," said "Whitey," and he picked it up, wiped the end with his handkerchief, put it in his mouth and began to puff.

"Where did you get it, Whitey?" said I. And the reply sent us into fits of laughter. "A fellow was walking along George Square smoking it, and I took it from his mouth and brought it here. He is still looking for it."

We were, of course, unable to verify that statement, though the house was only a few hundred yards from George Square. But I have often found myself smiling at the discomfiture of a man who lost a cigar from his mouth and looked for it in vain.

100 YEARS AGO



The National Memorial Service

For the Fallen in the War,

Royal Albert Hall, London

Under the auspices of the Spiritualists' National Union, Ltd.

"Light", May 3rd 1919, produced a Special Supplement of the full report of the

"Great Memorial Service for the Fallen in the War"

"*IT is not a Memorial Service, though we call it so. It is rather a joyous reunion*."

Thus did Sir Arthur Conan Doyle happily describe the great meeting in the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday, April 27, when many thousands, gathered together from all parts of England, were present at an assemblage arranged 'by Spiritualists in honour of those who had fallen in the war.'

It was, as Sir Arthur truly said, an event unique in the history of the world.

The impressive speeches delivered, while in keeping with the devotional atmosphere of the evening, had a note of firm certitude. And they carried more than a suggestion of future vigorous action in the furtherance of a great truth.

Below is published Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's full address:

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle said:—Our movement, the greatest movement which has been seen in this world for the last two thousand years, has recently been passing through a crisis of contention and of argument. There are many of the more sensitive souls among us who feel very much that a matter which is so delicate, which concerns those whom we have lost, should be exposed to that unseemly levity which is so often the only weapon with which our opponents can attack us. But none the less we are out to fight. We can only fight, and we can only win by fighting. If you have got a thing which is not true, if you are trying to bolster up a thing you are not certain of, then keep it in the dark, and tell people to keep their hands off. But when you know that a thing is true, and when you know that the whole human race is just yearning for that thing, then I say at all costs to your own feelings you must bring it down into the market-place, you must let people see the length and breadth of it for themselves, and, though they may mock and look at it with ignorance, depend upon it the human race is not really foolish, the human race sooner or later, if you put truth before it, will understand that it is true and will follow it. Therefore, I say, although we have got in front of us now a whole Hindenburg Line of ignorance and prejudice, and plenty of theological barbed wire in front of that, we are going to smash through it, because we have got a cause that cannot be beaten.

Fortunately we are not here to-day to argue or dispute. I get enough of that elsewhere. We are here to greet our dead heroes, those men who cut short their earthly life in order that our earthly life might be tolerable. Only two days ago 5,000 of our brave Australian fellow-subjects marched through the streets of London, receiving from one end to the other the well-deserved plaudits of the Londoners. Then, having done that, they depart to another land to take up their duties in another sphere. Even so to-night far more than 5,000, many tens of thousands of our dead are, I believe, attracted by that spiritual law of sympathy and love down to us to-night. They come to be congratulated, and having been congratulated, for we who represent London and represent those who love them do congratulate them, they go back to that other world and to their high duties in another sphere.

Although we call it so this is not a memorial meeting, for there is something sad in the very word memorial. It is rather a joyous re-union, because those dark days are gone when we used to be taught that we looked after our dead and saw them gradually vanishing away into the mists of eternity without any assurance of how or where we should meet them again. No, thank Heaven, owing to the new knowledge which has come to every man who will only honestly examine it, owing to that new knowledge we know that now we can extend our arms and with smiling faces look up, knowing that we are looking straight into those unchanged faces which once we knew upon earth.

Such a gathering as this is unique in Europe, but it is not unique in the world. I can remember at the end of the Japanese war reading how Admiral Togo went down to some spot—I picture it as a barren place beside the seashore—and standing there alone he invoked his dead seamen who had fought for him in a great battle, he invoked them to gather round him, and, standing there, he told them what the issue of the war had been. He thanked them and told them how far that issue had been due to their own exertions. He said, "You know these things, but it is only out of respect that I, your Admiral, come to tell you." When we have got to the level of Japan in psychical civilisation, it will not be we civilians who will stand here, but it will be those great chiefs of the Army and the Navy who led their men to battle and led them to their death, it will be they who will stand here in a great meeting of this sort and will welcome them and thank them for their services. We know that the Army is largely impregnated with our ideas, It may not be so long before what I say comes true. I know at least one brave Army Commander, the Commander of an Army Corps second to none in the Army, who is as good a Spiritualist as any man in this room. I well know how he would rejoice to stand and address his vanished men,

You may remember that some time ago they had a meeting here to commemorate those of the First Seven Divisions who fallen. That meeting was held in the most religious, the most solemn, the most sympathetic spirit, but none the less it was not held with the practical knowledge and the realism which we have. It was an interesting thing that on the day following that meeting, at a séance where they had the most unexceptionable results, one of their friends who had lost his life with the Seventh Division came back, as he had been in the habit of doing. His first communication when he came back was that he regretted that his friends at the time had not got tickets for the meeting, as they had tried to do. They explained that that was impossible. The dialogue, which was sent to me a few days afterwards by the gentleman who presided at the séance, then went like this:—

They said to the Spirit: "Have you anything more to say?"

The Spirit: "There was too much ceremony."

They said: "Anything more?"

The Spirit: "All of us felt out of it."

They said: “We are very interested; is there anything more?”

The Spirit: “They praised the dead. We are not dead. They do not see us.”

They said: “Then you were disappointed?”

The Spirit: “Yes, a bit.”

They said: “Some people surely felt you were there?”

The Spirit: “Many did, but they were so swamped by the scoffers and the unbelievers.”

They said: “We are sorry.”

The Spirit: “That is all right, that’s nothing.”

They said: “Were most of those who passed away in the Seven Divisions there?”

The Spirit: “Yes, they were there.”

Since then, to-night, at least, I am sure that no fault of that kind could be found by any of our friends on the further side. We know with all our knowledge, with all our intellect, that they have the power to come, and with all our emotions we know that our love, respect, and admiration is the one force in the universe which can bring them here. I have no doubt that at this moment, had we only those eyes of power which are, I believe, gradually developing in the human race, that sense by which all psychic bodies can be known, if we only had that we would realise that this is a double meeting, and that we perhaps are the smaller half of it. We cannot doubt from all that we know of that power of sympathy that they are here—the men who died on the sea, the men who died on the land, and the men who died under the land, and the men, the heroic boys, who, almost before life had dawned upon them, gave their lives in the air for their country. We believe in the depths of our souls that they are here with us to-night, It matters not whether they died in the mud of Flanders, whether they died in the chalk of Picardy, whether it was on the sands of Kut or Mesopotamia or Palestine, or whether they left their young lives among the swamps of Equatorial Africa. They have died at the ends of the earth, but we have the power, by our love, which is a real invocation, to draw them all to us to-night. We know it even as we know the span of that great roof above us.

They have done much for us, and we have to ask what we can do for them. They tell us one thing we can do is not to mourn for them. They tell us that their lives are spent in such ineffable happiness as they never could have dreamed of on this planet, and nothing on earth except their love for us causes them ever to think again of a world which is so immeasurably inferior in happiness and comfort to that which they inhabit. Therefore, they tell us not to mourn, because when we mourn it is the one thing which casts a cold cloud upon their perfect happiness. The other thing they tell us is not to look upon them as things forgotten and done with, to rule them out of life, but, go where we will, in our hearts to carry them with us, remembering that they are there and making them one of the family circle. That also they beg us to do.

There is much which they can help us to do. They can help us above all to do our duty, they can help us to fight a hard battle just as they fought a hard battle, and not to mind what the consequences may be. We have got this battle before us, and everyone can fight it out in their own little circle, fighting it with tact. We do not want to proselytise, but the day of sorrow and trouble is the day when we can approach a friend and perhaps set him on the right path. That is what we have to do—to fight this battle even as they fought theirs. They have won great things by their death—they have won, I have no doubt, a

hundred years of peace in Europe. They have solved a great number of tangled political questions, they have straightened a number of crooked frontiers, they have allowed civilisation to go where barbarism once was unchecked, and, believe me, the greatest thing that will come through the war, the greatest thing that will come from their death is not political at all but religious. Their death has given us a tremendous driving force. The shock of this horrible catastrophe, steadying every man's mind, making him look hard at his old beliefs, has made him say that he has done with phrases and mere wards, and wants to get to the facts, to get something which is solid and certain. It is their death which has caused us to take that line of thought and given us the power by which we may drive that line of thought into the heads of the whole human race and into their hearts. That, I believe, will be the permanent effect of the great movement which has gathered you and me together here to-night.

Miss Winnie Bowden then gave a fine rendition of the song "Vale'' (Farewell).

A CENTURY LATER



History was made by the President of the Spiritualists' National Union, Minister David Bruton, who was invited to represent Spiritualists at the

"Centenary of the Armistice"

For the first time in our history Spiritualists were represented at the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph by SNU President Minister David Bruton on November 11th 2018.



Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith, in his confirmation letter to Minister Bruton noted:[15]

"… I would like to formally confirm that you have been successful in your application to have the Spiritualists included as permanent faith and belief representatives.

"The Spiritualists have a long link to Britain's Armed Forces and I am delighted that the National Service of Remembrance will now be truly reflective of the diverse faiths and beliefs which help to make Britain the great country we are today."



Further, Minister Steven Upton, himself a former member of the Armed Forces, was nominated by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Spiritualists' National Union to accompany its President to this momentous occasion in our history.[16]





ARMISTICE DAY 2018
SNU WEBSITE:

https://www.snu.org.uk/News/armistice-day-2018

[15] President David Bruton, back right of the photograph shown.

[16] Minister Steven Upton is the SNU Education and Exponents Director, Public Relations Officer, Faith Advisor to HM Prison and Young Offenders Service, and Faith Advisor to HM Armed Forces.