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

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PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY

WILLIAM HOPE, FRAUD OR GENUINE!

Psychic photography, throughout its history within the Spiritualist movement, has been the most controversial of phenomena since the early days of its inception in 1862 with William Mumler in America and, ten years later, with Frederick Hudson with its introduction in England. It has been strongly debated from its beginnings within the Spiritualist movement, with early court cases, splitting the Spiritualist community for and against it being genuine, and supporters continually changing their testimonies with much contradiction.

There have been many allegations of fraud of double exposures (double rebate), screen markings (small dots which appear on pictures printed in newspapers), substitution of photographic plates, spirit extras showing a texture of a woven fabric, and images which bore evidence of having been cut out from paper and tucked into the veiling. The subject of this article is the claims of fraud against William (Billy) Hope, which included all the above deceptions and more, for example his psychographs (handwriting—copperplate scripts—on plates exposed in the camera) were in the handwriting of Billy Hope, which contain many mistakes in grammar and spelling, and some handwritten letters of Hope where the same errors could be found.



William (Billy) Hope

The very nature of these earlier physical phenomena like psychography, e.g., slate writing, direct writing, art, etc., involved mediums 'magnetising' the tools of their trade: slates, cards, photographic plates, etc. This meant, of course, being in contact with the items, in Hope's case with the *sealed, unopened photographic plates* to generate the necessary required fluids as the basis of the phenomena. Part of the allegations against Hope was whether or not he touched or had contact with the plates before and during the proceedings and mainly in the developing process.

We have read many times with the testing of mediums comments such as fraud obtained under conditions rendering trickery *impossible*, only to find at a later time that some were in fact exposed as fraudulent mediums. I believe the evidence in some cases needs to be researched within the results of the séance, for example in psychic photography. The required proof is a recognisable *spirit extra*, where there is no known photograph or painting of the spirit extra—but fully recognised by the sitter.



Mrs Buxton

William (Billy) Hope (1863-1933) was a Lancashire man, a carpenter by trade and a member of the Salvation Army. Hope, it is said, discovered his psychic potential by chance at the age of 42 when he and his friend photographed each other one Saturday afternoon: the

plate that Hope exposed showed an extra figure, a transparent woman, where one could see the brick was visible behind her—the sister of Hope's friend.

This resulted in Billy Hope becoming a psychic photographer in around 1905 with the help of Mr Buxton, the organist at the Spiritualist hall at Crewe. A circle was formed; this group would become known as the "Crewe Circle", with William Hope as its leader, although later he would move to London. When Archdeacon Thomas Colley joined the circle, their work became public. It is said that Hope took more than 2,500 photographs; he charged 4/6d for a dozen prints, which was calculated on what he would have earned as a carpenter.

Hope was aided by Mrs Buxton; though his earlier efforts were obtained independently, he found that his work greatly improved in her presence and thus Buxton became an integral part of the "Crewe Circle" and Hope's later work.

It was the Venerable Archdeacon who helped develop the upcoming spirit photographer William Hope. Colley reorganised the Crewe circle, named after the Cheshire town where the medium lived, as did Mrs Buxton. Colley gave Hope his first stand camera; however, we note in "Gale Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology: William Hope":

> "The first controversy about Hope and his psychic photographs arose in 1908 in connection with Colley's first sitting. He recognized his mother in the psychic "extra." Hope thought it was more like a picture he had copied two years earlier. A Mrs. Spencer, of Nantwich, recognized her grandmother in the image. Hope informed Colley of his mistake. Colley said it was madness to think that a man did not know his own mother and advertised in the Leamington paper asking all who remembered his mother to meet him at the rectory. Eighteen persons selected the photograph from a group of several others and testified in writing that the picture was a portrait of the late Mrs. Colley, who has never been photographed." [1]

Hope further came into the spotlight when it was claimed he was found to be a fraud by a committee appointed to examine the images by the Daily Mail in 1909; this was followed in May 1922 by the Society for Psychical Research publishing Harry Price's accusation of plate substitution by William Hope in "A Case of Fraud with the Crewe Circle". As a result, on December 14th, 1922, Hutchinson & Co published "The Case for Spirit Photography", by Arthur Conan Doyle, M.D.; the book was chiefly written to defend Hope from accusations of fraud by Harry Price. [2]

In 1918, the "Society for the Study of Supernormal Pictures" (SSSP) was formed, with Dr Abraham Wallace as its president and Fred Barlow as its secretary; it continued its work of examination and testing until it was dissolved in 1923. The Society consisted largely of professional photographers. It reported at its May meeting in 1920:

> "The members here present desire to place on record the fact that after many tests and the examination of thousands of pictures, they are unanimously of opinion that results have been obtained supernormally on sensitive photographic plates under reliable test conditions. At present the members do not undertake to explain how the results have been obtained, but they assert that they have undoubtedly been secured under conditions excluding the possibility of fraud."

The SSSP secretary, Fred Barlow, wrote the preface to Doyle's "The Case for Spirit Photography" in full support of psychic photography and the mediums of the Crewe Circle. However, Barlow's support and conviction was about to drastically change in a scathing report,

[1] This was more fully explained in the Two Worlds, July 17th, 1914, and published in Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No.12: "The Open Court".

[2] See Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 5: " "The Case for Spirit Photography" – Arthur Conan Doyle" and "The Case for Spirit Photography" now republished".

"Report of an Investigation into Spirit Photography", published in the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, Vol. XLI, 1932-1933: he states, "To-day the position is altered. Instead of defending spirit-photography I have cause to criticise it very adversely…" The long, illustrated 26-page report is authored by Barlow and Major W. Rampling-Rose; this is available for a free download and makes interesting reading. This directly brings the reader to the articles published below by "Light" on Friday, May 19th, 1933 in response to the claims of fraud against William Hope made by Fred Barlow and Major W. Rampling-Rose; the reports are extremely absorbing and give much information on this phase of mediumship:

PSYCHIC PHOTOGRAPHY DEBATED

MAJOR W. R. ROSE AND MR. FRED BARLOW STATE THEIR CASE AGAINST WILLIAM HOPE'S WORK

A DISCUSSION on Psychic Photography, with special reference to the mediumship of the late William Hope, of Crewe, attracted a large audience to the Queen's Gate Hall, South Kensington, on Thursday evening last week (May 11).

The discussion was arranged by the London Spiritualist Alliance, and the chair was occupied by Dr. Fielding-Ould, President of the Alliance. The speakers were: Major W. Rampling Rose and Mr. Fred Barlow, who presented the case against Mr. Hope's mediumship; and Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, Mr. Stanley De Brath, Major C. H. Mowbray, Commander J. R. Grisman, R.N., Mr. Graham Moffat and Mr. J. B. M'Indoe (President of the Spiritualists' National Union). A large number of lantern slides were shown—some to demonstrate the alleged "fake" methods of production and some to demonstrate the evidential nature of the "extras."

The discussion was characterised by good humour on both sides. Only on two occasions was there any indication of strong feeling, and these were at the end, when Mr. Barlow was replying to questions. The first was when Mr. Barlow asked why Hope always insisted on going into the dark room, and answered by saying: "Because his presence there was necessary to carry through the trick." To this there were loud cries of "No, no." The other occasion was when Mr. H. J. Osborn, in putting a question, said the only alternative to accepting certain evidence of genuineness was to say that those giving the evidence were "liars." To this Mr. Barlow objected warmly. "We differ in opinion," he said, "but we do not call each other liars."

Dr. Fielding-Ould, opening the proceedings, said they had met to discuss one of the most controversial questions in Psychical Research. It was very difficult, he said, for many of them to come to any definite conclusion on the subject of Psychic Photography, because witnesses gave such contradictory evidence, and sometimes a witness turned round and contradicted himself. In that discussion, they would try to clear the air a little and on some future occasion the L.S.A, might arrange another meeting at which they might get closer to the facts.

MAJOR W. R. ROSE'S CRITICISMS

Major W. RAMPLING ROSE, who opened the discussion, said he had ten minutes in which to explain his reasons for believing that all the results he obtained during the dozen or more sittings he had at Crewe, with the late William Hope, were fraudulent. His reasons were based chiefly on the appearance of the veiled-figure photographs, some of which were shown on the screen. In regard to the first—which was produced on one of Hope's own plates—he pointed out that (1) the face of the "extra" showed screen markings (small dots which appear on pictures printed in newspapers); (2) the veil showed the texture of a woven fabric; 3) the plate had a double rebate; and (4) the bottom left-hand corner was uneven. The face in the "extra" he said, bore evidence of having been cut out from paper and tucked into the veiling. Other photographs were analysed.

"My case," he said, "rests upon the evidence contained in the pictures themselves. You may not agree with my interpretation of that evidence, but I venture to think you will have some difficulty in finding a reasonable supernormal explanation that will cover even the few facts I have placed before you." It had been said that certain of Hope's results were obtained under strict test conditions—that is, conditions which leave no loop-hole whatever for fraud. But could any of them devise such conditions. He very much doubted if he (Major Rose) could. It had been stated that 200 ways of providing "extras" in a normal way were known; he believed he could add to that number and they did not know them all by any means.

"Remember, please," he said in conclusion, "that I am not attacking your conclusions regarding your own results. I am defending myself against attacks on mine, and give what I consider overwhelming proof for my conclusions. I am not unsympathetic to your cause in general. I know that there is so much that happens quite contrary to ordinary science, and your hypotheses explain those events to me better than any others. You have so much that is true that I venture most respectfully to suggest that you can afford to throw overboard that which is false or doubtful."

MR. FRED BARLOW'S CHALLENGE

Mr. Fred Barlow said: First of all, please understand that we are not out to take away Hope's reputation or that of any Medium. The subject of our discussion is Spirit Photography and the personality of the Medium is a secondary feature.

Let me very briefly recapitulate the events that led to my changed views. In the middle of 1925 I proved that the spirit photographer Moss was a fraud. About this time, a friend in whom I had every confidence, told me that he had discovered in Hope's possession, material for faking spirit photographs. That was the starting point.

I knew a lot about Hope, so did not immediately make up my mind in regard to his guilt or otherwise. I thought the best course was to continue experiments until I was able to say quite definitely that he was either genuine or that he was a fraud—or perhaps a bit of both. I am *now* absolutely convinced that I never secured with Hope a single genuine result. Major Rose has given similar definite views on the matter from the point of view of an experienced technical photographer.

With most people the case for the genuineness of spirit photography would appear to rest on the question of recognised extras—they are not concerned so much about the conditions as about the results. I maintain that such cases have not one scrap of *scientific* value and cannot be accepted as evidence.

If there is no scientific value in the results, where shall we look for proof ? The answer is, in the conditions under which those results were secured. If these were such that the extra could *not* be faked, either accidently or intentionally, then obviously it must be genuine. If, under similar conditions one *could* produce a similar result by normal means (however impossible this might appear to the untrained observer), it is equally obvious there must be *some doubt* about it. Time and time again we have been told that results have been obtained under conditions rendering trickery *impossible*. No one could have been more dogmatic than myself about this, in my earlier days. And yet, I have to confess that every extra I have ever got *could* be produced by normal means under identical conditions (and there are hundreds of them).

In most of these experiments Hope stipulated that he should carry the loaded slide in his left hand trouser pocket. At some time or other during the proceedings he had contact with the plate. This, he assured me, was essential and he could not get results without it,

as “the power worked through his hands”—these are his own words. When contact with the plate was prevented, no extra was forthcoming.

My experience in this respect is no different from that of other investigators who have made full detailed reports of what exactly has transpired. Included in the details of a report I have here, on what Major Spencer considered a very stringent test, are the same significant features. In the official tests conducted by the British Photographic Research Association which convinced them that Hope was a fraud, similar incidents took place. In a test after something suspicious had occurred, Hope was challenged to allow himself to be searched. The request was reasonably made and was backed up by Miss Stead but Hope refused. Why?

I have said elsewhere that Hope’s psychographs in themselves provide evidence more than sufficient to obtain a verdict against him in a court of law. The copperplate scripts are in the handwriting of Billy Hope. They contain many mistakes in grammar and spelling and I have numerous letters from Hope in which the same errors are to be found.

Similar remarks apply to the psychographs in foreign languages. Listen to this description. “The French is absolutely terrible, irrelevant and often incoherent. Why do the operators on the ‘other side’ allow ignorant and pretentious spirits to send such idiotic messages through ?” ‘These remarks are by Mr. C. H. Hans Hamilton, who has resided for many years in France, and who recently sent a long article to LIGHT in defence of Hope.

Exactly the same can be said of the Latin. Dictionary phrases are used with no idea whatever of their sense and they are often quite unintelligible. Where any departure is made from stock phrases, the result is a fearful mess.

There is another type of so-called psychograph produced in facsimile handwriting. These have deceived the very elect, and yet a microscopical examination definitely shows that they could *all* have been produced by the scissors and paste method.

I have some fresh evidence to submit to you. On one or two occasions Hope asked me to obtain for him a chemical known as calcium sulphide. A month or so ago, on going through some of his old correspondence, I was surprised to discover a letter from his private address at Oakley Street, Crewe. Almost without exception Hope’s letters were addressed from 144, Market Street, Crewe, the home of Mrs. Buxton, This particular letter among other things contained the following request:—

“Will you paint me a card with that luminous paint. Give it a coat or two and let me have it this week if you can, or tell me where I can get it for I cannot get it in Crewe. We are due at the College next week. Let me have the card early and I will do as much for you some day. Write me to my own address which is 50, Oakley Street, Crewe.” (I have this letter with me here).

In my enlightened frame of mind, I immediately realised that he wanted this sent to Oakley Street so that Mrs. Buxton would know nothing of it and that he probably wanted it to prepare a stock of extras for his visit to London I immediately tried this luminous paint and was amazed at the results. I do not for a moment suggest that Hope used it for *all* his fakes—he had doubtless many methods—but an examination shows that he *could* have used it for numerous effects. All one has to do is to paint a little of this on a small positive—or place the positive in front of a card that has been painted—press it in contact with the surface of the plate for two or three seconds and it gives a perfect image. It is economical, simple and safe and the irony of it all is that I provided Hope myself with sufficient of this stuff to fake thousands of extras. Let me show you the results this material produces. (*Here several lantern slides were shown.*)

Concerning a test of his own with Hope with a sealed packet Sir Oliver Lodge said in LIGHT: "I have not the slightest doubt that the envelope including the plates had been opened." On another occasion he wrote: "I do not see how your proof of Hope's duplicity could be more complete." Surely statements like this concerning Hope from a Spiritualist [3] and scientist of the standing of Sir Oliver Lodge should carry *some* weight.

Mrs. McKenzie had a great deal of experience with the Crewe Circle. May I ask her now:—Do you sincerely believe Hope *never* tricked ?

BARLOW AMONGST WITNESSES CITED BY MR. S. DE BRATH

THE case in favour of the genuineness of Psychic Photography and of the Mediumship of William Hope, at the L.S.A. discussion, was opened by Mr. STANLEY DE BRATH who said:—

An old fable recounts how the fox told the cat of the hundred tricks he could use for escaping the hounds. The cat modestly replied: "I have but one trick—to run up a tree—but it always succeeds." Well, every Psychical Researcher who has touched supernormal Photography similarly has the one trick which always succeeds: he does not allow the Medium to touch the plates. I shall adduce evidence to show that this test has been applied. If Mr. Barlow can show that a Medium has the power of influencing the plate which he cannot touch, I for one shall follow his scepticism, though I shall still consider the result supernormal. I will now adduce my testimony.

My first witness will be Mr. Barlow himself.

In Budget 67 (Society for the Study of Supernormal Pictures) of May 17th, 1921, there is a very fully detailed account of a test experiment (pp. 9 and 10) by fifteen members of the Society, signed by them all, which certifies (underlined) that "*Mr. Hope did not touch the plate till fixation was complete*." The account shows that the observation of Hope was very close. It is signed by Dr. Abraham Wallace, Colonel Baddeley, R.E., Mrs. McKenzie, Major R. E. E. Spencer and Mr. Barlow himself, with ten other reputable witnesses. It is testimony to the fact, which no change of opinion can alter. The S.S.S.P. was a Society for the *critical* examination of supernormal photographs.

My next witness is Mr. Colledge, an experienced and sceptical professional photographer whose services were engaged by Lady Glenconner to test the Crewe circle. He brought his own stereoscopic camera, plates, and apparatus to Lady Glenconner's house at Glen, conducted the experiments himself, developing the plates himself, and certifies, in a very long and fully detailed report, that Mr. Hope and Mrs. Buxton merely raised the cloth before the lens of the camera to make the exposure. Lady Glenconner desired a portrait of her son who was killed during the war. You will see [*said Mr. De Brath, refereeing to lantern slides shown to the audience*] that the first photograph is of quite another person, and that it is different on either side of the stereoscopic plate. The later photographs are of Lieut. Tennant, fully recognised by his mother.

My next witness is Dr. Geley. He came with me to test Mr Hope at Crewe in November, 1919. We bought two packets of plates in London—one panchromatic and one ordinary rapid. Once the packets were opened, every precaution was used that the Medium should not touch the plates. The panchromatic plates were first used. We

[3] Sir Oliver Lodge was quite clear in numerous interviews that he was *not* a Spiritualist, for example see Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 1: "I can't answer for Spiritualism," Sir Oliver replied. "I don't much like the word myself, except as a term in Philosophy. In so far as Spiritualists constitute a sect, and hold religious services, I don't belong to it and have no sort of connection with it; though doubtless it attracts many good people."

examined the camera and lens closely. Two exposures were made. The first gave a cloud covering the whole plate; the next gave a smaller cloud covering both our faces. The third, with ordinary plates, gave (1) a message "*Bonjour vous étes le bienvenu*," across the sitters; and (2) the portrait of a lady who in a previous automatic writing had promised me her photograph "if possible." I am quite certain that Mr. Hope had never seen this lady nor any portrait of her.

In July, 1924 (after Dr. Geley's lamented death in an aeroplane crash) all arrangements made in view of his projected visit to England were cancelled. But an automatic message was received by me at Exmouth through Miss Harvey at Hulham House, to carry out the experiment as if Dr. Geley were present. I did so, with Hope and with Mrs. McKenzie and Miss Scatcherd, on plates double-sealed by the Imperial Dry Plate Company. We kept the slide in sight till it was put into the camera and kept our eyes upon it there. I loaded the slide and developed the plates. On one of them was an attempt at a portrait and on the other a good portrait of Dr. Geley. Both my witnesses certify that the Medium did not touch the plates.

In September, 1924, Mr. Hope took for me another portrait on 5 in. by 4 in., in my own camera which I had brought to the College and deposited in a corner of the room. Mr. Hope asked me what it was. I said: "It is my own camera but I knew you would not use it." He replied, "Oh yes, I will." I loaded the slide alone in the dark room, placed the slide in the camera, took it out and developed the plates myself. Mr. Hope never even approached the slide, and merely raised the cloth from the lens.

In the same month, I prevailed on Sir William Barrett, F.R.S., to meet Hope at the College, and he kept Hope in conversation while I loaded the slides and developed the plates. Hope did not enter the dark room at all. The result was a portrait of Letty Hyde, who died November 1st, 1921. She was a parlour-maid in my house, and her portrait was recognised by her father, mother and three brothers and sisters who were not Spiritualists and were told nothing of the supernormal origin of the photograph. Sir William Barrett has told the S.P.R. (see Proc. xxxiv., for December, 1924) that this experiment convinced him of the fact. He says: "With regard to the so-called 'spirit photographs,' I have been extremely sceptical of their genuineness until quite lately. Recently, however, experiments conducted by my friend Mr. De Brath—in one of which he kindly allowed me to take part—appear to afford *indubitable* evidence of supernormal photography. This conclusion confirms the opinion held by some expert and critical experimenters who have discussed their results with me." Sir William added: "We shall never arrive at any knowledge of the conditions requisite for these and other marvellous psychic phenomena until hostile incredulity becomes no longer possible."

I have now adduced six simple cases of photographs on untouched plates. I invite Mr. Barlow to explain these, and to show why *his own testimony* to the *fact* should be set aside in favour of his later *inferences*. If Mr. Barlow can show any normal means by which the results could have been produced, I shall be very heartily grateful, but no merely inferential evidence will affect my agreement with Sir William Barrett that they are "indubitable."

COMMANDER GRISMAN'S PSYCHOGRAPH

Commander GRISMAN said that he would not claim to be an expert, but he had had test sittings with Mr. Hope and so far as he was concerned the facts brought forward by Major Rampling Rose and Mr. Barlow would not explain the evidence he had acquired. He took a friend to Mr. Hope, a man who had travelled in many distant parts of the globe who had lost his wife. "Extras" were obtained which were recognised by his relations and were not like any existing photograph. At another time this friend was told at a sitting with a Medium to have a photograph taken by Mr. Hope on the anniversary of his wedding

and his wife would give him a wreath of flowers. The "extra" showed a wreath of roses round him. He (Commander Grisman) had tried psychographs himself and had obtained writing on a plate—not very good nor very clear, but still definite enough to enable him to read a certain amount of it. This plate was not exposed in a camera but just carried about and developed. The fact that he was able to obtain these markings himself helped to convince him that Mr. Hope's work was genuine.

MRS. MCKENZIE ON Wm. HOPE'S MEDIUMSHIP

CONFIRMATORY EVIDENCE OUTSIDE THE ACTUAL RESULTS

Mrs. HEWAT McKENZIE took an important part in the L.S.A. Discussion on Psychic Photography. She began by referring to the work done by Mr. Barlow as honorary secretary of the Society for the Study of Supernormal Pictures and his close association with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the production of the brochure, *The Case for Spirit Photography*. The occasion of that publication, she recalled, was the attack on Mr. Hope in the Price-Hope case, in which it was clearly proved that Mr. Hope was not the deceiver. On this point also, Mr. Barlow had reversed his judgment and withheld important evidence adduced at the time.

Answering a statement by Mr. Barlow that, in every single instance of recognised likenesses he had investigated, the "extra" was "an exact copy of some existing photograph or painting," Mrs. McKenzie quoted a number of authenticated cases in which recognisable likenesses had been obtained, when no photograph or painting existed from which they could have been copied.

Continuing, Mrs. McKENZIE said: Mrs. Sturrock, of Hale, Cheshire (who with her husband made many experiments with the crew Circle, both at Crew and in her own home), sends me particulars of psychographs (that is, writing on plates exposed in the camera) and skotographs (Miss Scatcherd's name for results obtained on plates without camera exposure), The account indicates that Mr. and Mrs. Sturrock were very keen on satisfying themselves that there was no human interference with these results. The procedure was as follows:

An unopened and marked packet of plates was held against Mrs. Buxton's forehead. A request was made that one particular plate in the packet should be affected. The packet was taken by Mrs. Sturrock to the dark room, opened by her, the particular plate selected, numbered, initialled and developed by her, while Hope stood by without touching it, and on several occasions a message was secured on the selected plate. One such was an answer to a mental request, made at the moment of holding the packet to Mrs. Buxton's forehead, and was an appropriate answer, confirmed by events a month later. Mrs. Sturrock says that these messages were in her father's handwriting, which I have compared with the "extras" and found very good. He was not a Spiritualist and had never communicated in any way with Mr. Hope. There was no question here of packets being left in Hope's possession and of being plunged in a bucket of water to destroy markings, as Mr. Barlow has suggested to account for similar results.

Before a plate in a sealed packet could receive an image, as in these "skotographs," some kind of light or ray must have reached that particular one. That certain Mediums can project luminous emanations is held by Professor Fukurai, of Japan, in his study of experiments with Japanese Mediums, in his book on *Clairvoyance and Thoughtography*. He speaks of several who, by holding sealed and elaborately marked packets of plates and being asked to concentrate on producing a Japanese character on the middle one of three plates, successfully accomplished this. That particular plate, when developed, was invariably nearly black, while the other two showed no such effect. This occurred so often under the most careful conditions that Fukurai considered that psychic emanations from

the Medium were clearly proved. Sometimes the Mediums only concentrated in thought on the plate and did not even hold the package.

Major Rampling Rose, in his contribution to Mr. Barlow's S.P.R. lecture, suggests that all plates which showed "extras" come up much darker on development than they ought to have been, suggesting "double" exposure or fake. Professor Fukurai's results are a reply to this. Fukurai found, also, that more than the letter asked for appeared on the plate. Once a background of grained wood appeared—it was traced to something the Medium had been interested in on the previous day, and had nothing to do with the particular concentration of the moment. This result might meet Mr. Barlow's claim that familiar articles often appeared in the background with "extras" which indicated double exposure and fake. We have many instances of such in Mr. Hope's mediumship.

So, neither the darker appearances of the plates with "extras" when developed, nor extraneous appearances on the background, can be held in *themselves* to prove fraud or substitution. If luminous psychic emanations can produce an image on a particular plate in a sealed packet, they may also be part of the process in affecting plates exposed in the camera—either before, or during exposure, and may even be power enough to make a slight material adjustment of the plate in the slide, sufficient to cause the double margin effect so often noticed, with great suspicion, on plates on which "extras" appear. Photographic Mediums are also physical Mediums and there would be nothing unusual in such an occurrence. The Rev. Charles Tweeddale in *The Vindication of William Hope,* takes up this point vigorously.

A College member, Miss Eissner, who has had many experiments with the Crewe circle at Crewe and in her own home, has had very remarkable experiences. In some cases a series of plates were exposed one after another at the same sitting. The "extra" on each varies. Mr. Hope must have been very busy with his flashlight or substitution to produce these results !

"In the examples I have given," said Mrs McKenzie in concluding, "my object has been to produce confirmatory evidence outside the actual result itself to support the claim as to the reality of supernormal images, and that these are in many instances what they claim to be; the result of intelligent operators on the spirit side.

"EXTRAS" ON A FILM

Mr. GRAHAM MOFFAT, who was a professional photographer for sixteen years, told how he obtained an "extra" of Sarah Bernhardt on his first visit to Crewe. In order to satisfy some sceptical friends in Glasgow, the Moffat family went back to Crewe taking their own cameras, their own back cloth, dishes and developer. Mr. Hope agreed to try with Mr. Moffat's film camera. Two films, making twelve exposures in all, were taken without any "extras" being obtained. Although the light was fading Mr. Hope was eager to try again. Mr. Moffat went, for the second time, and bought another film. He suggested to Mr. Hope that the wrappings of black and red paper round the film had something to do with the want of success. After taking the pictures, Mrs. Moffat, at Mr. Hope's request, went into the dark room with Mrs. Buxton and himself. She stripped the film of its wrappings and passed it across Mrs. Buxton's brow. Mrs. Buxton came out of the dark room as Mr. Moffat went in, and the film was handed to him by Mrs. Moffat. She then left the dark room. Mr. Hope prepared the developer and Mr. Moffat developed the film in his own large dish. The Medium never handled the film except that he gripped one end of it during the course of development. There were extra faces on three pictures, and ectoplasmic clouds on several—only two were completely blank.

Mr. Moffat showed one of the film pictures on the screen, the only one with a definitely recognised "extra"—this being the face of a young girl named Agnes who passed over

many years ago. The identity was confirmed through the mediumship of Mrs. Mason. Mr. Moffat drew attention to the wonderful way in which the shadows in his knickerbockers were utilized to make the shadows in the hair of the extra.

"It might be possible," said Mr. Moffat, "to obtain extras on a plate by using a transparency and a palmed flashlight —though I would like to see it done before I would be convinced—but I doubt if any conjure could manipulate three transparencies and expose them in quick succession on a wobbling film without being detected in the act. I am convinced that psychic photography is a genuine reality."

MAJOR C. H. MOWBRAY'S "EXTRAS"

Major C. H. Mowbray said that he understood Mr. Barlow had said at the S.P.R. that if we had one clear case absolutely proved, it proved our case. This kind of case, he claimed, he had in abundance. He gave some striking personal experiences, one of Penanne, a little girl of about twelve, who used to stay at his home. She died and came through to Major Mowbray at one of his sittings, asking him to send a message to her mother. When she had given sufficient evidence to satisfy Major Mowbray and her mother, he made arrangements for a photographic sitting with Mr. Hope, taking every precaution against the possibility of fraud, Mr. Hope also having no knowledge of the lady sitter. The result was an unmistakable likeness of the child Penanne, and this was shown on the screen.

Another startling "extra" obtained was a photograph of his wife's grandfather which, at first, he could not place. At a further sitting details were given, which neither he nor his wife knew at the time, of a miniature of this grandfather. This Major Mowbray produced. He had shown this and the photograph to an anthropologist in Cambridge who examined both the miniature and the "extra'' critically, coming to the conclusion that it was one and the same person. There were some strikingly evidential features about this case in the form of confirmatory messages, as for instance the statement that there was a portrait of the grandfather wearing a scarlet coat (he was a soldier) of which Major Mowbray was unaware, but which he afterwards verified. These instances, Major Mowbray submitted, provided the "clear case" required by Mr. Barlow.

"SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT"

Mr. J. B. M'INDOE dealt with the problem of "screen-markings" raised by Major Rampling Rose. A lantern slide was shown of an "extra" which had been obtained in Glasgow with a Glasgow Medium. This, it was claimed, showed a recognisable picture of the late Peter Galloway, for many years President of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists, and it bore clear "screen-markings" When it was obtained, Mr. McCully, of the Glasgow Association, remarked on the markings and said someone would be accused of "faking," although he knew there had been no "faking." Later, at a sitting, Mr. Galloway "came through" and said it was his picture and he "had given McCully something to think about." The explanation, Mr. M'Indoe went on, was that, when the Crewe Circle first came to Glasgow, Mr. McCully was one of a Committee of experts who had test sittings with them, making their own conditions and obtaining a number of "extras." Amongst these "extras" was one on which there were "screen-markings," and Mr. McCully drew attention to it with the result that the Committee refused to certify that they were satisfied that supernormal results had been obtained. Mr. Galloway never forgot that and, from the "other side," recalled it to Mr. McCully by means of the portrait of himself. Mr. M'Indoe's point was that the presence of "screen-markings" did not necessarily imply fraud, as Major Rose seemed to assert.

Dr. D. DINGWALL asked if a full statement could be made in regard to the occasion, mentioned by Mr. Barlow, when material for "faking" had been found in Hope's possession.

Mr. BARLOW said he was not at liberty to make a complete statement but said that Mrs. McKenzie might be able to.

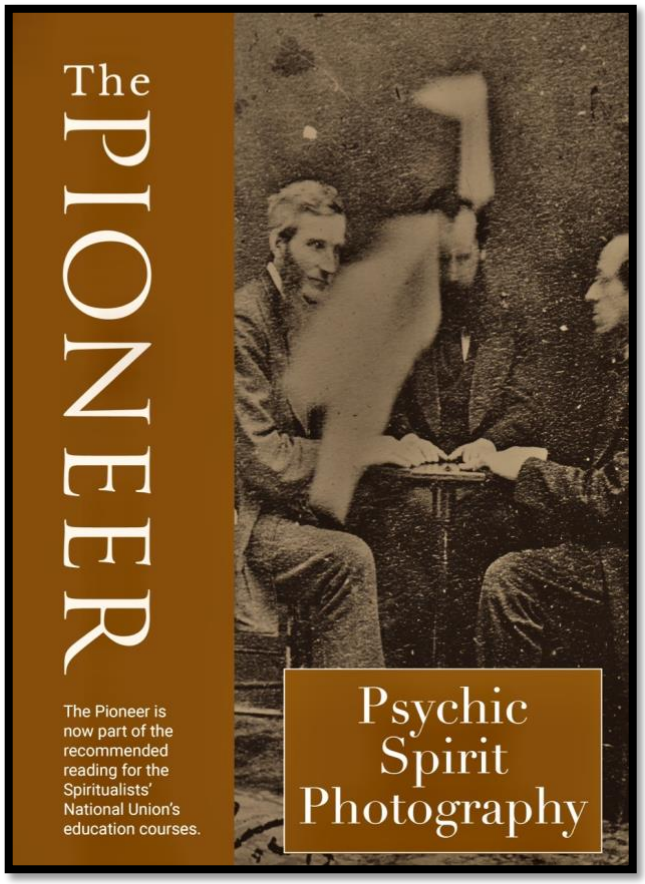
Mrs. McKENZIE, however, said the statement was Mr. BARLOW'S, and she had nothing to say regarding it.

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Editor's Note:

Regarding the request by Dr. Dingwall "…the occasion, mentioned by Mr. Barlow, when material for "faking" had been found in Hope's possession," this is briefly addressed by Mrs McKenzie in the following concluding article.

The above discussion gives the reader much food for thought on the curious phase of psychic or spirit extras soon after the death of Billy Hope on March 8th 1933, after undergoing an operation for cancer at Salford Royal Hospital; his final illness was mercifully brief, lasting just over a week. This *style* of Spiritualistic phenomena faded away, with John Myers being the last of a long line of spirit photographers of any note to appear in Britain. In 1932 charges were made against Myers in the "Sunday Dispatch" by Lord Donegall and, later, in 1935 by the SNU President, John B. McIndoe, who published his findings with Roy Brandon in "Light", claiming that John Myers was fraudulent. However, John Myers was defended by the editor of Psychic News, Maurice Barbanell... A story for another issue.



For further information Pioneer's previous articles on this subject can be freely downloaded or read online on the SNU website.

Details are on the last page of this issue.

None of Hope's images were published in the above discussions, so I was reluctant to publish similar images by Hope to demonstrate some of the negative claims, counter-claims and the comments. As noted in the introduction, Fred Barlow and Major W. Rampling-Rose's joint SPR report is freely available online and relevant reference is made in the report, as well as in the above discussions: both mention the suspicion of fraud regarding a *double rebate on the photographic plate, and the scissors and paste method*.

The two William Hope images shown here were used by Barlow/Rose in the SPR report and it should be read in conjunction in order to put it into full context with the images:



FIG.1.—The veiled figure photograph taken at Crewe by W. Hope as described in text. This was a previously prepared plate, and the evidence is to be found in the double rebate of the lightly printed photograph which plainly shows the double exposure.

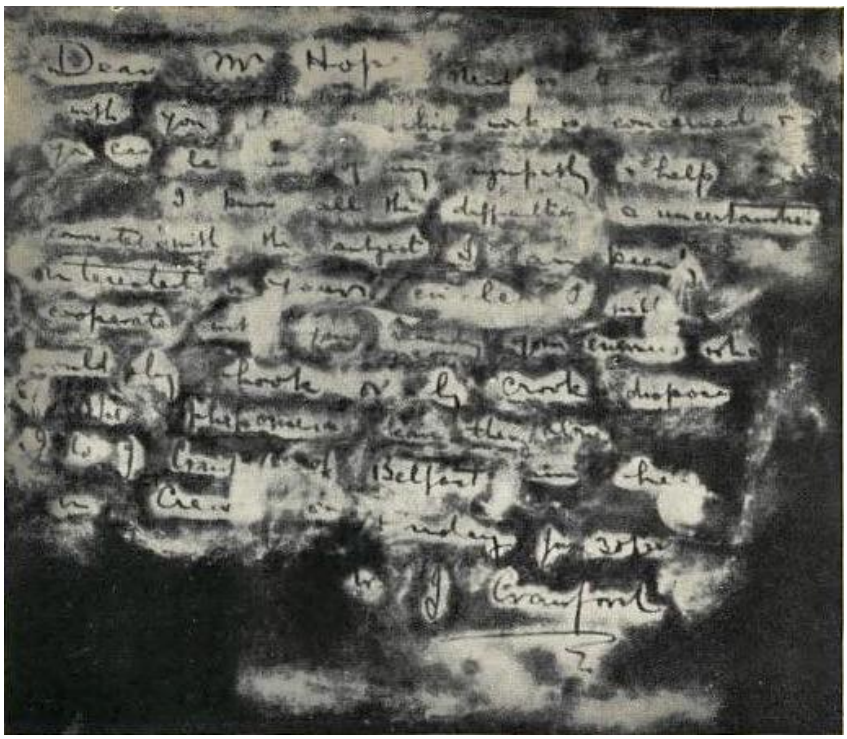


FIG. 2.—The picture is the Crawford photograph obtained by several sitters from Belfast during a visit to the Crewe circle. There is no doubt that the handwriting is that of the late Dr. Crawford, but it will be seen that the result has every appearance of having been produced by cutting out letters and forming them up to make sense.

In 1935 Mr C.P. MacCarthy gave a lecture to the British College of Psychic Science entitled "Deception in Psychic Photography"; a précis of the lecture was published in its Quarterly Transactions and the editor noted:

> This lecture on this subject was so good and exhaustive that I feel some difficulty in making a précis of it. To be complete it should contain all the plates he showed. I must be content with ten of the leading phenomena.[4]

To conclude, published below is an article taken from "Light", June 2nd 1933:

AFTERTHOUGHTS ON "HOPE" DEBATE

FACTS OF THE FLASH-LAMP - DISCOVERY " AT THE BRITISH COLLEGE

By MRS. HEWAT McKENZIE

SUSPICION grows by what it feeds upon, and the photographic discussion reported in LIGHT of May 19th seems to leave the opposing parties "as they were." Mr. Barlow probably still regards as deluded those who supported Hope's genuineness with a dozen reasons as cogent as his own against it. Major Rampling Rose definitely doubts whether even he could devise conditions for experiment, which would leave no loophole for fraud. I did call attention to a series of experiments by Mr. Price with Mrs. Irving—do these go by the board ? But if the Major is right, then we have been wise to call extra and confirmative support for the genuineness of certain results, the line taken in the discussion by Hope's supporters on the 11th May.

Mr. Barlow has made unwarranted capital, I think, out of an innocent letter from Hope; only years after does he find it reek with suggestion of fraud. It was written from Hope's own home-address instead of from Mrs. Buxton's, where all sittings were given and letters for appointments dealt with. But I also have had personal letters from Hope, and so has Miss Scatcherd and other friends, from his own address and saw nothing suspicious in this. He asked Mr. Barlow to supply him with some luminous cards "as he was going to the College." I remember making some psycho-physical experiments with Hope in which luminous cards, probably provided by him, were used. But how naive, if he were "up to some game" as Mr. Barlow suspects ! Why should he take Mr. Barlow into his confidence ? Did he regard him as a willing accomplice ? To such lengths can suspicion go—and it spreads. Mr. J. Arthur Hill seizes on this point in LIGHT of May 26th and says: "It is also significant that Hope knew the use of luminous paint which he obtained from Mr. Barlow." Mr. Barlow has not proved from this incident that Hope made any use of luminous paint for photographic deception.

Mr. Hewat McKenzie, when Principal of the British College, supported the Crewe Circle in the determined attack made on their mediumship in the Price-Hope case in 1922. He and his Committee spent months in an endeavour to elucidate the truth, which culminated in a discovery that the wrappings of the packet used (and which Hope had not handled) had been illicitly opened and re-sealed, as verified by the Imperial Plate Co. This convinced Mr. McKenzie that in this case *others had attempted to deceive Hope, and he never receded from this conclusion*. [5] Mr. Barlow now assumes Hope's guilt in this instance, but is there nothing yet to ask of Messrs. Dingwall and Price or their associate who boasted of ability to open sealed packets undetected ?

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[4] See Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 2: "Deception in Psychic Photography – Mr. C.P. MacCarthy".

[5] The British College of Psychic Science, founded by James Hewat McKenzie in 1920, undertook a lot of important research into various aspects of phenomena, especially in psychic photography; for further details of the BCPS please see Psypioneer, for example Vol. 3, No. 8, August 2007: "A Knight Errant of Psychic Science: James Hewat McKenzie".

Following this case, which caused very serious disturbance to the Mediums and to the investigating public, all experiments at the College were carried out with specially marked and sealed packets of plates. Mr. Hope agreed to use these; they were instituted for his protection as well as for that of the public. The more cold-blooded and "scientific" we make psychic experiments, the more we seem to defeat our own ends. I do not think Hope ever liked these sealed packets. They lacked the magnetisation of the sitter who, before this, had usually carried his packet about with him for days, and they had stamped all over them: "We suspect you." A prejudicial emotion might be set up, which I have known, in the case of other Mediums, to ruin results.

Be this as it may, it was noticed during several visits that all the "extras" secured were of the "moving face" variety—all "draped" or "cloud" effects were absent. Before the advent of the sealed packets, the "extras" were varied and we heard that experimenters at Crewe still obtained these varieties. There was nothing in itself wrong with the "moving face extra" and we may recall Major Mowbray's excellent testimony to one of these at the Queen's Gate Hall discussion—but it gave us anxious thought that there should only be this one kind of result, for the theory of the use of a flash lamp had been freely mooted during many discussions.

Mr. McKenzie raised the matter with Hope and Mrs. Buxton, but no light was thrown upon it. To satisfy his doubts, the Hon. Principal took it upon himself on one occasion to examine Hope's luggage. I was not present, but he reported to me that he found in a suitcase a flash lamp with a bulb attachment, some cut-out photographic heads, and some hairs. He apparently reported this to Mr. Barlow, with whom he was collaborating at the time on photographic matters, but Mr. McKenzie was not a man to condemn another on suspicion and he made no public statement about it, hoping in time to satisfy himself regarding the matter.

That time never came, for shortly afterwards the Crewe Circle ceased their visits to the College, owing to family illness and a subsequent operation on Mrs. Buxton.

Mr. Barlow mentioned this matter without using names in his S.P.R. lecture, and subsequently asked me to confirm it publicly. I saw no necessity for this, as it was again a question of mere suspicion, and Mr. McKenzie had not taken any action in his lifetime; but I have since heard that exaggerated statements of the affair are being circulated, and have therefore felt it wise to give the facts as I know them. No record was ever made of the matter.

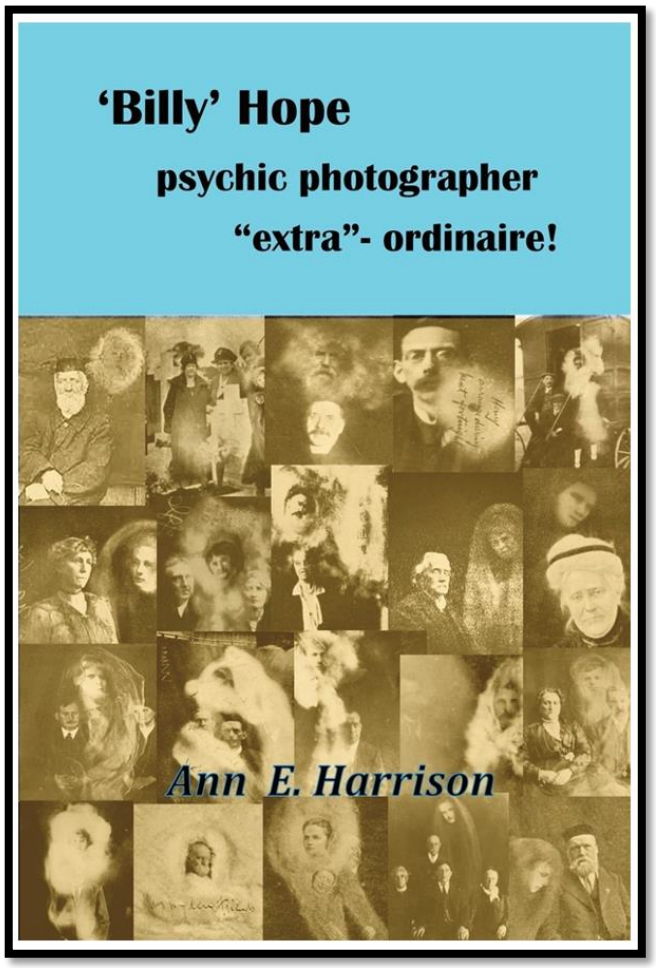
I have seen Hope work under many conditions, at his best and at his lesser best; I have *felt* the psychic force on many occasions flow from his hands; on other occasions I felt nothing. I have *seen* the emanations flow about his own and Mrs. Buxton's hands, as they stood near the camera; on other occasions nothing. I have been conscious, as a sitter, of cobwebby, tangible impacts upon me as I waited for the exposure of the plates, at other times everything was "dead as mutton."

We may surmise and discuss and suspect the why and wherefore of strange results and actions in this as in all psychical manifestations, but I shall continue to hold, from personal experience and from testimony adduced by reputable witnesses, that William Hope was a genuine Medium with the usual variable psychic force, and that he did a remarkable work in his day on behalf of the reality of psychic photography.



Ann Harrison has recently published a book on William Hope:

‘Billy’ Hope psychic photographer “extra”-ordinaire



‘Billy’ Hope is probably the best-known Psychic (Spirit) Photographer ever. People travelled from across the world to sit with him and Mrs Buxton, otherwise known as the ‘Crewe Circle’. Yet there has never been a book about him.

There are snippets in several books on his work but never a book analysing the accusations of fraud matched by the investigations into those claims, and proofs of genuine work from those who had tested him, under strict ‘fool-proof’ protocols, over the 25+ years of capturing images of those in “spirit”. So - Here it is!

Although accused of fraud several times, no case against him was proved. In 1922 Harry Price attempted to prove Hope was fraudulently placing images on the photographic plates, and the mud has stuck, so that many today still believe it to be so. Now, 100 years later, is the time to set it straight.

Working from journals and books of the time, important verbatim reports have been brought together in this book, together with many photographs and images from those reports.

Scientists, professional photographers, journalists, churchmen, lawyers and sceptical researchers all made an effort to test him for themselves. Highly esteemed by many people of standing, they worked frequently at the British College for Psychic Science, in London over a period of 10 years, and travelled throughout the British Isles, from Glasgow to Eastbourne, from Belfast to Norwich, never charging a fee for their work in almost 20 years

Available at the Arthur Findlay College Shop



The name Estelle Roberts needs little introduction in the annals of Spiritualism. Estelle has on numerous times been reflected in the pages of Pioneer; here Estelle talks about how she works as a medium on the platform—the two worlds are one—the spirit world interpenetrating with our world:

"I see them objectively as clearly as I see you now,"
"but they do not come to me. I go to them …" [6]

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The article below is published from the Two Worlds, March 20th, 1936 and gives a good example of her impressive platform work:

ESTELLE ROBERTS AT CROYDON

SPIRITUALISM has been denounced by the Pope and frowned upon by some of our bishops; it has been distorted in out popular Press and cold-shouldered by the B.B.C., yet in spite of these modern Canutes the rising tide of public interest refuses to recede.

On Wednesday, March 11th, under the auspices of the House of Red Cloud, [7] the first of a series of propaganda meetings was held at Croydon, at which the speaker was Mr. Maurice Barbanell, and the clairvoyante, Mrs. Estelle Roberts. The largest hall in Croydon (seating 1,200) had been procured, and before the meeting was due to commence the "house-full" boards were displayed, and numbers of disappointed people were turned away.

As chairman, Mr. J. M. Stewart [8] paid an earnest tribute to Red Cloud, the guide of Mrs. Roberts, at whose request these propaganda meetings were being arranged. He valued his contacts with that spirit, and had always found his advice both wise and practical. "Mr. Barbanell, the editor of *Psychic News*," he said, "was a fearless advocate for Spiritualism as he conceived it."

[6] This was published in Pioneer, Vol. 9, No. 6: "Seeing and Hearing "Other-World" People", "Mrs Estelle Roberts On Her Platform Work', & " "Red Cloud" Answers Questions".

[7] See Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 5: "Estelle Roberts and the House of Red Cloud".

[8] John M. Stewart, former SNU President (1941-1943) and founder member and President of Croydon National Spiritualist Church. See Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: "First Croydon National Spiritualist Church", "The benefits of Union affiliation!", & "Pioneer retires from active service – Farewell to John Stewart".

Mr. Barbanell, in his address, was invitingly persuasive. The case for Spiritualism, he said, rested on the evidence which, under proper conditions, could be obtained to-day. It proved that it was natural for man to survive death, and being a natural law he survived irrespective of his religious beliefs. In a popular way he explained the function of mediumship, and then dwelt upon our difficulties in view of the provision of the Witchcraft Act.

Mrs, Roberts' gifts as a clairvoyante are universally recognised among Spiritualists, and she followed with a very convincing demonstration.

"You have a brother on the other side who has passed over some time," she said, indicating a lady in the audience. This was a direct statement of fact, acknowledged to be true, and she followed: "He gives me the names of Aunt Mary, John, Elizabeth, Uncle George, Tom, Aunt Sarah, Arthur (your cousin), Aunt Polly (dad's sister-in-law), and Ginny." All these names were immediately recognised. "They also give me Harry and Jim (two brothers), and Alice and Emily." All acknowledged. "They are all here, and are referring to a friend you knew about fifteen to twenty years ago, Mrs. Farmer." Correct.

"They now ask me to give you the name of George Carpenter. He was a porter at a hospital, and you knew him when you were a young girl. They are talking of ear and eye trouble in connection with the visit." The lady in the audience had some difficulty in placing these facts, but when Mrs. Roberts said, "They are now asking me to remind you of an elderly lady—surname Clark—you use to meet there," this established recognition and enabled the above facts to be remembered.

"They are asking me to give their love to you and also to your sister, who is with you." Correct: the sister was sitting next to the lady.



Addressing the sister, Mrs. Roberts continued: "They are now talking of Jim. You must go back over twenty years. I am to remind you of an old couple. The lady died and Jim passed over nine days later. They were country people interested in farming. They lived in a cottage and were friends of your father. They lost a son in the war. The man suffered with his kidneys, and the lady died of old age. It was pneumonia that carried her off in the end. They want me to remind you of Mr. and Mrs. Wells." The sister could not place this, so Mrs, Roberts continued: "They want me to remind you of when you were a little girl and used to stay with your aunt in the country. You used to visit them and take a basket of eggs or fruit with you. There was a water-mill there." "Oh, yes" interrupted the sister, "I recognise it all now. I fell into that water."

Both these ladies admitted that Mrs. Roberts did not know them, and had never spoken to them before.

Similar descriptions and messages followed. They told their own tale and carried their own conviction to a very interested audience, who enthusiastically assented when later they were invited to indicate whether they would like a further meeting at which Red Cloud could address them.

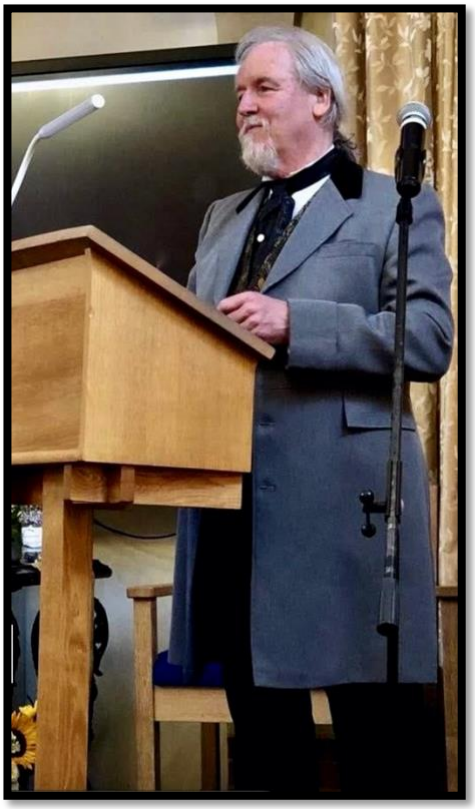
Both the lecture and the demonstration served the best interests of Spiritualism, and the "House of Red Cloud" are to be congratulated on their public-spiritedness and on the services they are rendering to our Cause.

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The Burden of Proof

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James Arthur Findlay was the founder of the Glasgow Psychical Research Society in 1920 and his brother, John Galloway Findlay, became the Honorary Treasurer; for further details please see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No.1: "Glasgow Society for Psychical Research". J. Arthur Findlay worked closely with the trance and direct-voice medium John Campbell Sloan (1869-1951). Much of Sloan's known mediumship is associated with Findlay through his investigations, lectures and books; however, in the Psypioneer journal for December 2012 [9] we find a rare report on Sloan's mediumship at London at the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS).



In one of Findlay's scrapbooks in the Britten Museum & Library housed at the Arthur Findlay College is a photograph of Mr and Mrs Sloan; this image was sent to Findlay shortly after Sloan's death in May 1951 at the age of 82, by a Mrs D. McLean, Stornoway, Scotland, dated June 19th, 1951 (she is in the photograph but edited out).

Findlay's relationship with John Sloan would remain until his death. In a letter sent to Findlay on March 14th, 1951 from Miss Jean Logan Dearie, an expert stenographer who recorded much of the communications received in direct voice through Sloan's mediumship, she mentions her visit to Sloan:

"I was out seeing Mr Sloan last Saturday and passed on your message about sending him on anything he would like to make life a little more comfortable. He replied, "That is very good of Mr Arthur. He's an awful nice man, but I canna' think of a thing I need. I have plenty to eat and a comfortable bed, and what more could an old chap like me wish for." "

Dearie later notes that she was going to ask the Sloans' daughter, Ethel, for a photograph of her father or where they (Dearie/Findlay) might get one. However, she was advised by a Miss C…, [10] "No; keep the family out of it", asking Findlay what he thought. This may explain why there is only one previously known photo of Sloan and may have resulted in Findlay being sent the photo by Mrs McLean, which shows the younger image of the couple, predating the only other known photograph of John Sloan taken in 1936.



John Galloway Findlay

The purpose of this article is not to tread on familiar ground but to look at the Findlays' experiences with other leading mediums of the day which are not so well known outside of J.A. Findlay's published books, for example the time when Arthur and his brother John lost their beloved mother on February 3rd 1936.

[9] Vol. 8, No. 12: "John Campbell Sloan (1869-1951) – Paul J. Gaunt" & "A Scotch Materializing and Voice Medium – Mrs Hewat McKenzie".

[10] Full name removed at the editor's discretion.

The renowned medium Bertha Harris (1889-1981), it appears, was the first to give brothers Arthur and John Findlay their first survival evidence just three days after the passing of their mother. The story is told below by J. Arthur Findlay, which he first reported in Psychic News, July 29th, 1950:

164 CORRECT ITEMS IN TWO SEANCES

How Arthur Findlay Proved His Mother's Survival After Death

MY MOTHER DIED ON FEBRUARY 3, 1936, AND I THINK THAT THE READERS OF *PSYCHIC NEWS* WILL BE INTERESTED TO READ OF HER RETURN SHORTLY AFTER HER DEATH. THIS OCCURRED AT TWO SEANCES, ONE IN GLASGOW AND ONE IN LONDON.

REPORTS OF THESE TWO SEANCES HAVE NEVER BEFORE BEEN PUBLISHED.

These two seances are examples of what I consider is first class evidence. Not a single mistake was made, everything was correct, some statements were unknown to me and found, later, to be correct.

In both cases the medium could not have made any preparation beforehand and I am quite satisfied that neither of them knew that my mother had died.

Notes were taken at the time of the sittings.

Taking the sittings with the two mediums together 164 facts were given to me which were correct. There was no guessing, everything was said straight out. Nothing vague. Everything correct, and clearly stated.

So that the reader may better understand this, I have put at the end of each paragraph wherein these statements are recorded, the figures **1**, **2** or **3** according to the number of facts given which could not have been known by the medium.

When one correct statement is made the figure **1** is to be found at the end of the paragraph. When two correct statements are made, the figure **2** and so on.

If the reader adds all these up, he will find that 164 correct facts were given at the sittings held on the 9th and 12th February, 1936.

"SOMEONE HAS DIED WITHIN PAST WEEK"

Sitting In Glasgow With Mrs. Bertha Harris On February 9, 1936

MRS. BERTHA HARRIS arrived in Glasgow from Chester on the evening of February 8 and went to the Holland Street Spiritualist Church where she was given a bedroom and a sitting-room.

My brother and I, knowing that she was to be in Glasgow on the Sunday, February 9, motored to Glasgow from Ayrshire and arrived at 11 o'clock in the morning. No previous appointment had been made, and we went up to Mrs. Harris's room and knocked and were asked to come in.

I had only met Mrs. Harris once, after a meeting I addressed in Leicester, but she did not recognise me. She did remember John, my brother. [11]

[11] John Galloway Findlay died on Saturday, 24th November, 1956 at Bournemouth; his health had deteriorated since an attack of thrombosis five years earlier.

After the sitting with Mrs. Harris, I asked Mrs. Drysdale, the housekeeper who looked after her, if she had mentioned to her about my mother's death. Mrs. Drysdale said, "No."

When we entered Mrs. Harris's room, she came forward to greet us and said she was pleased to see us. We sat down without mentioning the fact that we had come for a seance, but just as if we had come to pay her a passing visit, my brother saying that when he heard she was in Glasgow, he just wanted to come and shake hands with her.

After a few words of general conversation Mrs. Harris spoke to us as follows:



"You seem to bring an atmosphere of sorrow with you today." Then she paused. "Someone has passed on within the past week. A lady, small, stooping, old. I should say about 80 years of age. Very closely connected with you. Nellie brings her with her." **(10)**

I now summarise what Mrs. Harris said, but she had much more to tell us when the time had arrived for her to go downstairs and take the meeting in the Church.

So she said, "Come back after the Church service, and we may be able to get more through."

I mention this because, with the sitting I had with Mrs. Abbott in London, reference was made to two separate occasions on which my mother had communicated, which was correct.

Mrs. Harris had no opportunity to inquire about my mother, as she came downstairs along with me and immediately she left the platform she joined me and my brother and we returned to her room with her.

However what was said at both these sittings is now incorporated hereunder, as if it had all occurred at the same time. Mrs. Harris went on, "The lady had no feeling of surprise when she passed over, only a feeling of great joy to touch dear Robert's hand." **(1)**

PROPHECY

She then referred to Robert meeting her when she passed over and also "an old gentleman who had passed on recently. He welcomed her, but was now looking after someone else (his sister, just died). **(2)**

"The lady gives her name as Margaret, and Nellie says, "Just as I came and brought the old gentleman in Glasgow and then in London, so shall I bring your mother to you in London as I have brought her this morning." (This reference is to Nellie bringing my uncle in Glasgow to speak to John the day before his funeral, and then on a later occasion to speak to John in London.) **(4)**

"The lady mentions Mary and Elizabeth. She sends them both her love and gratitude. She has mentioned them in her will giving them recognition. It is a money recognition, (5)

" 'I always like to pay my debts,' she says, 'I have tried to repay them for all their kindness to me,' Her last conscious remembrance on earth was Mary and Elizabeth standing beside her. Elizabeth stroked my head and face with her hand, she was alone with me at the time." **(4)**

I then asked, "Have you seen your old school friend?" and the reply was, "Yes, Annie, big woman." The medium said she would nearly fill the doorway. **(2)**

RED ROSE IN COFFIN

"Your mother mentions a red rose which was placed on her robe in her coffin on her breast. She says 'Red is my favourite colour, but why did you not put the rose in my hand?' **(4)**

"Your mother had very small hands and feet, she was proud of her small feet, she took size two in shoes. **(4)**

"Arthur's daughter," [12] the medium went on, "Your mother tells me, was young and tall, but was not present at your mother's passing, as she was away from home at the time. **(5)**

"Your mother mentions John's boys, one of them, 17, is tall. The other Arthur (not this Arthur, pointing to me), I am more concerned about, carry out what she advises and push him forward. **(4)**

"Your mother mentions various small gifts she has left for people, with cards attached bearing messages and names. Arthur's daughter's gift is a necklace. (3)

"Your mother asks me to tell you she tried to retain consciousness till Arthur and Gertrude arrived. They rushed up from a long distance. She did not succeed in remaining conscious but so long as she was conscious she kept thinking of them coming." **(3)**

The medium then spoke to John saying that he had recently had his birthday, but that he had not yet brought his mother's present. He had first told her he would not buy a book, and then had changed his mind and decided to buy one. **(4)**

NELLIE'S HANKIES

"She tells me that John's books are becoming numerous and that his library is becoming like Nellie's handkerchiefs. Then she goes on to say that John put a piece of paper in his waistcoat pocket and that had reference to this book. **(3)**

(The reference to Nellie's handkerchiefs was good because Nellie when she was ill used to buy so many handkerchiefs at one time that there was a joke about it. As to John putting a piece of paper in his waistcoat pocket, he had done so that morning to remind him to order the book at the Church Bookstall.)

"Your mother mentions something in her bedroom with a small single drawer in it containing papers which will interest you both." (3)

When we said we did not know of such a thing, she mentioned a bunch of keys and we said we did not know anything about this bunch of keys. **(1)**

(When we returned home, we looked around her room and saw her dressing case, which was a wooden box about 1 1/2 ft. x 1 1/2 ft. We could not open it as it was locked, and we asked for the key. This was on a bunch of keys. The dressing case was opened and after examining the inside we found a spring which released a single drawer in which we found quite a number of papers of interest. If we had not been told about this drawer it is unlikely we would ever have found these papers.)

[12] James Arthur Findlay was born on 16th May, 1883, and on 15th July, 1913 married Annie Gertrude Walker (known as Gertrude). In 1921, the Findlays adopted Joan (spelt Joane on her birth certificate) Margaret, born on 12th August, 1916; on 9th September, 1939, Joan married a London chartered accountant, Francis Wayne.

The medium then referred to my mother having pain in her stomach and weakness of heart, also to sickness. She referred also to one of her legs which felt weak from time to time, and also to her having weak knees. She then referred to one eye being very troublesome. "Not blind, you know, but sore and uncomfortable. She goes like this (then the medium's hand went up to her eye, as mother was continually doing when her eye was troublesome, her right finger went round her eye.) **(8)**

"Your mother died of something wrong here (the medium put her hand to her stomach). Your father died of something here," she put her hand on her appendix. "Your mother has left three grown up people and three children." **(4)**

"Your mother was very fond of her Bible and a little old village church with a bell in a small pointed steeple. She could hear the bell ringing from her home. (4)

"Your mother loved the hills, she now sees hills like those she could see from her home. **(1)**

"Your mother has met Dr. Lammond, she hardly recognised him as he is looking so much younger than when she saw him last. **(1)**

"Your mother refers to a picture of Nellie on the piano in a room with a high ceiling with a pattern round it, It is a coloured picture. **(3)**

MOVED HIS SEAT

"Your mother said that during the service Arthur moved up to the end of the pew, and she came and sat beside him" (this is correct about me moving up to the end of the pew, but when I did so the medium was in trance on the platform and could not have seen me, in any case I was sitting far back in the Church. This was said at the sitting we had after the service.) **(1)**

All that was said in the sitting we had after the Church service occurred with the medium in trance. Mrs. Harris, just before we left, when saying goodbye mentioned that before we arrived she had got a message which she had not understood.

When she was dressing that morning Nellie had appeared to her and said that John and Arthur were coming to see her that morning. She did not know who John and Arthur were, but she mentioned this message to us as a matter of interest.

Everything reported above its quite applicable to my mother and the other people mentioned. 84 facts were given which the medium could not have known. Not one single remark or statement incorrect or even doubtful.

—~—☼—~—

BERTHA AMELIA HARRIS



The veteran mental medium Bertha Harris was born on August 1st, 1889 in Cheshire; as Bertha Amelia Hughes she married Robert Harris in 1918 and died age 91 in 1981. There have been decades of discussion between mediums and Spiritualists as to whether a medium is born a medium, whether mediumship is a gift or whether, in fact, it can be developed through training. Bertha was of the opinion that mediumship was *not a gift* but that it could be taught.

Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 5 has previously published: "Bertha Harris tells: How I See The Dead". Further information can be found on Harris in Psypioneer, Vol. 12, No. 1: "Bertha Harris Located – Leslie Price", and "A Famous British Medium – Mrs. Hewat Mckenzie".

Published below is a profile by the Two Worlds Special Correspondent Philip Paul, published on May 14th, 1955:

> LIKE many "natural" psychics, Bertha Harris found the early years of her mediumship a trial. When interviewed the other day, she pondered the problem of how many times in childhood she was sent supperless to bed for disturbing her parents with uncannily accurate remarks about family affairs of which she knew nothing, or for putting forward prognostications which were considered outrageous at the time and yet always came true.
>
> The life as a sensitive is not an easy road is underlined by these early sufferings and by certain gloomy forewarnings of domestic tragedy that sometimes descended upon the diminutive medium.
>
> **FATHER'S DEATH SEEN**
>
> One such sombre prophecy concerned the death of her father, a civil servant. Then aged 17, she saw, clairvoyantly, a burial tablet which bore her parent's name and date.
>
> Horrified by the revelation, she was nonetheless impelled to write the details in a place of concealment behind a picture in her bedroom. Thereafter, she fell to constant prayer that, for once, her unearthly inspirers would be proven wrong.
>
> **Her petitions went unanswered. Her father met with a bicycle accident and, three days later, died—exactly on the date foreshadowed in her vision. The tablet prepared in his memory was precisely the shape and design of the one she had "seen."**
>
> **TUMBLED INTO TROUGH**
>
> A less tragic happening also centred upon her father's cycling. Out for a ride one day, he failed to return home. Her mother became anxious, but Bertha reassured her, saying, "Father has fallen into a big black bath and now they have him locked up."
>
> Next day, they learned that his brakes had failed and he had tumbled into a horse trough. Twenty-five miles from home and soaking wet, he called at a police station, where a kindly sergeant allowed him to spend the night in the only unoccupied accommodation they had—a cell !

Bertha addressed her first Spiritualist meeting in her native Chester 43 years ago. Professionally, she followed a musical career and was, at one time, the youngest organist in England—"only because I had long legs to reach the pedals," she says modestly.

"KNEW" HIS FATE

She met her husband through music. At first, her psychic abilities went unmentioned, but he discovered the facts when they were engaged. After joining Bertha at circles, he developed an outstanding trance mediumship.

Following their wedding in Chester in 1918—the bridegroom, Robert, was on leave from the Border Regiment and returned to France after a brief honeymoon—Bertha obtained the same extraordinary "inspirations" about her husband as she did about other members of her family.

Soon after his return to the front, she was officially informed that he was missing. "But I knew he was all right and that I should have a bundle of letters from him," says Bertha. It proved true, two months later.

ENDED BY BOMBS

When Robert was serving with the Army of Occupation at Bonn, Bertha suddenly sensed he had had an accident. Again it was true—he had been injured by a horse and was ill for some months.

Their married life ended in the midst of another war, when Robert died while German bombs rained around their Golders Green home. She was preserved from death in that conflagration when she was "prompted" to alight from a bus before reaching her destination. Moments later, bus and passengers were destroyed by a direct hit.

Bertha came to London as a professional medium in 1932 and worked at the newly – founded British College of Psychic Science, the International Institute of Psychical Research, the Spiritualist Community, and the Marylebone Spiritualist Association.

HER FAME ABROAD

Since then, she had become famous in many countries. She has demonstrated and spoken in Belgium, Holland, Germany, France, Switzerland, Spain, Denmark, Finland and South Africa. Her clairvoyance has been translated into the languages of those counties, plus Icelandic.

Her inspirers do not desert her, even in the matter of tongues. "Though I do not know the words the translators use, the spirit people tell me immediately if they are not being properly interpreted," she says. Then, woe betide the interpreter !

She is booked for demonstrations in Germany, Switzerland and France in the autumn, there is the possibility of another South African tour, and she has been invited to visit Australia and New Zealand.

One of Spiritualism's most-travelled ambassadors, she remembers as her most thrilling experience – with a solitary exception which she is keeping for her speech at the *Two Worlds* "Tribute to Our Mediums" dinner on May 14—the fact that her work in Denmark and Finland was followed by an unprecedented rush for membership of local Spiritualist societies.

Tall, grey-haired Bertha's international achievements are all the more remarkable for the fact that most of them have been attained despite physical infirmities that many people would regard as crippling.

GUIDE PROVED RIGHT

The year after her husband's passing, she was blown into a wall by a flying bomb. Concussed and internally injured, she went to a nursing home at Midhurst, Sussex. There she met silver-haired Miss Ethel Robertson, now her secretary-companion.

There was an operation at the London Clinic. When a spinal injury made itself felt, paralysis attacked her. Strapped to a board in University College Hospital, she told Miss Robertson, "I do not think I shall work again." But a few minutes later a guide controlled her and said she would work on "and sail the seven seas." [13]

SHE NEVER COMPLAINS

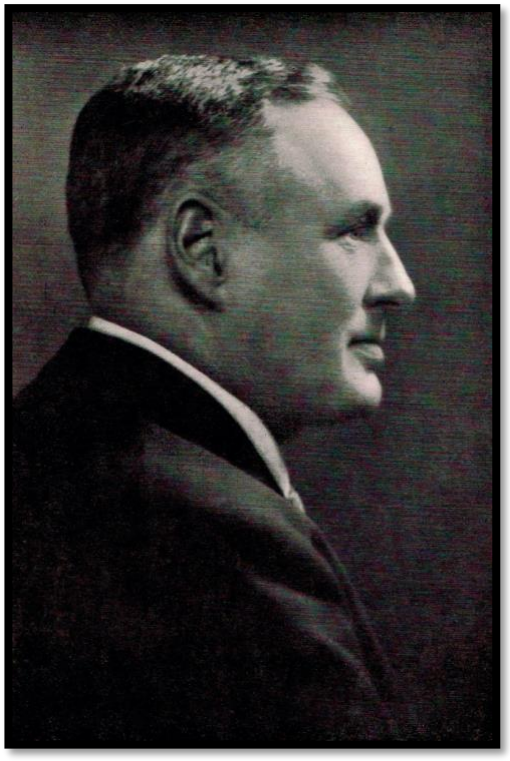
Two years passed before she was able to walk again, but at last she regained her feet. It is a state of health in which she was to wear a steel spinal jacket and consider every movement with care. But there is never any complaint and rarely as much as a hint that she is in any way physically out of the ordinary.

This indomitable spirit shows itself in her outlook towards British Spiritualism. "I feel we are apt to undervalue our efforts. We have a higher standard than that in any other country. But there is a crying need for more good mediumship."

—~—☼—~—

[13] The artist Marcel Poncin (see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 6) is little known today for his Spiritualist work, except for his famous painting of Silver Birch. One of Bertha Harris's most treasured possessions was a painting of her famous guide (various spellings and pronunciations), *"Angelo", "Angelus" or "Angelos"*. She was at "The International Institute for Psychic Investigation" (see Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: October 2019), when the secretary called her into the office and she found that Poncin had left a painting of her guide; Harris did not meet the artist.

Other well-known *"Spirit Guides"* and works by Poncin (oil or pastel) include: *"Poppet"*, guide of Lilian Bailey, *"Rosie"*, guide of Bertha Hirst, Estelle Roberts – Red Cloud and Spirit Friends, which hangs at Stansted Hall, and the most famous healer at this time, W.T. Parish. The image depicts Parish in the foreground overshadowed by the Nazarene.



ARTHUR FINDLAY told last week of a sitting with Bertha Harris, at which 84 facts were given as applicable to his dead mother and other people mentioned. Not a single statement was incorrect or even doubtful.

This week, Mr. Findlay describes a séance with Mrs. Abbot at the London Spiritualist Alliance in London, three days later, at which a further 80 correct facts were forthcoming.

Mr. Findlay is referred to throughout as YOU, and at the end of each paragraph is printed in heavy type the number of evidential facts contained in that paragraph.

By Arthur Findlay

MRS. ABBOT WENT INTO A TRANCE QUICKLY AND HER CONTROL STATED THAT AN ELDERLY LADY WAS PRESENT FROM 75 TO 80 YEARS, BELONGING TO ME. SHE HAD RECENTLY PASSED OVER. **(3)**

Amongst those who were waiting for her was a clergyman uncle, who when on earth thought Spiritualism was the work of the Devil. He was an ardent minister, and used to wear a red hood, but he has now given up the foolish ideas which he preached. **(4)**

Your father and mother are both in the spirit world, and they send you their love. All is well with your mother. This is not the first time she has come back to you, as she came back on two occasions before, but the first time she could not get through well, the second time, she got through what she wanted quite well. **(4)**

She learned a lot about the after life from you (Arthur) before dying. She feels much younger now. She met Nellie. Your father is very happy having her with him. Your father can never thank you enough for all you did for your mother. It will be repaid in the years to come. You have many years in front of you and he is glad that people look up to you. He approves of your books. **(3).**

Nellie's mother is also here but finds it very difficult to understand the new conditions. She will take a long time to understand them, as she was so attached to earth and earth things. **(2)**

> **For a long time your mother was against your views and did not believe in what you believed. Though she was very proud of her two sons, yet she was so tied down to what she was taught in childhood that she could not realise that things could be different from what she had then been taught. She feels very humble and subdued now and is not so opinionative as she was on earth. (5)**

Your mother saw Nellie just before she passed over. Your father was also waiting for her. When she got over here your father said to her, "What do you think of all this?" to which she replied, "I suppose I am dead, but I never felt ill." Your father replied, "You were never dead and you never will be dead." Your father put her to bed to rest when she got here.

GAELIC NAME

For some weeks before she died her mind was very forgetful, she was losing a grip on earth life, she just slept away quite peacefully. When she arrived here she was not so surprised as many others because of what you had told her. For some years before passing her legs were bad, but now she feels quite young again, and her great freedom of movement is one of the things that impresses her most in her new life. She has now a much nicer garden than she had in her own home. **(5)**

Then reference was made to the two boys and that they were called Ian's (Gaelic for John. Correct—his pet name) sons. One was named Arthur, but his name had been changed owing to the confusion with you, to a name connected with the family. (5)

Your mother objected to the change at first, but now thinks was a good idea to change the name. **(1)**

Then reference was made to her furniture, and she hope that the big furniture would not be sold. **(1)**

Reference was made to old family papers and to old family photographs. They are not old rubbish, and though you are not interested in them you should keep them. (Correct, she knew I was not interested in these.) **(1)**

Her father, she said, was like you in looks. He would push in where angels feared to tread. Very stern, and at times she was in awe of him, but looked up to him, as no one could help but do so. She is very fond of him. **(6)**

She then referred to a visit of recent years to Bournemouth which I had forgotten, and said so, but she said this was correct, and I now remember that a few years before she died my wife and I did stay with her at an hotel in Bournemouth for a few days. **(1)**

POWDERED DRINK

Your mother is very grateful to Nellie for her kindness to her since she arrived and for helping her to come back and speak to you. She never could have imagined that Nellie could have been of such help. She has just been like a nurse. Your mother was not always too nice to Nellie, and used to blame Ian for spoiling her, but will not do so again, as Nellie is well worthy of it. Nellie's mother used not to be very nice with her either. Your mother is also very grateful to Gertrude for all her kindness to her, which she much appreciated. **(5)**

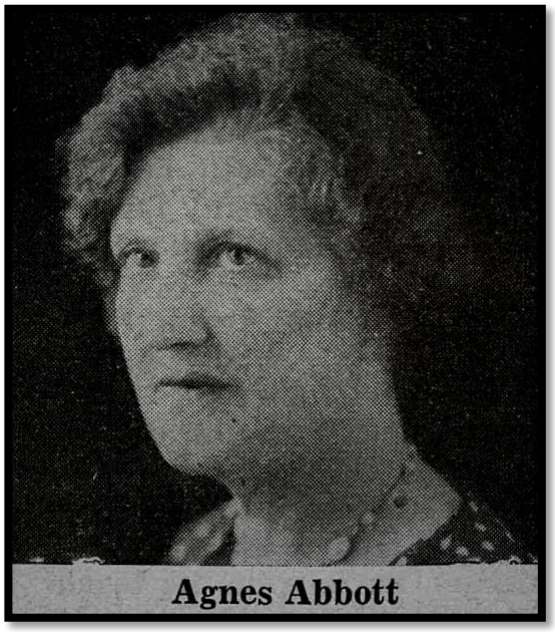
She then referred to the pretty nurse who looked after her. She said she liked her very much indeed. She also liked drinking the powdered stuff just before passing, as it made her mouth feel clean and relieved discomfort. (3)

I then asked my mother what G.W.G. stood for. The control stated that she was laughing, and that though she could not explain what the initials stood for, yet she was not that now. She was having to lie low and not say too much as she felt somewhat subdued after all the opinions she had given on earth. She said she was not a G.W.G. any longer. (Correct. G.W.G. stood for Great Wee Girl, which we called her when she became opinionative.) **(3)**

AUTOCRATIC

Your mother was very autocratic yet homely. She did not like to be pushed on one side, but liked to feel she was someone in the house. Her legs were rather bad towards the end, but now she can walk and feels bright and fresh. She so loved her country place and her garden, but now she is in a place where there is no fog and dullness. Three months

before her passing her sight became bad, but she can now see clearly and farther than before. **(6)**


Agnes Abbott

She brings a stick and says she has now no need for a stick. This is symbolic of her religious outlook. What you told her about her religion was true. When she awoke on the other side, she saw a bright light, which she thought was Christ, but it was your father. It will be sometime before she understands all you told her, but her outlook is much brighter now than it has ever been. **(1)**

She is glad Ian's two boys are getting on so well, and she wants you to look after the maid who took such care of her. Mary had to put up with so much from her, and was always so gentle and patient. Don't cast her aside, but keep her in the family. (7)

Mrs. Abbott's control then said he would like Nellie to control the medium herself. Nellie then spoke to me, calling me Arthur throughout. She put her hand (the medium's hand) out, and shook hands with me. She started off by saying, "Your mother is all right." **(1)**

She said she just wished her own mother had a clearer outlook on things, but unfortunately she was kept on the astral plane because of her egotism, her love of subservience, and having people always bowing down to her and loving to be the centre of everything. **(4)**

DIRECT VOICE PROMISE

Your father asked me to tell you that if you go to Sloan he will try and get your mother to speak to you by the direct voice. Nellie then said, "I would like my darling Ian to go with you to Sloan so that I can speak with him also. **(1)**

"Your mother was conscious almost to the last and passed over without any suffering and quite naturally. Your mother is very much more willing to learn about her new life than is my mother," (Nellie went on). "It is sad for me not to be able to be with her more as she cannot rise to the plane in which we live, but this will come some day." **(1)**

In reply to a question, Nellie said, "Yes, we are living just above you and can come to you instantly. We have very bright diffused light, which is very much more pleasant than the light from your sun, as it is not so glaring."

Then she referred to Jack, who, owing to his contrition and the shame he felt for what he had done, had risen to be with the rest of them. He was never bad at heart, in fact, he was a very warm-hearted and kind-hearted man. **(3)**

UNLEARN IDEAS

Until he felt shame and remorse he could not rise to where we are, but whenever that came on him and he saw his mistakes, he was able to mix with us. He certainly did very odd things, which seemed to be selfish, but not really selfishness.

Then she referred to her father, who was with her, and said that the love of money and earth's goods had not spoiled him the way it had spoiled her mother. (1)

Nellie then referred to the fact that your mother would have to unlearn all her past religious ideas, but that she would soon do that under your father's guidance.

Nellie then spoke about the conditions over there, emphasising that their world was very much like ours. She said that when she arrived first of all she saw a beautiful little waterfall, and went and put her hand under the water.

When she pulled her hand away it was quite dry and she did not feel the water. When she bathes in their sea she gets all the pleasure and exhilaration of bathing, but is never wet, and comes out of the water quite dry.

In reply to a question, she confirmed what I have already been told, that to come to earth they come through their own surface, but it was just a question of tuning in the vibrations to the different surface levels. Yes, they had towns and villages and everything was very beautiful, and they never had any darkness.

The sitting lasted for an hour and a half. When Mrs. Abbott came out of trance I asked her if she remembered my brother, and she said, "No," that she remembered me because she had seen me going about the London Spiritualist Alliance building, but that she never, to her knowledge, had met my brother, which confirms what my brother had told me, that Mrs. Abbott did not know him, as he had never given her his name.

This all being so, the information given is all the more interesting, especially the story about Nellie putting her hand under the waterfall, because Nellie told John the same story through another medium.

Mrs. Abbott said, after coming out of trance, that she was quite unaware that my mother had recently died, and I do not see how she could have heard of it or known about it, as, after the sitting, I mentioned it to one or two others in the L.S.A. who had not heard of it.

It was mentioned only once in "The Times," but even if Mrs. Abbott had seen it, I do not see how she could have connected it with me, in fact, I am quite certain that she never knew my mother had died.

The sitting was arranged by Miss Carter, of the International Institute for Psychical Research, but no name was given. That being so, Mrs. Abbott had no opportunity to make enquiries, and when I arrived I walked up to her room and found her waiting.

She said she had an appointment for someone at 2 o'clock, she did not know who it was, and I told her I was the person for whom the appointment was made.

Everything stated above is correct and applicable to my mother and others mentioned. Eighty facts were given at this seance, which the medium could not have known. So if we add together the facts given at the two sittings we find 84 facts given at the sitting on February 9, 1936, and 80 facts at the sitting on February 12, 1936, making 164 in all.

Not one remark made was incorrect or even doubtful.

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Arthur and John's father was Robert Downie Findlay, born in 1856 at Anderston, Glasgow, Lanark, Scotland and died in 1907. Their mother, whom the above communications primarily revolved around, was born Margaret Galloway (hence John's middle name), born in Paisley, Renfrewshire in 1856 and died in 1936, as is detailed above. Naturally, the communications revolve around the Findlays' family members, hence many of the names used where the reader is naturally unaware of the family connections. One of the principal names used in the communications is "Nellie"; however, Findlay gives no indication as to who she was and the apparent family connection.

It would be no doubt interesting to consider if *you were* in the Findlays' shoes at this point of time, under the same circumstances and séance conditions as exactly *described* by J. Arthur Findlay, i.e. prior, during and after the sittings, would you consider you would reach the same or a similar conclusion —***proven survival after death!***

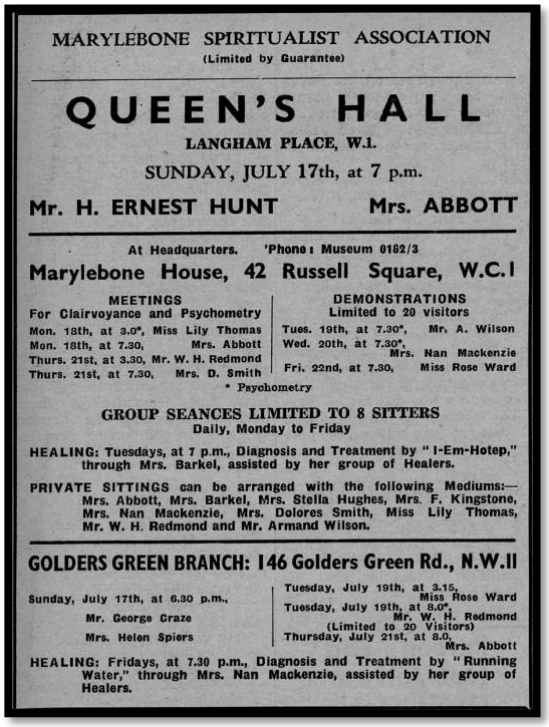
It would be fair to say that, of the two mediums cited above, Bertha Harris would be the more recognisable name; however, Agnes Abbott was well-known, especially in London. Six years after her sitting with Findlay she died, as published by Psychic News on November 14th, 1942:

TRANSITION OF AGNES ABBOTT

BY the passing of Agnes Abbott, last Sunday, Spiritualism has lost the services of a medium who has given evidence and comfort to mourners for over 30 years.

She was engaged to give clairvoyance at the Golders Green branch of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association on that day. She looked forward to the engagement, the first after a fortnight's rest caused by her having ptomaine poisoning. She seemed very bright in the morning and suddenly collapsed in the afternoon.

A quiet and almost retiring personality, Mrs. Abbott was regarded by the M.S.A. as one of their best mediums. She worked on their staff for the past few years, and regularly gave clairvoyance at their Queen's Hall services. The many hundreds who had private seances with her testified to the high standard of evidence that came through her trance mediumship.



MARYLEBONE SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION
(Limited by Guarantee)

QUEEN'S HALL
LANGHAM PLACE, W.1.
SUNDAY, JULY 17th, at 7 p.m.
Mr. H. ERNEST HUNT — Mrs. ABBOTT

At Headquarters. 'Phone: Museum 0162/3
Marylebone House, 42 Russell Square, W.C.1

MEETINGS For Clairvoyance and Psychometry
Mon. 18th, at 3.0*, Miss Lily Thomas
Mon. 18th, at 7.30, Mrs. Abbott
Thurs. 21st, at 3.30, Mr. W. H. Redmond
Thurs. 21st, at 7.30, Mrs. D. Smith
* Psychometry

DEMONSTRATIONS Limited to 20 visitors
Tues. 19th, at 7.30*, Mr. A. Wilson
Wed. 20th, at 7.30*, Mrs. Nan Mackenzie
Fri. 22nd, at 7.30, Miss Rose Ward

GROUP SEANCES LIMITED TO 8 SITTERS
Daily, Monday to Friday

HEALING: Tuesdays, at 7 p.m., Diagnosis and Treatment by "I-Em-Hotep," through Mrs. Barkel, assisted by her group of Healers.

PRIVATE SITTINGS can be arranged with the following Mediums:— Mrs. Abbott, Mrs. Barkel, Mrs. Stella Hughes, Mrs. F. Kingstone, Mrs. Nan Mackenzie, Mrs. Dolores Smith, Miss Lily Thomas, Mr. W. H. Redmond and Mr. Armand Wilson.

GOLDERS GREEN BRANCH: 146 Golders Green Rd., N.W.11

Sunday, July 17th, at 6.30 p.m., Mr. George Craze, Mrs. Helen Spiers
Tuesday, July 19th, at 3.15, Miss Rose Ward
Tuesday, July 19th, at 8.0*, Mr. W. H. Redmond (Limited to 20 Visitors)
Thursday, July 21st, at 8.0, Mrs. Abbott

HEALING: Fridays, at 7.30 p.m., Diagnosis and Treatment by "Running Water," through Mrs. Nan Mackenzie, assisted by her group of Healers.

DAUGHTER OF A PIONEER

Mrs. Abbott came of a psychic family. She was the daughter of Albert Bessant, a medium well known in the North of England during the end of the last century, and one of our pioneers in this country. Her two sisters, a brother and her two daughters are also mediumistic. She was reared in a Spiritualist atmosphere and attended the Lyceum when she was five.

In those days, hostility to Spiritualism in Middlesbrough, her home town, was such that the Lyceum children were stoned by other children as they went home. To prevent injury, the Lyceum leader used to take the children home.

At the age of 14, Mrs. Abbott joined her father's home circle and developed so rapidly that a year later she was able to give trance addresses.

For five years she gave her services without making any charge to those who sat in her seances.

The funeral service was arranged to take place on Friday of this week at Hendon Park Cemetery at 2.30 p.m. Because George Craze, president of the M.S.A., is ill in hospital, it will be conducted by Nan Mackenzie,[14] one of her medium-colleagues.

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Ernest Oaten, editor of the Two Worlds, further noted (edited) in his issue dated November 13th, 1942:

Promoted—Mrs. Agnes Abbott

Mrs. Agnes Abbott, one of the staff mediums of the Marylebone Association was called suddenly and tragically to the higher life on Sunday, November 8th at 4-30 p.m. The M.S.A. thus loses one of its most efficient workers. Some weeks ago she contracted ptomaine poisoning, but after a rest in the country had made apparently a complete recovery. On Sunday last she was putting on her clothes to journey to Golders Green, where she was due to take the services, when she mysteriously collapsed and passed to the world with which for many years she had been familiar.

I remember her and her brothers and sisters as children in the Lyceum well over 30 years ago. She began to practise mediumship in her teens and was the centre of the family home circle in which she was developed. Her passing revives memories for me, for I had the melancholy task of interring the remains of her parents and her sister Hester.

Never constitutionally strong, her convictions and pluck were evidenced when London was subjected to severe bombing. She refused to leave town and insisted on sticking to her post and carrying on her duties—whatever happened.

In offering my sympathies to her husband, her brother and sister (who I believe are all that are left of a long family) I offer her my congratulations on her life and work and cherish memories of a family who were always loyal to the cause.

A post mortem revealed that Mrs. Abbott passed from heart failure.

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Agnes Abbott, known for her work as a mental medium, on occasion worked as a physical medium; however, rightly or wrongly not all reports were met as favourably as the many years of her mental platform work, trance, etc. I mention this only briefly with a short quote below from the historian Malcolm Gaskill; as readers of Psypioneer, and now Pioneer, will know, I try to publish both sides of any story to give an even, *fair*, balanced, accurate and referenced account whenever possible. The allegations of fraud regarding Abbott surfaced around the mid/late 1930s possibly, all primarily involving the psychical researcher Mollie Goldney: [15]

[14] See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 5: "Spiritualist Healers of the Past – Nan Mackenzie".

[15] **Society for Psychical Research**:

"Goldney joined the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in 1927, having become intrigued with Indian firewalking. She joined its governing council in 1942, served as its secretary from 1949 to1957 and was later appointed a vice-president.

"In addition to her work in the SPR, Goldney worked with Harry Price at his National Laboratory of Psychical Research, assisting with the investigation of such mediums as Rudi Schneider and Helen Duncan, whose trial for witchcraft she attended."

"Mollie Goldney, at this time also active in the IIPR where she participated in the exposure of a medium from the LSA, Agnes Abbott. Breaching séance etiquette, Mollie took an illicit infra-red photograph in the darkness, which showed a 'floating' luminous trumpet stuck on the end of Mrs Abbott's thumb, and on a separate occasion spotted 'ectoplasm' poking out of her dress. Mrs Abbott, whose cod-Irish control 'Pat' would *pat* sitters, was induced to sign a confession, but soon cried that the photographs had been faked; her husband a bullying drunkard, went on record saying: 'As God is my witness, I'm honest as the day." [16]

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Editor's Note:

The above claim of fraudulent mediumship mentions the IIPR, which stands for the "International Institute for Psychical Research", which was formed in 1934 for the purpose of investigating psychic phenomena on strictly scientific lines; it enrolled a number of distinguished scientists both in an active and in a consultative capacity. Arthur Findlay was the IIPR chairman and an Honorary Vice-President. [17]

Also noted are the initials LSA, which stood for the "London Spiritualist Alliance", where Findlay was briefly its president in 1934; [18] today it is called the "College of Psychic Studies", still situated at 16 Queensberry Place, South Kensington.



What is so striking about the claim of fraud involving Agnes Abbott is that Findlay still included the *Abbott séance with the return of his mother* in his 1955 autobiography, "Looking Back"; he would have been, no doubt, fully aware of the fraud allegations levied at Mrs Abbott made by or through the IIRP and the LSA by Kathleen Mollie Goldney. Given that Findlay was still associated with these societies, and no doubt with their members and his colleagues, he still published the sitting with Agnes Abbott with full praise to her mediumship, albeit in connection with her mental mediumship as published in this article! [19]

Further, the editor of the Two Worlds, Ernest Oaten, in his obituary of Agnes Abbott quoted above speaks fondly of their long association: "I offer her my congratulations on her life and work and cherish memories of a family who were always loyal to the cause." Oaten, former SNU President, was well known for his distaste of fraudulent mediums and publicly denounced them in the Spiritualist press, as

[16] Hellish Nell, Last of Britain's Witches, published 2001: Chapter 5: Changing Fortunes, pages 171-172.

[17] For further information see Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 2: "Whatever happened to the British College? - Psychic Science" & "The International Institute for Psychic Investigation (IIPI)".

[18] See Pioneer, Volume 9, No. 5: "Findlay Resigns from The L.S.A."

[19] Firstly, in Psychic News 1950, as published in this article.

did Maurice Barbanell, the editor of Psychic News; his obituary, also quoted above, tells a similar story: “Mrs. Abbott was regarded by the M.S.A. as one of their best mediums.”

Further still, after the allegations concerning Agnes Abbott, she continued as one of the staff mediums at the well-respected “Marylebone Spiritualist Association”. Findlay was probably more closely associated with the MSA than any other society, which lasted for some decades; the image shows J. Arthur Findlay addressing the MSA in 1952. [20]

The family history of Agnes Abbott does not stop with her death in 1942: it can be noted from Barbanell's obituary in Psychic News:

> Mrs. Abbott came of a psychic family. She was the daughter of Albert Bessant, a medium well known in the North of England during the end of the last century, and one of our pioneers in this country. Her two sisters, a brother and her two daughters are also mediumistic.

Further, Oaten in the Two Worlds notes:

> “I remember her and her brothers and sisters as children in the Lyceum well over 30 years ago.”
>
> “Her passing revives memories for me, for I had the melancholy task of interring the remains of her parents and her sister Hester.”
>
> “In offering my sympathies to her husband, her brother and sister (who I believe are all that are left of a long family)”.

—~—☼—~—

A few years after Abbott’s death in 1942, in the March or April of 1946 a home circle was developed; in some references the circle is referred to as the Shipman’s Circle, founded at the suggestion of Sydney Shipman and formed in Middlesbrough.

The medium was Agnes Abbott’s younger sister, Minnie Harrison; I have noted that, according to Ernest Oaten, who had known the family for over three decades, only one younger sister was still alive to his knowledge, presumably Minnie.

It is recorded by Minnie Harrison’s son, Tom Harrison:

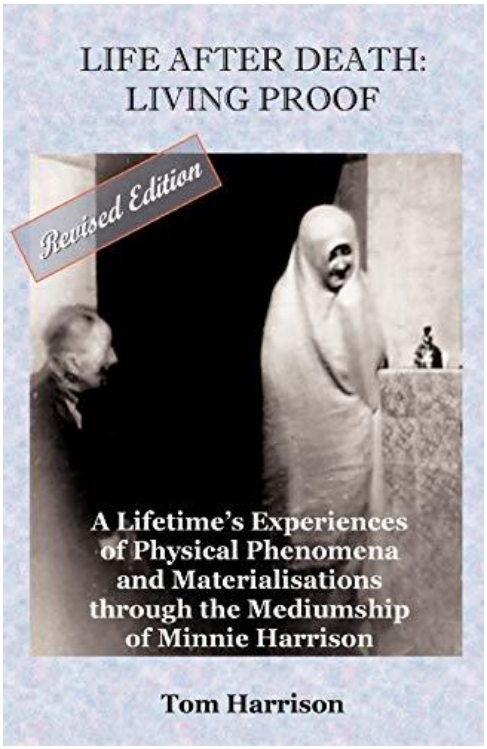
> “On the 7th December 1946, to our great delight and not a little wonderment, they achieved their aim and my Aunt Agg materialised!”

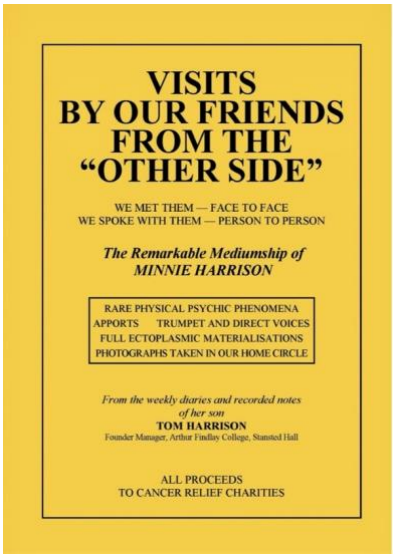
[20] The Marylebone Spiritualist Association, founded in 1872, today known as the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain (SAGB), now situated at 341 Queenstown Road, Battersea, London. The photograph is taken while lecturing on “The Effect of Religion on History” to the Marylebone Spiritualist Association on August 27th, 1952. For further information please see Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 1: “Visit to the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain”.



Aunt Agg is claimed to be Minnie's elder sister, Tom Harrison's auntie—Agnes Abbott—the materialised (cropped) image as shown.

The circle is today better known as the "Saturday Night Club", given that the circle was held generally on a Saturday night. The story of the various phenomena which took place is told by the medium's son, Tom Harrison, and the booklets are available at various outlets.



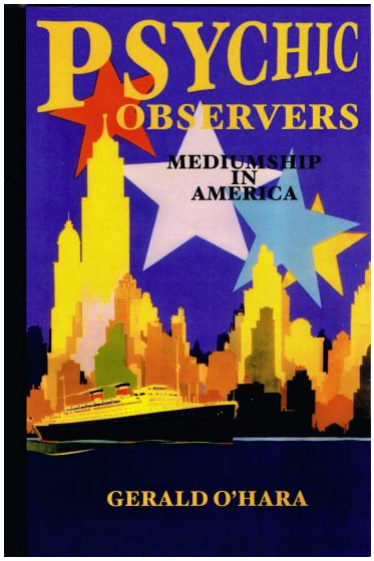


PSYCHIC OBSERVERS

Mediumship in America

By Gerald O'Hara B.Sc.

Book Review by the editor:



Many who have researched, for example on the Research & Study weeks at the Arthur Findlay College, or those who over the years have read Psypioneer, or in the last ten years the SNU Pioneer, would be somewhat familiar with the names of some of the British Spiritualist journals of the day, for example The Two Worlds, Light, The Medium & Daybreak, and Psychic News. In addition, they may be aware of some of the editors who brought us the news, for example Emma Hardinge Britten, James J. Morse, Ernest Oaten, James (Jas) Burns, Stainton Moses and Maurice Barbanell. Naturally some of these journals started in the 1870s/80s and have brought to life many of our pioneers, some of whose names we would probably have never heard or known little about them. These journals have tracked our history, recorded our events, the opening of our societies and churches, and so much more.

However, if we were to change our focus to America and name some of their journals and editors, many indeed would struggle on this side of the water, albeit some are mentioned in Psypioneer and the Pioneer. Historian Gerald O'Hara has significantly helped to change this with his latest book, "Psychic Observers"; this is, in fact, the third of a series of books focusing on "Mediumship in America". The first book in this series is "I Come to the Garden" in 2017, followed by "Ethel Parish Post" in 2020, which brings the reader to "Psychic Observers", published this year.

The book focuses on what may be referred to, or at least likened to, the American version of the London-based "Psychic News"; one of the leading American publications at around the same time was the "Psychic Observer". The author notes in his introduction:

> The story of mid-twentieth-century American Spiritualism stands on the cusp of memory. The newspaper, the Psychic Observer, and its founders are forgotten. The leading figures of the 1930 to 1963 era have passed into history, and few recall the events, personalities, and organizations. Names that once were nationally known and whose mediumship had a star-like quality are nearly forgotten. The mediums who were the "must-sit-with" sensations of their day had glamour and magic; their story and that of the twentieth-century Spiritualist movement is fading.
>
> "Psychic Observers" is the story of Ralph and Juliette Pressing and the newspaper they started. From 1938 to 1963, the Pressings were at the heart of American Spiritualism. The first four chapters are a biography of Ralph and Juliette Pressing, and the narrative follows their timeline. It is also the newspaper's story; thereby, a series of snapshots of the Spiritualist movement as chronicled through the newspaper reports. In each chapter, the topics the newspapers covered are sub-headed in bold.
>
> The book is not intended to be a comprehensive survey of the mid-twentieth-century Spiritualist movement, but it does aim to be thorough. The portrait here is general and taken from the Psychic Observer. This portrait tells how Ralph and Juliette Pressing's newspaper interacted with the Spiritualist movement and its detractors. The organizations the Spiritualists established, and the role played by leading officials, speakers, and mediums are the stuff of this book. In aiming for a broad picture, the author, in researching

this work, has collated information in the appendices that have not previously been presented. The approach is to create an image of a movement and its significant players as contemporaries saw them. It is intended that an avid, contemporary reader of the Psychic Observer would recognize the portrait. This book was their world.

Who were the Psychic Observers? The first witnesses are the writers who passed on their and other people's experiences within the movement. Through Psychic Observer's pages, a picture emerges of a movement at a particular time, i.e., 1938 to 1963. All aspects of the Spiritualist movement were covered in the pages of the newspaper. Ralph Pressing complained that being the editor of a Spiritualist newspaper was stressful. The stress came from dealing with controversial issues, such as skeptics, frauds, and attacks on Spiritualism. This book looks at the controversies of the day without ducking or whitewashing the unsavory aspects. Officials and mediums also wrote their stories. Ralph and Juliette Pressing wrote of their background in the movement. Local churches wrote of their weekly activities, including services, visiting speakers, and celebrations. The heart of the Psychic Observer was the reports of mediumship. The news frequently originated at the annual Spiritualist summer camps and conventions. Background information on the organizations of the Spiritualists was often linked to accounts of séance activities.

International Spiritualists' voices are included, especially that of the British "Psychic News." British journalists visited their American cousins and wrote accounts of the Spiritualist camps, mediums, and séances. The British psychic press reports were informative and occasionally critical. Friendships grew between the Pressings and the overseas Spiritualists, mainly the British. The encouragement and example of the British Spiritualist press were essential factors in inspiring a new, national American Spiritualist newspaper. The visits by American Spiritualists in the 1930s to Great Britain created important connections for the new newspaper. The Psychic Observer used articles from other newspapers that proved crucial in the newspaper's success. On occasion, Maurice Barbanell, editor of "Psychic News," could be critical of the American newspaper and its editors. The relationship between the Pressings and Maurice Barbanell, which had been close, soured, and after 1953 all contact ceased.

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The author in his above-quoted introduction outlines very well the purpose of his book; it without doubt reunites the reader with the now forgotten path of the unique history of mediumship and Spiritualism in America at this period, giving an informative journey throughout the book's 290 pages with some illustrations. The growth of American Spiritualism, where of course the movement started and picked up pace in the 1850s, in many ways differed from our British history. Whereas in America one path from its very early days was often demonstrated from the many Spiritualist Camps which formed, some names are more familiar like Lily Dale, Silver Bell and Chesterfield, to name but a few.

The book generally references the all-important material sources; "Psychic Observers" is full of interesting information and facts. For the more avid reader, for example, we find statistics on the growth of Camp Chesterfield between 1917 and 1947, a list of American direct-voice and trumpet mediums from 1918 to 1988, etc. The book, in my view, is an essential read to broaden the horizon of mediumship in American Spiritualism. Some of their exponents we will be familiar with, but with many of them readers will hear themselves saying, "I've never heard of them", albeit in their day they were as famous as some of our loved and famed pioneers. Furthermore, Gerald O'Hara has made available some archived issues between the years 1943-1961 of "The Psychic Observer". [21]

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[21] Psychic Observer Archive: https://www.psychicobserverarchive.org

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