the PIONEER

Volume 11, No. 3: 2024

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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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Special thanks to Charles Coulston for his work in sub-editing this issue

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"STANSTED HALL"

How many Stansted Halls have there been?

It is considered that there were three Stansted Halls, although it is not a precise, referenced history by far. The *first* Stansted Hall is said, in several reports, to have been built on the location below the lake near to the church and close to where the J. Arthur Findlay monument is situated today. Richard de Montfichet, who owned the Stansted estate, died in 1258, when the Stansted estate reverted to his sister/s. Stansted Castle was his residence until it was laid siege to in 1216; it is suggested that this is when he built the first Stansted Hall. However, I find no confirmation, dates or referenced details available on the building or existence of Stansted Hall I being built. A large building or buildings may, of course, have pre-existed on or around the said location, etc. of the first alleged Hall before the castle itself was destroyed or damaged. The fate of the *first* Hall is again uncertain; some claim it was burnt down in the 1600s.

If we jump the line of succession of the Stansted estate to Sir Francis Hubbard, who in 1615 sold the estate to Sir Thomas Myddleton (sometimes spelt Middleton), we are on a safer foundation, as it appears that it was this gentleman who built, or at least started, the *second* Stansted Hall. Sir Thomas Myddleton died in 1631; the Myddleton family, however, remained for several generations until circa 1715, when, after around a century, the Myddleton male line died out. The estate was then purchased by Thomas Heath, then passed on to his son Bailey Heath, and, finally, to Bailey's own two sons, firstly to William, then Bailey.

William took over the estate and Stansted Hall in 1760 until his death in 1797; it is during this period that we fall on more solid ground as to the location of the building, engravings, paintings and references of Stansted Hall II. However, the various images of the building are mostly undated and not referenced, and they are not necessarily the *correct* images of the same building!



This image can be found in the present Stansted Hall, which is said to have been a Jacobean-style building; interestingly, the name 'William Heath' is clearly noted and can be dated to 1770. Stansted Hall II was close to the church: the said Stansted Hall I would have been on the other side of the Parish Church. Looking at this image, 'St Mary's the Virgin' would be on the right-hand side of the Hall.

As to the confusing remark, "not necessarily the *correct* images of the same building", the above image does not represent correctly the massive building of Stansted Hall II. Other images were often used as shown below:

The watercolour shown here is a similar image at a distance to the engraving above, but, again, it is not fully representative of Stansted Hall II—the tower on the far right through the trees as seen is the Parish Church





William Heath commissioned Humphry Repton, a well-known English landscape designer for commissions for the gentry, aristocracy and wealthy landowners. Repton claimed that he designed around 400 estates, but it was, however, up to the client to implement his designs, plans, recommendations, etc., which were given to the client in his famous Repton 'Red Books'.

The Red Book would be presented to the client in a red morocco leather binding; it would start with a ground plan summarising his ideas and a description of the client's property, commenting on its attractions and/or defects and suggesting improvements. This would include the approach to the house, features of the landscape, etc., all of which would be discussed in separate sections. The book would be beautifully illustrated with watercolour illustrations, sketches, maps and so forth. Some of the watercolours would be with overlay, with the use of a flap attached; this was to show the client his recommendations, before and after. Repton regarded the Red Book as the working plans for his designs.

William Heath's Red Book has the inscription to 'William Heath, esq.': The 'Introduction' is signed by Repton and dated 2-4 December 1790 at Stansted Hall and February 1791 at Hare Street by Romford. (As appears in the original Red Book.) The Red Book is held at the Essex Record Office, reference: D/DQ 29/1. The images shown further down in this article are 'Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office', to which I am most grateful for their help in this article.

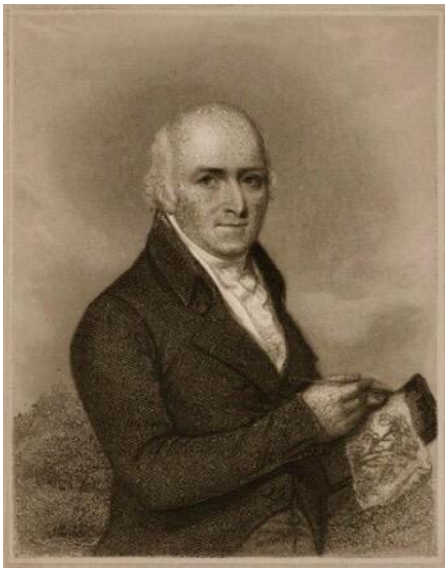
Further:

The Garden Trust website is focused on gardens and landscapes at every scale: from heritage landscapes to private gardens and public roadside verges. This site also holds some interesting information regarding: "C18 timbered landscape on which Repton had given advice and produced a Red Book". I quote:

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

"In 1615 Sir Thomas Middleton, Lord Mayor of London, bought Stansted park and built Stansted Hall, where the Middleton family lived for seven generations before the male line died out in 1715 and the estate was sold to Thomas Heath, a captain of the East India Company. It was William Heath, grandson to Thomas, who consulted Humphry Repton in December 1790 on improvements to the park and house. Repton spent three days at Stansted, and his bill for this, together with his travelling expenses, amounted to £14 3s 6d.

"Repton suggested changes to the access road to enhance the views of approach to the house, and the building of a lodge at the entrance to the park. The park boundary would be pushed south-west in a graceful curve, while the new approach would skirt the vicarage (hidden by plantation) before revealing the house. He felt that emphasis should be given to the foreground, rather than to distant views, as the setting of the house stood on an eminence 'so broad, that in looking from the house very little irregularity of grounds is seen; and consequently the views should be treated in some degree the same as if we were considering a flat; in which distant views are seldom worth obtaining'.



"The pond was objectionable because it was on high ground, and 'Water on the top of a hill will always appear unnatural' but should remain, as it was useful, and could not easily be replaced by a lake in the meadow. The house was described as 'very large without any room', and in its current state looked like the ruins of a palace. To remedy this, and to enable an architect to make the house comfortable, the low tower, which had originally been designed as the centre of the façade, should be raised to correspond with the others, and 'finish the house at this place'. Repton concluded that the house would be much improved by a stucco wash: 'From a full conviction how much more important as picturesque a stone coloured building appears than one of red bricks...'.

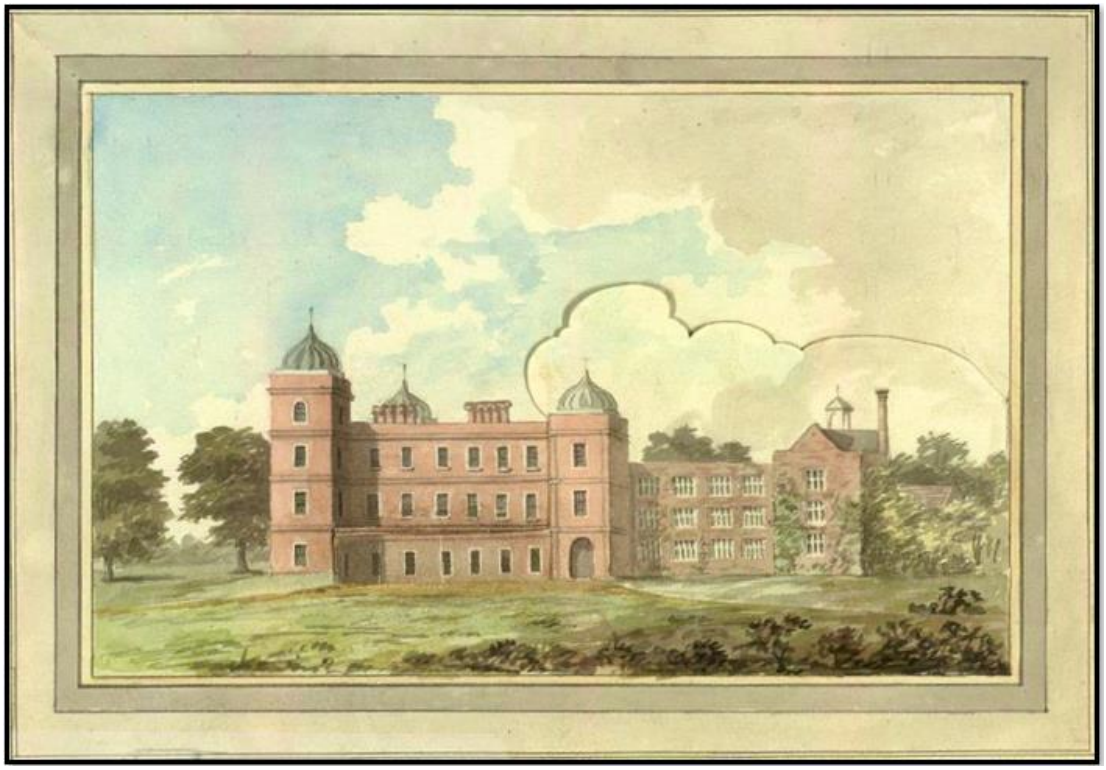
"Although Repton's advice regarding the house was not acted upon, it appears that the landscape was developed along the principles set out in his Red Book as field evidence, pointing to considerable improvements to the planting *c.*1795, is mentioned in a report by Nick Owen of Debois Landscape Survey Group (1999). A surprising aspect of the commission is that the road diversion suggested by Repton was carried out, but not until 1867, eight years before the Hall was rebuilt. This results in a confusing series of maps, where Repton's plan is consistent with the first edition Ordnance Surveys of the 1870s, while the tithe map of 1843 shows the road as it remained until 1867." [1]

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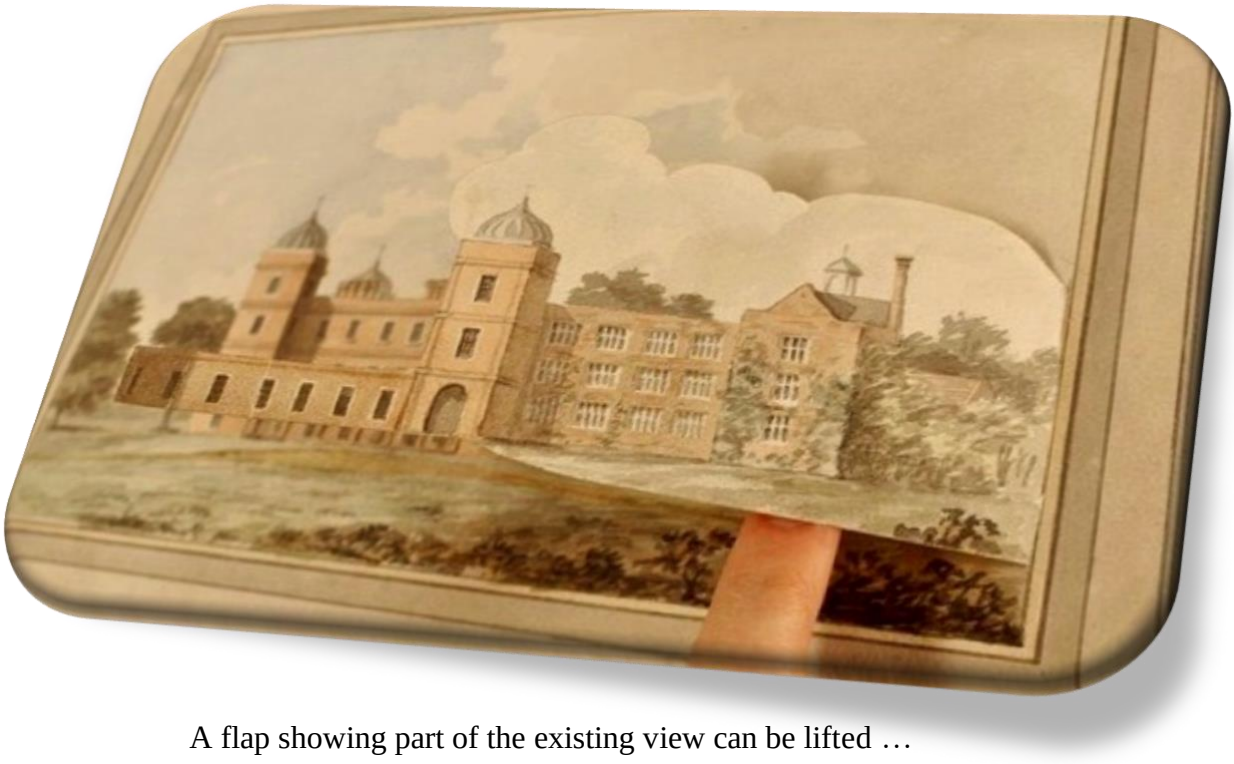
It has been noted previously that the drawing/engraving and the painting shown are not the *correct* images and did not represent the full size of Stansted Hall II; this is because both images are how Humphry Repton envisaged Stansted Hall II would look like *if his suggestions* were carried forward. However, Repton's advice regarding the house was not acted upon; the paintings shown below were painted by Repton in watercolours, as shown in his Red Book previously referred to. [2]

[1] The Garden Trust (TGT) website obtained its information from the Uttlesford District Council records (TL 525 245).

[2] Humphry Repton's Red Book of Stansted Hall can be viewed on-line at the 'Essex Record Office', as previously referenced. In their blog for March 2018 Repton's Red Book for Stansted Hall was featured in their 'Document of

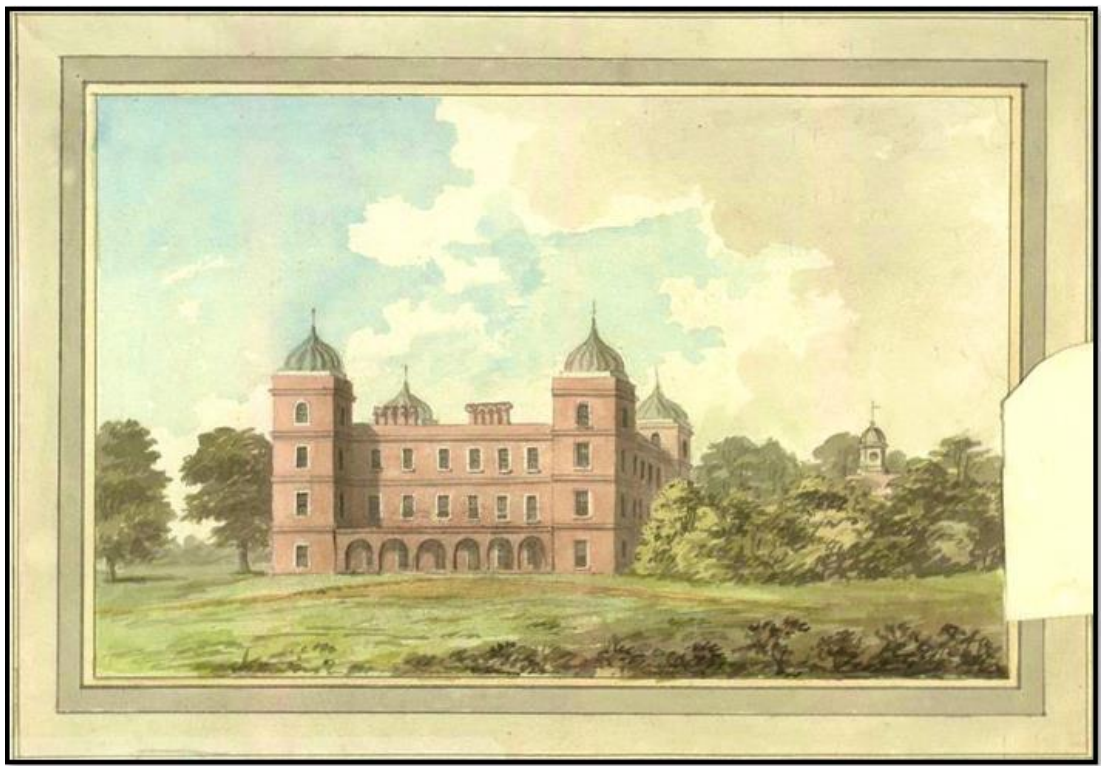


The Stansted Red Book includes one of Repton's 'lift the flap' pages. With the flap down, we see a watercolour of the house as it stood.



A flap showing part of the existing view can be lifted …

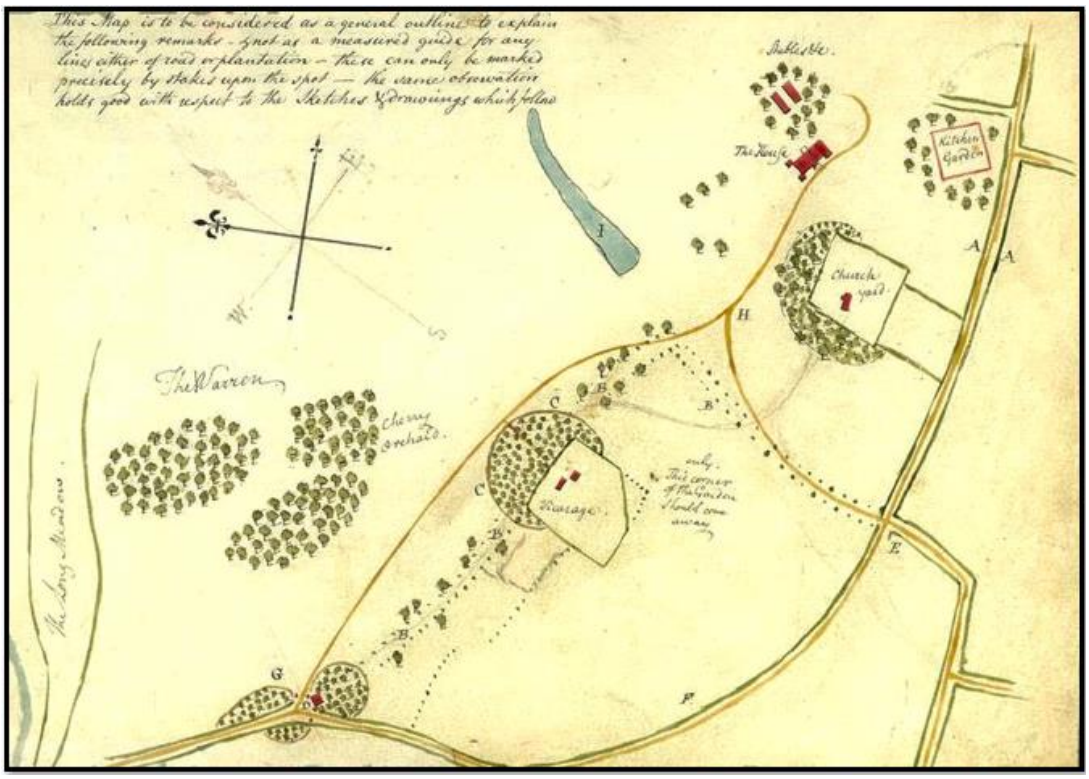
the Month'. I have used the image, as it shows the overlay with the use of a flap clearly with the finger and their captions under the images.



… to reveal to the client the changes Repton was proposing. In this case, the building up of the shorter tower to match the others, and concealing part of the building with planting.



Repton's impression of what Stansted Hall would look like if rendered in white stucco, which he considered a vast improvement on its red brick exterior



Repton suggested concealing the vicarage which was near the hall with a plantation, and rerouting the approach road to carefully craft the views seen by visitors as they arrived.

After William Heath died in 1797 the property passed to his brother Bailey. On Bailey's death in 1818 the estate was acquired by Ebenezer Fuller Maitland, purchased by his new wife's trustees at the time of their marriage. Fuller Maitland's wife did not like the house, so it became vacant and was demolished except for one tower. Here is a quote from 'The People's History of Essex', by D.W. Coller, published in 1861, pages 527-28:

> "… Stansted Mountfitchet, one of the largest parishes in the county, being nearly forty miles in circumference—containing within its boundaries a good village, the remains of an ancient town, and slight traces of the once mighty castle of the Mountfitchets, whose frowning towers awed the country round. This was the head of the barony of that great Norman family which, in the plunder of the Saxons, secured 48 lordships in the county. It continued so, however, but for a short period. The last of the house died without issue in 1258; the estates were divided, the castle of Stansted coming afterwards into the possession of the De Veres, and it became a sort of dependency of their chief seat of Hedingham.
>
> "Gradually it appears to have been demolished, or to have fallen to decay, as castles went out of fashion. A century ago some ruins of it remained, but these have disappeared or been overgrown; and near a small rivulet which falls into the Stort, at the south-west part of the parish, we can with difficulty trace the spot where stood its towers, its dungeons, and its keep. In place of the castle, Stansted Hall rose up as the home of the modern lords of the parish—Sir Thomas Middleton, a city magnate, who purchased the estate in 1615; afterwards of the Heaths, and lastly of the Maitlands,—William Fuller Maitland, Esq., being the present owner of the manors. It was a fine old mansion, on a lofty hill near the church, commanding a wide extent of view; but some years ago it was in turn deserted and demolished, save one of the towers, which still picturesquely crowns the height; and Stansted House was erected not far distant. It is a large elegant seat, surrounded by a fine park and pasture lands, and Mr. Maitland is much improving it.

"Bentfield hamlet, though over the border, in Clavering Hundred, is within this parish; the manor belongs to R. Gosling, Esq. Of the priory of Thremhall, which stood about two miles south-east of the church, on the border of Hatfield Forest, the only remains are parts of a stone wall by a garden-side. This house was founded by Richard De Mountfitchet, for black Benedictine canons, and was well endowed by his family and by the Earl of Oxford. It possessed the great tithes of the parish, with rights and lands in many parts of the surrounding district and several of its noble patrons, the Mountfitchets, the De Veres, and the Barringtons, were buried within its walls. Its value at the suppression was £70. 19s. 3d. The church was a small interesting old relic. Up to about thirty years ago, the carved stalls in which the priests repeated their matins and chanted their vespers remained entire along the north side of the chancel; and on the south was a huge pew with sliding lattice-work, in which the penitent could pray, as in a cage.

"The sacred edifice, however, was considerably enlarged by a public subscription in 1829; and though a few of the carved seats, and a rudely sculptured font, evidently of it antiquity, have been left, much of its olden character vanished at the touch of the modem trowel. On the south side of the chancel is a richly-decorated monument, rising 20 feet high, to Sir Thomas Middleton, who was buried here in 1631: and if we may judge from the diffuse Latin inscription, he was the perfection of a man and a merchant, and the model of a Lord Mayor. …"

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As noted, the Fuller Maitlands were living in a new residence, Stansted House, which had been built on the northern boundary of the park/estate, while Stansted Hall II lay vacant and demolished except for one tower. But other reports state that it was destroyed by fire, with just one tower standing, and left to fall into further ruin!

The image, "Remains of Stansted Hall", was drawn and engraved by J. Greg for 'Excursions Through Essex', dated April 1st 1819 and published by Longman & Co., Paternoster Row. The year after, the last male member of the Heath family died and the estate at some point was acquired by Ebenezer Fuller Maitland; this shows that Stansted Hall II was in ruins, partially demolished or destroyed by fire shortly after the Maitlands purchased the estate.



Ebenezer Fuller Maitland died in 1858 and was succeeded by his son, William Fuller Maitland, who commissioned a new Stansted Hall III, which work started in 1871 and was completed between 1875-78, depending on which report is read; the new Hall was built in Tudor style on a site slightly to the north-east of the old hall. William never lived in the new Hall, as he died in 1876. His son, also called William, sold the estate in 1922 to Sir Albert Ball, who in turn sold it to James Arthur Findlay in 1923.



The Findlay family moved into their new residence in February 1925. The information given throughout this article may, naturally, differ slightly from other reports. I have primarily taken the dates from Findlay's research, which he published in his autobiography, "Looking Back", first published in 1955, where Findlay notes with regard to the current Stansted Hall:

Its architect, Robert Armstrong, was a man of great talent, as his modern Elizabethan architecture fitted perfectly into the old surroundings. He erected a noble dwelling in keeping with the past history of its situation, but modern in every respect, fireproof, steel girders instead of wooden beams, everything where it should be, and its large windows give ample light to its spacious and well-designed rooms. Armstrong would have become an outstanding member of his profession, but he only lived long enough to carry out one other residence of the same size.

Some items were salvaged from the old Stansted Hall, which include two beautiful Adams fireplaces of Italian marble. I understand that other items include other fireplaces, a wooden fireplace surround, some sixteenth-century wood panelling, two cupolas from the towers, one on the main roof, "…adapted and made into a Bell Tower and incorporated on the roof of the Kitchen wing", and one placed "…on the Stable Block" (now the Britten House Annex). [3]

What can be concluded:

We know that Stansted Hall II, as I have referred to it, was build post-1615 by Sir Thomas Myddleton and/or completed by the Myddleton family (see further reference in the end notes) but it is lacking in dates and general information. I have referenced back to 'The People's History of Essex', 1861, by D.W. Coller, as quoted, when under the ownership of Ebenezer Fuller Maitland, that Stansted Hall "…was in turn deserted and demolished, save one of the towers"; however, it does not mention that it was destroyed or partially destroyed by fire, though the author does mention other such building being destroyed by fire in his book. The image, 'Remains of Stansted Hall', by J. Greg was published on April 1st, 1819 and shows just one of the towers standing at this date; the image itself shows no indication of its being destroyed or damaged by fire.

J. Arthur Findlay, in his autobiography, states that it was "burnt down" and that all that remains is "its underground drainage system". Other statements suggest that it burnt down in 1880, leaving just the tower, but we know the date to be incorrect from John Greg's 'Remains of Stansted Hall'; by 1880 Greg was certainly no longer working and most probably was dead. Possibly it was the final tower which was destroyed by fire, which seems more fitting, but who knows the final fate of Stansted Hall II!

[3] Taken from: "The History of Stansted Hall", 2010, by former SNU President Minister Duncan Gascoyne.

But how safe is the foundation that there was a Stansted Hall I?

This is said to have been built circa 1216 by Richard de Montfichet and has been accepted in the history of Stansted Hall, as noted at the start of this article. The claim of a Stansted Hall I appears only as a modern claim. Arthur Findlay, in his autobiography previously referenced, tells a different story. He states:

> I made a careful research into the history and previous owners of this property and, as I wish this preserved for future generations, I here give a copy of the document I prepared.

To cut the story short, William I took the lands of Stansted from their previous Saxon owners and gave them to Robert Gernon, one of his generals. William made him a baron, taking the name Baron Mountfitchet, the name of a village in Normandy, and that is why Stansted is called Stansted Mountfitchet; it was Robert Gernon who built the Castle on his land. History records that the Castle was attacked but the estate remained and continued, which is listed by Findlay through generations of benefactors; at one point the estate was confiscated and returned by Henry VII to the Earl of Oxford, with the estate continuing in the family to 1582.

Findlay states:

> "… as fortified dwellings became unnecessary, the first Stansted Hall was built, and the old castle fell into ruins. This happened, I should think, about the end of the 16th century from the appearance of the picture I have of the first Stansted Hall, …"

Which brings the reader to within a few years of when Sir Francis Hubbard sold the estate to Sir Thomas Myddleton in 1615. Further, it can be noted to endorse Findlay in the quotation published in this article taken from 'The People's History of Essex', 1861, by D.W. Coller:

> "… The last of the house died (Richard de Montfichet) without issue in 1258; the estates were divided, the castle of Stansted coming afterwards into the possession of the De Veres, and it became a sort of dependency of their chief seat of Hedingham.
>
> "Gradually it appears to have been demolished, or to have fallen to decay, as castles went out of fashion. A century ago some ruins of it remained, but these have disappeared or been overgrown; and near a small rivulet which falls into the Stort, at the south-west part of the parish, we can with difficulty trace the spot where stood its towers, its dungeons, and its keep. In place of the castle, Stansted Hall rose up as the home of the modern lords of the parish—Sir Thomas Middleton, a city magnate, who purchased the estate in 1615; afterwards of the Heaths, and lastly of the Maitlands,—William Fuller Maitland, Esq., being the present owner of the manors."

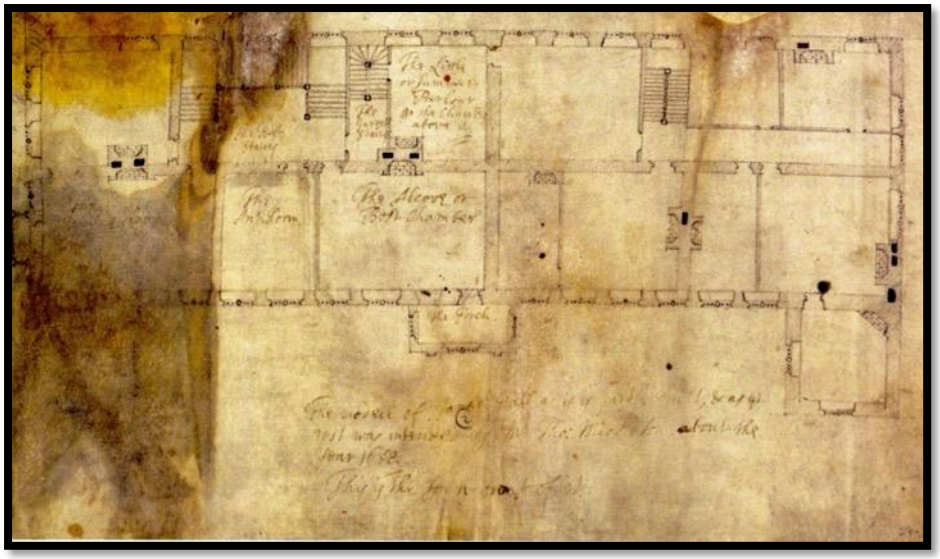
How many Stansted Halls have there been?

End notes:

A further reference. We know that Sir Thomas Myddleton purchased the estate in 1615 and said that he built Stansted Hall; he died in 1631. We can note below that the Hall was not completed by him and it fell upon another Thomas in the family to finish the work. This Thomas, spelt "Middleton" in the British Library archives, was the last in the family to own Stansted Hall, etc.; he died in 1710.

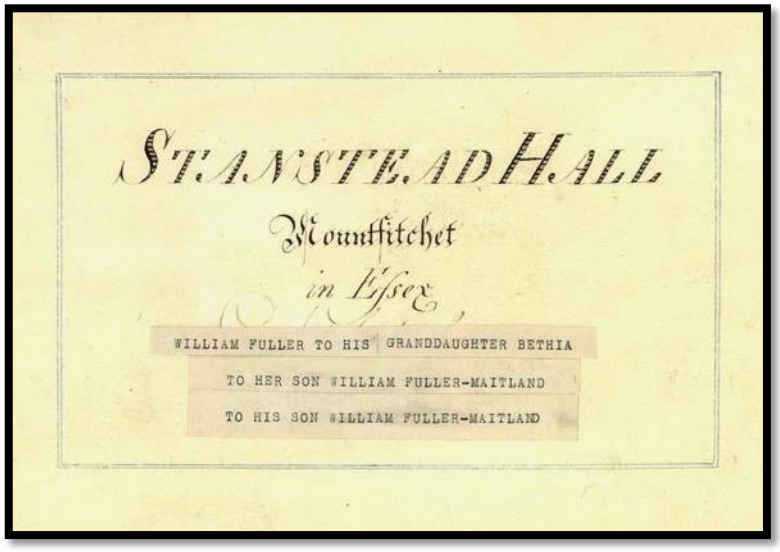
The British Library holds a drawing of a plan of Stansted Hall: [4]

> "The modell of Stansted Hall it is partly built, and as the rest was intended by Mr. Thomas Middleton [*sic*] about the year 1658: this is the south front of it."
>
> "Inscribed with title in brown ink below image about 1658
>
> "The drawing:
>
> "Pen and black and brown ink on vellum; sheet 19 x 34 cm"



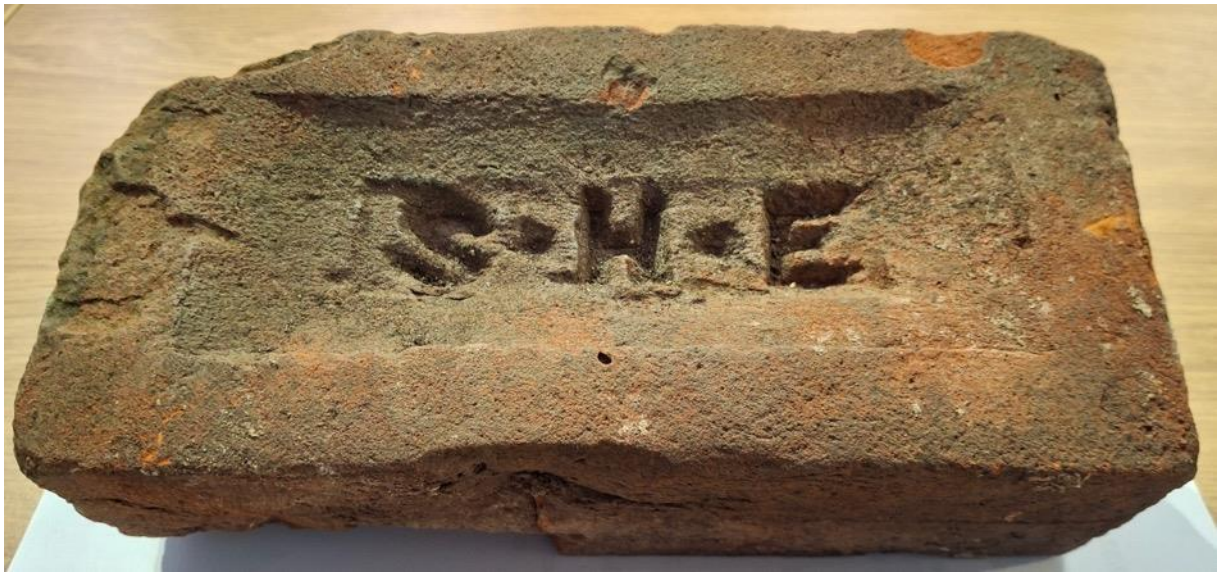
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Humphry Repton's Red Book of Stansted Hall was at one point in the possession of the Maitland family, with a note stuck over the original inscription to William Heath, Esq.



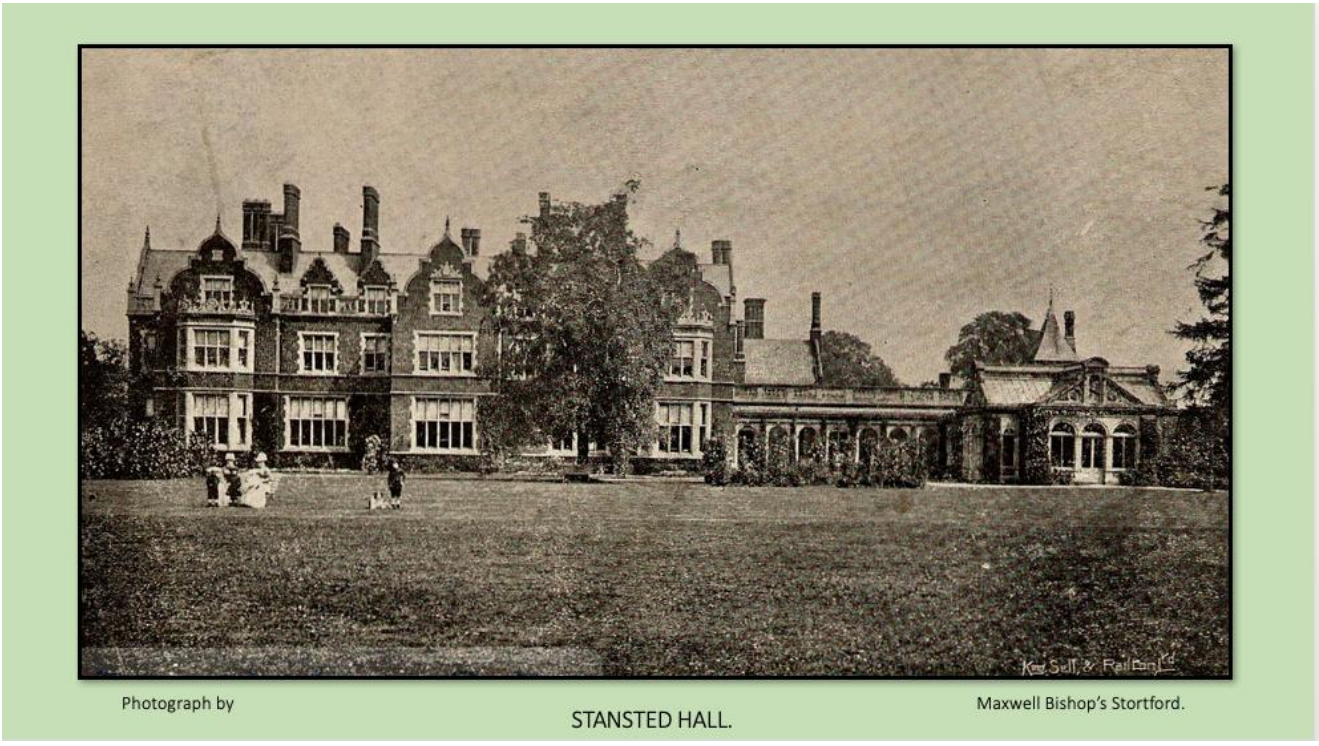
[4] [Reference - Maps] King George III Topographical Collection.

The remarks of the pond by Repton and the location shown on his map are recorded in part in this article. In the building of the present Stansted Hall this would have been extended by its builders by removing the clay to make the bricks. These bricks were called ‘SHE’ bricks and were marked as such, meaning ‘Stansted Hall Estate’.



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A postcard of Stansted Hall taken by Arthur Maxwell, 27 Potter Street, Bishops Stortford, Essex. This is dated between 1902 and 1912, the Hall being then occupied by William Fuller Maitland; as can be noted, the name ‘William’ was carried down. This image would show the Maitland family in residence; note the building at the right of the postcard which today is the Sanctuary. J. Arthur Findlay used this as an orangery or conservatory.



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Stansted Hall

Calendar House

Stansted Hall is *reputed* to be a Calendar House, which represents architectural features reflecting the seasons, the number of days, weeks, months in a year, etc. This style of architecture developed in the Elizabethan era, becoming prevalent in the Victorian era when the Hall was built. [5]

Originally with regards to the design of Stansted Hall:

365 panes of glass for each day in a year

52 chimneys for the weeks in a year

29 fireplaces for the Leap Year

12 hallways for the months in a year

7 external doorways for the days in a week

4 staircases for the seasons in a year



Stansted Hall circa 1910

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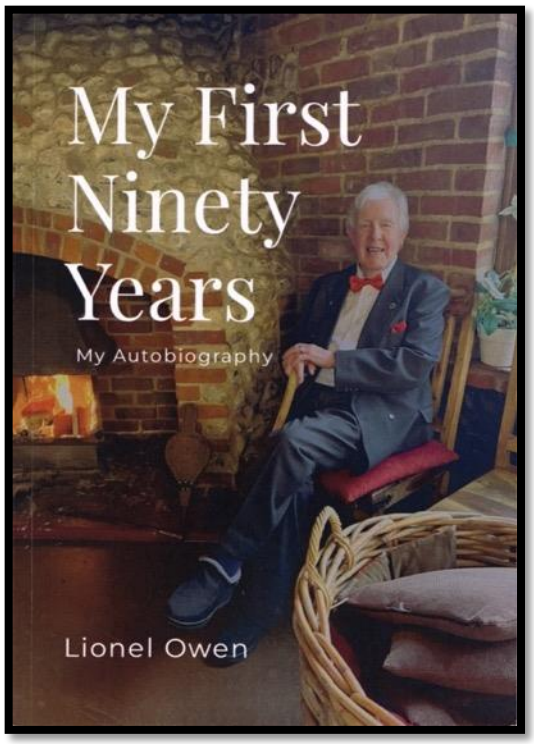
[5] How correct this statement is we cannot be sure, as to my knowledge we hold no record to confirm this. However, the number of chimneys and fireplaces is correct, as the extra chimneys are solely cosmetic to balance the architecture.

Lionel Owen

"My First Ninety Years: My Autobiography"

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Book review by Paul J. Gaunt:



Lionel Owen's autobiography, "My First Ninety Years", could be in part subtitled: 'An Autobiography of a Spiritualist', given that Lionel was born into a Spiritualist family at Seaforth, a suburb of Liverpool, in 1934. Like many other Spiritualists' children Lionel underwent a Naming Service, where the Spiritualist Minister [6] is inspired or through their mediumship gives the child a spirit name [7] from the spirit world, as Lionel notes (p10):

> "That name links the child to those in the spirit world who have spiritual charge of the child throughout its life."

The ceremony is symbolic, using flowers for the purity of the child; no water is used to cleanse the child, as it is generally accepted by Spiritualists that a child is not born in sin. The ceremony was performed by the then President of Liverpool National Spiritualist Church, Ernest Keeling. Keeling had a rich Spiritualist history: at the age of thirteen he joined the Lyceum at Daulby Hall, Liverpool, later becoming Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) President, and later becoming President of the International Spiritualist Federation (ISF) in 1948.

Naturally, the first few chapters of Lionel's autobiography are dedicated to his family life and the war years in England. As I noted, Lionel was born into a Spiritualist family, which dates to around 1888 with his paternal grandfather. This began with a work colleague giving him a pamphlet written by Emma Hardinge Britten, who was now living in Manchester. Emma's pamphlet was about how to contact spirit people; albeit he considered it to be ridiculous he decided not to dismiss it totally. After Lionel's grandmother one Sunday morning had left for church, leaving their seven-year-old son Robert and her husband at home, sitting at the kitchen table he followed Emma's pamphlet, which included starting with a prayer.

Lionel records (p39):

> "… Robert appeared to fall asleep. Grandfather was about to wake him up when he remembered that the pamphlet said if that happened not to try to wake the person but give them a pencil and some paper. When he did this, Robert began writing. When he stopped his father saw he had written in the Welsh language. This was grandfather's native tongue but Robert knew only a few words of Welsh as he was born and brought up in Liverpool and English was spoken at home.

[6] It would not be until the start of World War II that Spiritualist Ministers would be officially appointed and recognised and given the necessary permits to travel, etc. in war-torn Britain.

[7] This can be done at any age in one's life.

> "What my grandfather read astonished him. The message appeared to be from a relative of his who had died several years earlier. However the information given was known to only two people, my grandfather and the relative from whom the writing appeared to come. Even had he spoken Welsh, Robert would not have known about what was written. However, grandfather was a thorough person and thought if this really is my relative I can address questions to him in Welsh that my son will not understand. He then, in Welsh, asked several questions about family matters of which Robert could know nothing. Robert, still seemingly asleep, wrote the correct answers in Welsh, to each question. …"

Later a home circle was established, where various members of the Owen family developed their psychic faculties. Robert did not develop trance mediumship but developed healing in the form of medical clairvoyance, as in the case of Andrew Jackson Davis, Maria Hayden, etc. Like Keeling, who performed Lionel's spirit naming service, his uncle Robert would join the ranks as SNU President. [8]

The autobiography interestingly continues with Robert's younger sister, Lionel's Auntie Gladys, who developed trance mediumship. Miss Gladys Owen was the Spiritualists' Lyceum Union's (SLU) President from 1961 to 1965 and was also for many years President of Daulby Street Spiritualist Church. [9] It would be the same church in which Lionel as a child started his introduction into Spiritualism via its Lyceum, the equivalent of a Spiritualist Sunday school.

Lionel takes the reader through his varied travels to various churches and Lyceums, his development of mental mediumship, which started when he was just sixteen years of age, and his doubts, joys and experiences within the Spiritualist movement. While helping at a Cardiff Lyceum it resulted in a sitting with the famed materialisation medium Alec Harris, considered as the ultimate achievement in physical mediumship; during the séance Lionel's paternal grandmother materialised and held his hands.

Lionel first took the Spiritualist platform as a speaker at Norwich Spiritualist Church in 1952, seventy-two years ago! He later developed trance mediumship; always cautious, he notes that "we should test the spirit…" (p49). Much of this phase of development was at Longton National Church, with the encouragement of its President, Gordon Higginson; Lionel was at some point the Church's Vice-President. In the early 1980s Lionel would be known as a popular speaker and began lecturing, teaching mediumship, public speaking and demonstrating his mediumship publicly. It was during this period with his second wife Laura that he attended the Arthur Findlay College at Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex.

The tutors included Don Galloway, Mavis Pittilla and Jill Harland, a fair introduction to the Arthur Findlay College. In 1990 Lionel began his involvement with the International Spiritualist Federation at the Amersfoort, Holland Congress, which hugely impacted on him. At the following ISF Congress held in 1992 at Torquay under the presidency of Robin Stevens, who sadly died the following year, Robin persuaded Lionel on to the management committee of the ISF; after his untimely death at 51 Lionel would become the next President of the International Spiritualist Federation in 1993.

Lionel started teaching and was a course organiser at the Arthur Findlay College, as well as travelling across the UK and out to other countries, for example New Zealand, Australia and

[8] Robert was born at Bootle, Lancashire, on Oct. 27th, 1881 and was educated at St. John's Church Day School, which he left at the age of 12 years to become a wage-earner. When nine years of age, he was brought into contact with the Lyceum at Daulby Hall, Liverpool, and there began his lifelong friendship with Ernest Keeling. Robert Anderson Owen became SNU President from 1925 to 1928 and was followed by Ernest Allan Keeling (1877-1958) until 1930.

[9] Just prior to the official opening of Stansted Hall Gladys Owen in July 1966, as SNU Treasurer, accepted a temporary offer whereby she would move from her home in Bootle to take up residence at the Hall to act in a dual capacity as SNU Treasurer, as well as College Receptionist and hostess.

America, taking services, seminars, workshops and suchlike; given that Lionel was now retired as a building society bank manager, he could put more time and effort into his spiritual work.

I have only touched on some of Lionel Owen's key points in his autobiography, "My First Ninety Years"; I have not endeavoured to remark in any detail on the various avenues of mediumship Lionel has experienced in his many years within the Spiritualist movement. Although Lionel's family connection goes back to the 1880s, his book, in my opinion, is best referred to for the Spiritualist of today, as many of the mediums and workers mentioned by Lionel whom he has known and worked with are still today in living memory, either physically by the older generation of Spiritualists or by their reputation to the younger.

There is little substitute for knowledge and experience except that which is gained over many years of involvement and dedication; it will be clear to the reader that this is the case with Lionel Owen, whose wholehearted and unselfish work that he has relentlessly put into the Spiritualist movement over his long life is not in doubt. One can only imagine how proud his family are for his carrying on their work within the Spiritualist movement!

Not to forget that this is an autobiography and brings Lionel's personal, working and family life from his birth in 1934 to the present day with his wife Maria, his two sons, Chris and David, and his family; the final pages contain numerous photographs.

Of course, Lionel Owen's work is not finished: he is still active today continuing his work within Spiritualism.

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Editor's Note:

It is noted in the above review that Lionel's uncle was Robert Owen, who in 1927 became the Spiritualists' National Union President:

> At the twenty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Union, held at Caxton Hall, Westminster and the Artworkers' Guild, Queens Square, Southampton Row, London, on July 2nd and 3rd 1927 respectively, SNU President Robert A. Owen was presented with a new President's badge. For many years, a farthing coin [10] was the symbol of office carried by the President of the Spiritualists' National Union.[11]

The story itself turned out to be a bit of a mystery; eventually it was revealed, after the badge resurfaced, that it appeared to have been lost for a while. The story is told in Pioneer over various issues and can be searched for in the Pioneer 'SNU History' pdf booklet, details on the last page of this issue.

Today the President's Badge is worn by its President.

It can be further noted from the autobiography that Lionel Owen was elected the International Spiritualist Federation President in 1993 after the untimely death of its President, Robin Stevens (1987-1993), who died in the previous June at the age of 51. Robin regularly worked at the Arthur Findlay College and was closely linked with the SNU; he served for some years as President of the West London District Council. The photograph shown below was taken at the ISF Congress in Sweden in 1984 and shows its former President, Connie Ransom (1984-1987), together with her close friend, Robin Stevens.

[10] A former monetary unit and coin of the UK, withdrawn in 1961, equal to a quarter of an old penny.

[11] Quoted from Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 4: "The President's Badge".

A Brief History of the ISF:

The first International Congress I can reference was the Barcelona Congress, which is reported in Light, issue November 10th, 1888, page 552; it appears that there was an earlier Congress in Madrid in the early 1880s. Numerous other Congresses would follow, for example the "Spiritist and Spiritualist International Congress in Paris", which took place on September 9th, 1889, again reported in Light. The well-known Spiritualist, Thomas Everitt, was the delegate for the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA), under the presidency of William Stainton Moses. Everitt was of one of the Congress Vice-Presidents; in his address he spoke on the various phases of phenomena which he was acquainted with through the famed physical mediumship of his wife, who was probably the first direct-voice medium in this country. [12] Numerous World Congresses continued, with some positive attempt to form an International Union or Federation, but were interrupted by World War I.

Post-war, the Spiritualists' National Union significantly helped in the formation of the International Spiritualist Federation in 1922-23. From this time the Federation would continue in strength, only to be halted again by World War II. During this period the Federation's headquarters were at "*Maison des Spirites", la rue Copernic*, Paris, through the generosity of Jean Meyer (died 1931). The war would halt all activity; it appears that all the Federation records up until this period were destroyed in the siege of Paris in 1940 and the ISF never secured another headquarters of its own. It would not be until 1947 that a new start and a complete reorganisation began in the re-establishing of the Federation. At the SNU AGM in Bournemouth delegates "were to be invited by the S.N.U. in the hope of forming a new International Federation"; former SNU President Ernest Keeling was the Acting President of the ISF.

It is interesting to note that a year later, in the relaunch of the International Spiritualist Federation at Stansted Hall, Mr and Mrs Findlay would be involved. The full text below is taken from the forty-sixth SNU AGM, held in Harrogate in 1948, Annual Report, page 15:

> **INTERNATIONAL REPORT**
>
> At the International Week held at Bournemouth in July 1947 the initial steps were taken for the revival of an International Spiritualist Federation. It was agreed to hold an International Congress from the 4th to the 10th September, 1948 as part of the Centenary Year Celebrations. The Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C., has been booked for the week and invitations have been sent out to 25 countries. The Psychic Press in these countries has been notified. Specialist sections will be meeting, both in the mornings and afternoons, for "Psychic Science" and "Spiritual Philosophy." The evenings will be given over to a united session in the large hall. Suggestions for guiding the business of the Congress will be submitted by the Organising Committee, together with a tentative Constitution and proposals for the resumption of International activities.
>
> Mr. J. Arthur Findlay, M.B.E., will preside at the opening reception on Saturday, 4th September, to welcome the delegates. A season ticket for all meetings at 10/- will be available. During the Congress a visit will be paid to Stansted Hall, Essex, by kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Findlay (photo below). It has been agreed to assist delegates who are not able to meet their own expenses in this Country, owing to currency restrictions. Donations have already been received for this purpose but more will be very welcome, as well as practical offers of hospitality. Churches are invited to undertake responsibility for giving hospitality to at least one delegate.

[12] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 2: "Spirits Speak On The Telephone".



Soon after, the International Spiritualist Federation was again active under the presidency of Ernest Keeling; shortly afterwards their quarterly journal, "Yours Fraternally", first came into being, initially as a duplicated newsletter, with the first printed copy (No. 7, autumn) in 1950.

In about 1974 the ISF started to hold its "Fraternal Week" at the Arthur Findlay College, organised for many years by Connie Ransom; I believe that this continued until about 2003.



Connie Ransom & Robin Stevens

A Unique Opportunity Exploring Spiritualist History

Research — Study Weeks at the Arthur Findlay College



SINCE 2011, when I was appointed Curator of the Britten Museum & Library, I have endeavoured to use our archives for Research and Study within and outside the Spiritualist movement. This has been strongly achieved in one avenue since 2013 with the publication of the SNU Pioneer online journal. Over the last decade or so much research has been done by authors, education students, churches researching their history, psychical researchers and universities, their professors and students' dissertations on Spiritualist subjects.



Three Research-Study Weeks a year are available to book for a day, two days or a full week at a cost of £40.00 a day

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curator@snu.org.uk

Places are limited to around four students a day so that I can give as much attention as possible to each student. This is generally not a residential course but accommodation may be available if required –
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EVIDENTIAL MEDIUMSHIP

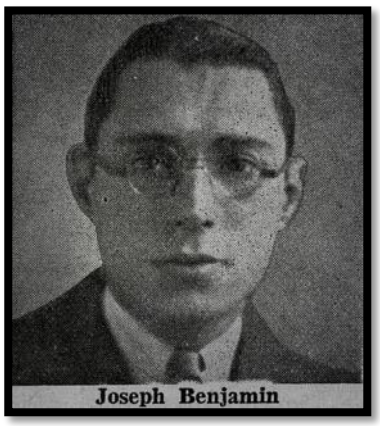
Joseph Benjamin

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One of the finest evidential mediums was Joseph Benjamin, who started to be publicly recognised in 1938. Joe was a young Jewish medium; the report below gives the reader some idea of Benjamin's early beginnings as a medium, written by another Jewish medium,[13] Maurice Barbanell, founder Editor of Psychic News, in which he published this article in the November 26th, 1938 issue:

EAST-END JEWRY HAS A REMARKABLE MEDIUM

In the heart of London's East End there is a remarkable young Jewish medium, Joseph Benjamin.


Joseph Benjamin

Though he is only 23, he has been associated with Spiritualism for twelve years. He is a fine trance medium and an excellent clairvoyant, an earnest Spiritualist who radiates sincerity.

Usually his seances never begin much before 10 p.m., for his work as a presser keeps him employed thirteen hours a day, and he seldom finishes before 9 o'clock. Yet such is his enthusiasm that he devotes three and four nights a week to holding seances and spreading our knowledge among the members of his own race.

Once a week, at his own expense, he hires a hall, where he gives trance addresses and clairvoyance, usually in Yiddish. So many of his audience are unable to speak English that he is contemplating the printing of a pamphlet in Yiddish telling what it's all about.

BREAKING DOWN ORTHODOXY

His labours are succeeding in breaking down that curious mixture of materialism and Orthodoxy which is so typical of the Jewish outlook on life. My work for Spiritualism provides me with striking contrasts. I have been to seances in a Belgrave Square mansion and in a miner's tiny cottage in desolate South Wales. I have been present at sittings where famous men and women have proved Survival.

Benjamin's sitters were all "obscure" people, but they were filled with the same thirst for knowledge that comes to nearly all human beings when "death" removes the ones they love.

Benjamin lives above a grocer's shop. To reach his small but scrupulously clean flat you make your way up the stairs, past cases of provisions and a bicycle. There was a warm welcome from his young wife and himself, and the inevitable cup of tea, our national symbol of hospitality, both before and after the sitting.

[13] At this time Barbanell was not known as a medium; he was known primarily as the founder Editor of Psychic News. Please see Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 6: "An extraordinary secret was held in the Spiritualist movement for over three decades: who is Silver Birch's medium?"

A LATE START

For the seance we went to another small room on the next floor used only for his mediumship.

It was some time after 10.30 p.m. when the seance began. And Benjamin conducted it with great reverence.

It was a night packed with evidence that life continues beyond the grave. There were scores of details to prove spirit identity, but most of it is too intimate to be printed. Apart from Benjamin's clairvoyance, there were a few trance controls, followed by "dead" relatives and friends of the sitters. Drama and humour were all mixed up in these astonishing séance talks.

A more than welcome visitor was my old friend, A. G. Newton, who referred to our last meeting in his Southampton home. [14]

Through the lips of the entranced medium I was greeted by an old Jewish acquaintance, a man named Tannenbaum, a Spiritualist I knew more than ten years ago. He was a great student of the Kabbala and a picturesque figure.

I well remember his excitement when he called on Hannen Swaffer at his Trafalgar Square flat. Tannenbaum apologised for not coming on the previous Saturday which, being the Jewish Sabbath, would have meant walking all the way from the East End.

As Swaffer had not asked him to call, he was puzzled by the apology.

Tannenbaum was a most learned man. He was indifferent to his appearance and wore, I remember, a black bowler hat and brown button boots.

Well, Tannenbaum spoke to me last week and in a few minutes gave me at least a dozen proofs of his identity—names and facts that the medium could not have known. He made references, to my first seance—incidentally this took place only a few streets away—mentioning some of the people who went there.

If I began to describe all the spirit evidence at this remarkable seance it would fill columns. Old friends of mine who had passed on were named, and they indicated their presence with messages.

FINISHED AT 1 A.M.

There were spirit greetings from those who had communicated with me at sittings with other mediums. And there were messages of comfort, cheer and guidance for some of the other sitters from their own loved ones. It was almost 1 a.m. when the seance ended.

Benjamin's wife told me that she was not a Spiritualist when she married her husband, but that his mediumship soon convinced her. There was one amusing story he told of how, when at Southend, he went for fun to a fortune-teller.

"You are a Spiritualist," she said to him. "What's more, you are a medium. *What can you tell me*?"

He gave her messages from her "dead" husband, which she accepted. In the end she said "Customers like you aren't of much use to me."

[14] Alexander George Newton was well known in the Spiritualist movement for some thirty years, mostly for his work at Southampton Church, where he was Secretary, and within the Spiritualists' National Union. In 1915 he was elected to the Council of the Union and was Vice-President. Newton died on September 22nd, 1938.

Already Benjamin has won local recognition, for the knowledge of his powers has spread by word of mouth to hundreds. He has fostered Spiritualism by forming home circles, of which more than a score are already in existence. Occasionally he has visitors from far-away towns who have heard of his mediumship. One memorable evening neighbours gasped when a Rolls-Royce arrived.

Rich or poor, however, Benjamin treats them all alike. He thinks only of his mediumship which can help the bereaved and spread what he knows is one of the greatest truths in the world.

M.B.

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A further two months later Hannen Swaffer published an article in Psychic News on January 28th, 1939, which gives, at least in my opinion, a feeling of the atmosphere which faced Spiritualism and those who represented it on the front line during these troubled times in our history; mediumship was indeed in high demand in the many avenues where it was demonstrated:

East End Takes Its Troubles To A Medium

SPIRITUALISM GROWS DESPITE POVERTY AND POLITICS

IN many parts of Britain, Spiritualism is making progress, not only because of the evidence it pours out at public meetings, but because of its philosophical and religious implications.

In the East End of London, stricken by poverty, a place of almost overwhelming despair, Joseph Benjamin, the young Jewish medium, finds himself the centre of political arguments, "Fascism v. Communism," and things like that, and attacks, from all sides, of clashing thought.

He is continually worried for help of a material kind. Many of the very poor are not concerned about their "dead." They are not thinking of an after-life.

They want money. They want a better job. It is no use talking about a better world to people who, living in a slum, are in the depths of gloom.

QUESTIONS THEY ASK

"When shall I win the Irish Sweepstake?" someone may ask Benjamin—in the middle of a religious address !

"Shall I break my partnership?" asks another.

"What about my coupon in Littlewoods' Pool?" is a question often heard.

"Will it be a boy or a girl?" is another.

Even one of Benjamin's most faithful supporters has, on occasion, interrupted the medium's guide while he has been teaching, putting into Benjamin's hand a letter and saying, "What shall I do about this?"

WHICH IS RIGHT?

A man followed Benjamin home, one night, in great bewilderment. A half-developed medium in the circle had told him he would not get a job at a synagogue. Benjamin, in trance, had told him he would.

"Which of you is right?" he kept on asking. Even when Benjamin got rid of him, he saw him standing in the middle of the road, still so puzzled that he nearly got run over.

There seems to have been much more faith in psychic happenings in orthodox Jewry than I thought. Benjamin not only tells me that people go for advice to rabbis exercising psychic gifts without calling them that, but he relates a story of a dream that is remarkable.

SPIRIT REVEALS BLUNDER

Hundreds in the East End still talk of the case of a man and a woman who died in the London Hospital on the same day, were laid on slabs near each other in a mortuary, and then got mixed, the woman's body going to Edmonton for burial, and the man's body to Plaistow, whereas it should have been the other way round.

The night of the woman's funeral, while the family were downstairs, "sitting shiva," the daughter dreamed that her mother came to her and said, "I was not here when they brought the coffin."

On three nights running she dreamed the same dream. All sorts of people were consulted, and, at last, the case was taken to a rabbi, who had the grave opened and the coffin examined. They found that the girl's dream was based on fact.

A Jewish friend who confirms this tells me that, in the southeast of Europe, Jewish people flock to an adviser called "The Good Jew," no doubt a man with half-developed psychic gifts. "It is not called Spiritualism," he said, "but no doubt it is the same thing."

So it was in the old Russia, I am told.

Before many of Benjamin's sittings, whether they are in a hall or in the room where his open circle is held, there are political arguments that sometimes continue even during the meeting. And they go on, long after it is over.

"Will you write us an article on Fascism versus Spiritualism?" demanded a man on the "New World Outpost"—as though the two could be compared. "Get it into 200 words."

ZEST FOR INQUIRY

The lesson to be drawn from all this is that eventually many thousands of Jews will be drawn into the Spiritualist movement. Jews have such a zest for inquiry. Jews argue so much.

The Jews are very emotional. If, at one of Benjamin's meetings, a woman gets a message which makes her cry, half the audience will cry. If, when Benjamin's guide controls him, someone laughs, they all laugh.

Then they start to argue, even during the trance address. Sometimes, too, as many as ten mediums will go into trance at the same time, mediums in various stages of development. Yet, all the time, Benjamin has to go on with his work.

"A LOT OF NONSENSE"

Sometimes, people's fears cause trouble. Once, the day after a sitting, a woman called up Benjamin's brother-in-law and said, "My evidence last night was a lot of nonsense." When, the same night, Benjamin and his wife were on their way to a meeting, they saw the woman walking up and down the pavement.

"I don't want to see her," said Benjamin. "It will disturb me. Besides, she may come along to the meeting and upset it."

"WONDERFUL EVIDENCE"

However, when he spoke to her, the woman said "I got wonderful evidence last night. The reason I called up your brother-in-law and denied it was that I didn't want him to know it was true. It embarrassed me."

Now, this woman is a regular sitter.

Once, when Benjamin and his wife were due at a Jewish wedding, three women insisted on a reading. Benjamin, upset at being delayed, and finding them in his seance room, said, "What do you want?"

"Should I go to America?" asked one.

"Should my daughter get married?" said the second.

"What do you want?" Benjamin asked the third, who was quiet.

"I have come with the other two," she explained. "I am waiting for them."

"Then you should wait downstairs," said Benjamin, still annoyed.

"Go to America," he told the first woman. "You will be successful . . . . Yes, your daughter can get married"—this to the second woman—"and you can still wait downstairs," this to the third.

Now, this advice he gave them, without consulting his guide, just to get rid of them.

ALL WERE PLEASED

"I have never had such a good sitting in my life," wrote the first woman from America, some time after. "I have been very successful here."

The second woman's daughter married happily, and has a baby.

"The third woman is still waiting downstairs for all I know," commented Benjamin.

Then, at a developing circle, when four would-be mediums were sitting with a score of inquirers, Benjamin was surprised to find that two mediums under control both claimed to be the famous Rabbi Shaposnick, who, in spite of his Orthodoxy, practised mediumship on earth.

"How can you both be Rabbi Shaposnick?" asked Benjamin. Yet, strangely enough, both mediums in trance were reciting, simultaneously, the same Hebrew prayer. Afterwards, both uttered the same words in conversation at the same time.

"Is simultaneous control of two mediums by the same spirit possible?" he asks.

Once, a Gentile who came from Westcliff, after his boy had been successfully treated for consumption by absent healing, asked in spite of this, "How can I escape my income tax?"

"Don't pay it !" replied Benjamin, in fun.

A woman who was laughing, at one of Benjamin's public demonstrations, was suddenly told by him that her husband had been killed in a smash between a motorcar and a tramcar at Shepherds Bush.

"I am not satisfied," said the woman, whereupon Benjamin gave the man's name.

"But I don't want him," shouted the woman. "He gets on my blinking nerves."

Benjamin persisted, and told her she had a bald patch on her head. Upon this, the woman took off her bonnet and pointed to the bald patch, at which the large audience laughed.

I have myself sat four times with Benjamin, whose sincerity of purpose is vouched for by Silver Birch. A great future is prophesied for him in the East End, among his own people, by this guide.

For he is hard-boiled. He gets on with his job, in spite of all the drawbacks.

GUIDE LOVES SINGING


JOHNNY MILLER

His guide, Johnny Miller, who was killed in the war, belonged to Plaistow. He, too, understands these East-enders. He loves them to hold hands while he joins them in singing war-time marching songs.

He apologises for the uncouthness of his language. "There is no need for him to worry about that," said Silver Birch, when asked about it. "There are no bad words. It is what you mean by them. That guide is trying to help people. Therefore, what do his words matter?" [15]

A private sitting with Benjamin is an amazing experience. Evidence pours through, often for three hours at a time.

A STRANGE MIXTURE

Now and then, you get something very concrete. It is a strange mixture of trance and clairvoyance, after which Benjamin will sometimes do psychometry.

Although he is not now an orthodox Jew, he always starts his sittings with a prayer in Hebrew. His mother-in-law, who was a Spiritualist long before him, remains orthodox in spite of her added knowledge.

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The psychic drawing of Benjamin's Cockney soldier guide was done by the inspirational psychic artist Marcel Poncin in the above article by Swaffer; it further notes:

> "Jonny said the drawing was a good likeness, though Poncin has never seen him or a photograph of him. Confirmation was given by the guide in trance, before the picture was shown to the medium."

Marcel Poncin's first well-known image appears to have been the beautiful painting of Estelle Roberts giving clairvoyance, showing the communicators and her guide, Red Cloud; this was firstly reported in 'Psychic News', December 4th, 1937. The original painting hangs today in the corridor at the Arthur Findlay College. Shortly after, Poncin would paint the well-known image of Silver Birch, followed by others such as healer William (Billy) Parish; for further information please see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 6: "Marcel Poncin, psychic artist, passes on".

The above article stated: "A great future is prophesied for him in the East End, among his own people, by this guide", and indeed it came to fruition; Benjamin worked for well over four decades as a public medium. He became known for his stunning evidential mediumship,

[15] It can be noted in the Britten Museum & Library in the final shorthand scripts by the circle's scribe, Frances Moore, unpublished sittings with "Big Jump", publicly known as Silver Birch. Joe Benjamin and his wife, Kitty, were present on February 20th, 1981 (possibly again later). The guide's medium, Maurice Barbanell, died on July 17th, 1981 at the age of 79.

colourful platform delivery and a wonderful sense of humour in his demonstrations, earning himself numerous descriptions such as ‘exhilarating as champagne’ or ‘as rare as a fine liqueur’. Joe demonstrated at two London venues for decades, Sunday meetings at the Alliance Hall, Westminster and on Tuesdays at a hall in Kentish Town, London. The photograph shown in the the concluding article below was taken at the Alliance Hall, Westminster in 1977.

Pioneer has previously published in Vol. 3, No. 5: “Joseph Benjamin Tells: How I See The Dead”; to conclude this article on Joseph “Joe” Benjamin, below is a profile of the medium by the Two Worlds correspondent, Philip Paul, published July 16th, 1955:



JOSEPH BENJAMIN

IT has been said that all men are singular but some rate more singularly than others. Joseph Benjamin indisputably qualifies for inclusion in the latter category.

Short, slight of build, black-haired and with thick horn-rimmed spectacles that are so much part of the personality one feels they must have been on his nose when he was born on December 23rd some two score years ago, this effervescent east-ender mans a meteoric mediumship which swept him into the milky way of the psychic firmament only two years before the outbreak of the second world war.

The only son of a Whitechapel dress designer, he took an obvious course in entering the tailoring trade at the end of his schooldays.

WENT TO SCOFF

Then he heard about Spiritualist meetings that were held in neighbouring Hanbury Street. He is frank about the motive which took him and a friend to that humble hall: “We had the idea of creating a disturbance.”

It was a disturbance that was never created, for Joe surrendered to Spiritualism in the wonder of a message from a dead cousin—a communication from beyond the barrier of death whose positive details sent him home in a daze

The following week he returned. While he sat in the audience he went into trance. “I don’t know how long I was under, but when I came round the whole crowd was standing round me. One man told me I had given him a wonderful message from his dead father.”

From that point it was only a matter of time before he took his rightful place on the platform.

One evening, a woman among his audience asked him back to her home for a cup of tea. There, for the first time, he met her daughter and learned there was a son named Joseph.

Those who know him will recognise the unhesitant Benjamin in his next action, which, in his own words, was to inquire of the young lady: Would you like two Joes in the family?

WHIRLWIND WOOING

One might have expected such whirlwind wooing to reap results, but the lady was adamant. She replied to the effect that she would not marry a medium for all the money

in the world. Perhaps it was because Joe didn't possess all the money in the world that they were married soon after. Now they have a son of 16, Michael, who anxiously awaits the results of his matriculation examination.

Though he has demonstrated in all parts of the British Isles, Joe has never been abroad. He has no need to travel, for the world comes to him in the little house he occupies in the street of his birth just behind London Hospital.

Among the famous who have attended sittings with him—the walls of his tiny seance room are crowded with photographs and memories—of Frances Day, Charlie Chester, Adelaide Hall, Ruby Miller, Sir John and Lady Anderson, Edgar K. Bruce, Canon Marcus Knight, Dean of St. Paul's, Sir Robert Gower and Lucille Clayton, the "mannequin queen."

SHORT SHRIFT FOR SCEPTIC

But those who would see the real Benjamin in action cannot do better than visit the two London meetings where he demonstrates each week—Westminster's Alliance Hall on Sunday evenings and the Foresters' Hall, Kentish Town, on Tuesdays.



In this connection a word of warning: both halls are always packed half-an-hour before the meetings open. It is not uncommon for strong men to weep under the spell of this diminutive disciple of psychic debouchment, whose platform technique presents, simultaneously, the mannerisms of an auctioneer and the tender concern of a comforter.

Nothing disconcerts him. Once, during a demonstration, a man yelled, "You are a liar!"

"Oh, am I?" responded Joe to the interrupter, a complete stranger to him. "Well, I'll tell you this. You have just come out of prison after serving a five-year sentence!" The man was nonplussed. Jaw hanging open he admitted that Joe spoke the truth.

The pen of Hannen Swaffer has spread the news of his psychic brilliance. He has cooperated with psychic researchers.

Patting Major, his black Alsatian, he told me his ambition is to own a hall of his own and so avoid the wrath of caretakers when, as they invariably do, his meetings overrun their scheduled time. A lover of beauty, he says he has never picked a blossom in his life. He is as delighted as a schoolboy over new decorations being made in his home. A tiny garden, carefully tended, flowers behind the house.

AGAINST SEGREGATION

Believing that there should be no segregation in Spiritualism —"our halls are sanctuaries of truth for Christian and Jew alike"—he affirms his greatest desire is to spread psychic truths among all people.

Suddenly, over cigarettes and drinks, he begins giving clairaudience. He tells me I am shortly on holiday. Mrs. Benjamin intervenes to inquire, "What will the weather be like?"

Joe's brown eyes take on the sparkle that heralds the approach of some of his characteristic Cockney humour.

"How do I know?" he demands, "I'm a medium, not a barometer !"

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We can note in the above article that the writer states: "Among the famous who have attended sittings with him—the walls of his tiny seance room are crowded with photographs and memories." Some two decades later Benjamin continued his memorabilia of signed photographs from some of the famed clients who attended his sittings, as the photograph shows.



His bust sits proudly in the Britten Museum & Library





Joe Benjamin died in 1983, aged 68

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SNU Churches and their Platform

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As time moved forward, there was naturally criticism and efforts made to improve the Union's affiliated churches and their platform presentation. Like most things, much is trial and error, trying to reach a positive outcome for the demand of both their churches and enquirers into Spiritualism. In the last couple of Pioneer issues it has noted a few of these avenues or suggestions on the best move forward in the presentation of National Spiritualism.

Pioneer noted in Vol. 11, No. 1: "Keep It Dark! Is Policy of the S.N.U.":

> "During its formative years the SNU was sometimes heavily criticised for not using or at least taking advantage of the likes of Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding and some of the leading speakers and mediums prior to and post WWII. In a *general* sense at this period the Union did not support large propaganda meetings. Maurice Barbanell had long argued over the importance of propaganda meetings, [16] often at loggerheads with the Union, which regarded its churches as the best way to secure a more long-term avenue for new people coming into Spiritualism to become members of a national organisation. For much of 1942 the Psychic News editor had kept the Union under pressure …"

> "WE are amazed that the S.N.U. disparages wartime propaganda. Surely it realises that its churches are very largely preaching to the converted."

In the last issue of Pioneer we moved back to 1924 in an article entitled 'Raising the Standard'; this looked at the SNU AGM, which passed the following resolution:

> "That the question of confining the platforms of affiliated Churches to workers within the Union be considered and, if necessary, that legislative measures be promulgated for confirmation."

The first official journal of the Spiritualists' National Union was "The National Spiritualist", which came into being under the presidency of its first female President, Jessy Greenwood, in July 1924 and continued until December 1932. It was edited by the SNU General Secretary (1922-1933) and former President (1920 -1922), George Berry. An article by former SNU President Ernest Oaten (1915-1920) is published below from its May 1926 issue.

Would we today, almost a hundred years later, agree with our former President, Ernest Oaten's, point of view or has too much changed in the progress of time in the Spiritualist movement? Some would no doubt say certainly, not with the importance of the Home Circles; I think there would be little disagreement as to its value in our history. Another article follows with an example published in the April 1928 issue of a psychical researcher giving positive, absolute proof to his mind of the survival of the human spirit. How many psychical researchers today give such convincing testimony? This was the former President of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), Oliver Lodge. Pioneer has featured Lodge in numerous issues and has pointed out that he was quite clear on occasions that he was *not* a Spiritualist, he was a scientist, a psychical researcher and a Christian. In the closing comments of Oaten's article it would not run true with the likes of Sir Oliver Lodge and some of his numerous colleagues in the SPR in support of survival evidence they have recorded.

[16] See the Pioneer pdf booklet,"Maurice Barbanell", as shown on the last page of this issue.

What Provision Should S.N.U, Churches Make to Meet the Needs of the Genuine Investigator into Spiritualism

By E. W. Oaten, Editor of *Two Worlds*



Spiritualism claims to prove life beyond the grave: first, by the demonstration of psychic faculties within man, which were superior to time, space and matter; and secondly, by communion with those who were already discarnate. The demonstration of the psychic faculties within man was the evidence of man's spiritual and psychic nature, but mediumship was something more than that, it was the use of the psychic faculties of men by discarnate entities. A large portion of Spiritualistic phenomena were good evidence of the psychic powers of man, but were no evidence of spirit communion. The whole world was awake to-day to the claims of Spiritualism, and everyone was asking to be put in touch with the spirit world.

The common idea was that this was only possible through what was called a developed medium. He believed, however, that much better evidence was obtainable in the home circle by people who were not Spiritualists, sitting in their own homes, without any known medium, and developing such psychic powers as made themselves apparent in members of the family. Occasionally, though only occasionally, home circles are without results, and people run after mediums. There was a growing body of mediums who were prepared to put themselves at the disposal of the public for sittings for evidential purposes, but they were faced with the fact that there were hundreds of people who were trading on this claim, and who had little or no pretensions to mediumship at all.

If the Spiritualist Churches had a full sense of responsibility, and were providing for the needs of the public, they ought to have so established themselves that anyone desirous of investigating Spiritualism would go direct to the Spiritualist Church as the best avenue for investigation. He regretted to say that in nine cases out of ten the last place people went to for such investigation was the Spiritualist Church. One had but to read such personal experiences as those of Mr. Blatchford, Mr. Bradley, the Rev. Drayton Thomas and Mr. J. Arthur Hill to realise that a higher standard of evidence was obtained in a private circle than was usual in our churches. There was a reason for this. The seclusion and selectness of the private circle for personal investigation gave much better psychic conditions than existed in the church, especially where our churches meet in hired halls. They were asking for the amendment of the law in order to make mediumship legally permissible, but they could be quite sure that no such amendment would be granted until they were prepared to give some guarantee that those who called themselves mediums possessed the powers they claimed, and were honest in the use of them.

One of the difficulties of platform clairvoyance was that mediums were expected to get through twenty or thirty descriptions in the course of an hour. The result was that none of them were sufficiently detailed to be evidential, yet he had been told by more than one medium that unless they gave twenty descriptions they were told that they would not be engaged again. In his opinion three descriptions which placed the evidence for identity beyond doubt were better than fifty which were nebulous and uncertain.

Next to the home circle, he believed that the best way of securing evidence was by means of private circles and private consultations with a well-developed and reliable medium, and he believed that it was the business of our churches to be responsible for the quality of mediumship used. The time would come when the individual who wanted evidence on Spiritualism would go to the Spiritualist Church of the town, as the best centre

to obtain it, and he believed that the scheme which would work best would be one in which every church had its own resident medium, paid a good living wage, who should exercise his or her mediumship upon the church premises. Such medium should be properly tested and certified, and his duty should be to assist investigators in obtaining evidence, to supervise the psychic development of other members of the church, and to be responsible for the phenomena given in the church.

Such mediums should be paid out of the funds of the church, and their salaries should not be dependent on monies derived from sittings. Those who used the time and services of the medium would be expected to support the church, and payments should be adjusted, as far as possible, according to the needs and circumstances of the investigator. One church might have a clairvoyant, another a healer, another a voice medium, another a materialising medium, and by the interchange of mediums or sitters amongst the churches we ought to be able to supply to a genuine investigator any phase of phenomena essential to his conviction. In many cases there could be little objection to the publication of such records, and he believed the churches could provide a mass of evidential information in twelve months, which would be many times more convincing than 40 years of psychical research proceedings have produced.

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April 1928 issue:

Sir Oliver Lodge's experience with Mrs. Piper, the American Medium.



Speaking at a meeting in aid of the Hospital Fund for London, on February 29th, Sir Oliver Lodge gave an interesting account of his experiments with the famous American medium, Mrs. Piper, who was discovered in Boston by Professor William James. Mrs. Piper was invited to England, and went to Myers at Cambridge, who at once reported to him that she was genuine. Mrs. Piper was the first medium with whom Sir Oliver had a sitting. He described how Mrs. Piper's communications while in the trance were suddenly interrupted, and ''my aunt forcibly took control.''

This aunt, he explained, who was then dead, had been distressed by his Agnosticism and had promised him that she would communicate if she was ever able.

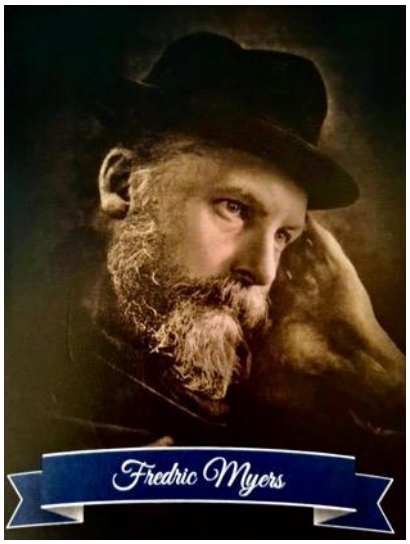
He said that Mrs. Piper spoke in a voice that was unmistakably that of his aunt, saying, "My boy, I promised I would come to you," and many other things which only he could know. "Both Myers and I were in tears. We were much upset by the messages." Things were said which were absolutely outside the knowledge of the medium. In the same year, 1889, Mrs. Piper came to Liverpool, and he tested her in every possible way. He brought professors into the room whom she did not know, and messages came through from their dead relatives.

"My scepticism was broken down. I perceived that the dead are not extinct, but can still communicate under certain difficult conditions." He got into touch with an uncle who died long before and got him to relate incidents in his youth—things he (Sir Oliver Lodge) had never heard of—and was able to check the accuracy of the messages from the memories of the uncle's living brother.

Sir Oliver Lodge went on to describe the later researches which he said had convinced him that what were supposed to be communications from dead persons are not due to

telepathy, or thought transference from the minds of living people. This was effected chiefly by the messages that came through from Myers after his death in 1901, when "things began to hum." Myers knew the difficulties and took pains to overcome them. He devised ingenious tests and proofs to show that it was not all due to telepathy. Through illiterate mediums he spoke Latin and Greek. "I have talks with Myers still," said Sir Oliver Lodge. The occurrences since the death of Myers and others had, he considered, proved the survival of personal identity—at least, evidence had been now accumulated which would in time, he thought, constitute proof such as would be accepted by science.

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Born 6th February 1843 Keswick, Cumberland, England. Myers was a professor of classics at Cambridge University. He was a founder member of the Society for Psychical Research and was its President in 1900. Myers had a strong interest in mediumship and would often sit with numerous mediums.

He investigated Eusapia Palladino with others like Oliver Lodge (Myers found her to be a clever fraud). Myers was the co-author of the two-volume 'Phantasms of the Living', 1886. Possibly his main work, 'Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death', was posthumously published in two volumes in February 1903.

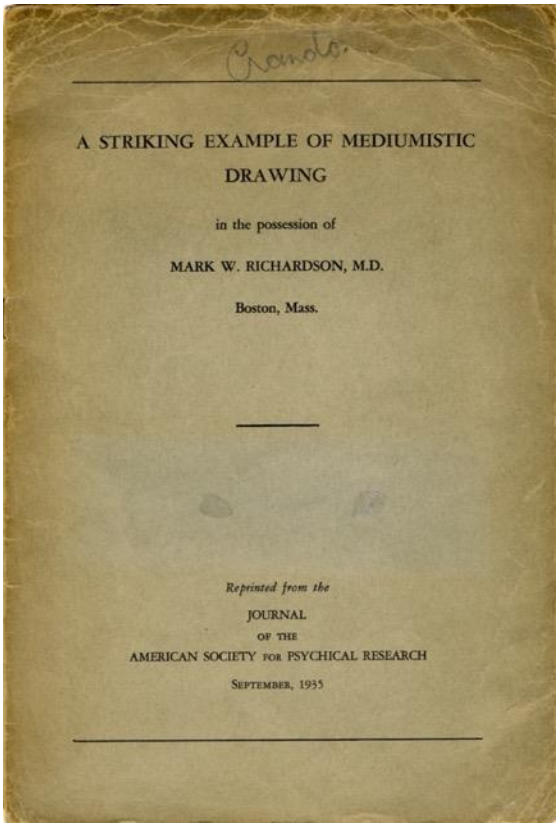
After his death Myers started to communicate through various writing mediums in different parts of the world; the messages made no sense individually but when they were put together they formed messages - these became known as 'cross-correspondences' and proved excellent proof of spirit communication.

Myers passed to died on 17th January 1901.

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Psychic Art

Psychic/Spirit Art has been one of the most consistent phases of mediumship throughout our history, covering both physical and mental forms of mediumship; it has constantly reinvented itself through its various phases of development and today it is presented mostly in mental mediumship. The image below, as presented by Mark W. Richardson MD, unfortunately lacks greatly in information but it is an interesting example of an early phase of psychic drawing with the medium under control and being produced in a dark séance in a relevantly short period of time.


A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF MEDIUMISTIC DRAWING

in the possession of

MARK W. RICHARDSON, M.D.

Boston, Mass.

Reprinted from the
JOURNAL
OF THE
AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH
SEPTEMBER, 1935

A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF MEDIUMISTIC DRAWING

By MARK W. RICHARDSON, M.D.

The drawing which accompanies this communication was presented to the writer several years ago by Dr. Gustave P. Wiksell, then a resident of Massachusetts. The history of the drawing is given in Dr. Wiksell's letters which are submitted herewith. Furthermore, the reference in these letters to the Cram family led me to confer with Mr. Ralph Adams Cram, whose letter gives interested and interesting comment on this most remarkable artistic production. The original picture is somewhat larger than the photograph, being 8 x 10. The paper is slightly yellowish in tint and the pencil used must have been rather soft though sharply pointed. To get a proper photograph was extremely difficult, and Mr. B. K. Thorogood is to be congratulated on his final success in getting a good reproduction.

December 19, 1930

Dr. Gustav P. Wiksell
459 So. Orange Drive
Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear Dr. Wiksell:

. . . Some months ago I tried to write to you to inquire more definitely the circumstances surrounding that spirit drawing which you kindly gave me. All that I could remember is that it was done by a medium and in a very short period of time. The picture has been very much admired and I should like, if possible, to have more details as to the method and other circumstances of its construction.

With very kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

(signed) MARK W. RICHARDSON, M.D.

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Los Angeles, Calif., December 26, 1930

Mark W. Richardson, M.D.
Boston, Mass.

Dear Doctor:

Yours of 19th inst. at hand. The spirit picture was done in the dark by controlled hand of the medium in the house of a Mr. Cram of Hampton Falls, father of Cram the great architect. My father-in-law, Dr. W. L. Johnson (of *The Educator*), was the one who sat in the seance and received the picture which was symbolic of his life. That is all I remember of it. Lots of that sort of thing was done by spirits in the old days. Perhaps they are too busy now!

Yours truly,

(signed) G. P. WIKSELL, M.D.

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Mediumistic drawing made at a single sitting, probably about 1860. In the possession of Mark W. Richardson, M.D.

Boston, Mass., May 31, 1935
Dear Dr. Wiksell:

I am trying to prepare for publication the spirit drawing which you gave me several years ago. One important point remains in doubt. The picture seems to have been done at a single seance. Have you any idea as to how long it took to make it?

Yours very sincerely,

(signed) MARK W. RICHARDSON, M.D.

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Los Angeles, Calif., June 3, 1935

Mark W. Richardson, M.D.

Dear Doctor:

All I can tell you is what Dr. Wm. L. Johnson (of *The Educator*) told me; that the pencil work was done in the dark and in a very short time. The séance was at the house of Mr. Cram. Dr. Johnson at that time was a dentist in Exeter.

I remember the doctor said that no mortal could do such a piece of work in less than a day.

(signed) G. P. WIKSELL, M.D.

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21st January, 35

My dear Dr. Richardson:

Yes, I remember very well the investigations into the phenomena of Spiritism that my father carried on, chiefly in the house of my Aunt, Mrs. John Cram, just across the road from my father's place. I took part in several of them. The medium was, as I remember, a very respectable woman from Exeter, not a professional but a friend of my Aunt. I do not remember her name. This must have been about 1890 I should say.

I also remember that there were certain "spirit" drawings, but I do not think they came from this particular medium.

There was one curious drawing in pencil, somewhat resembling frost-figures on a window in winter. This very much antedated my experience. It hung in my father's library when I was a small boy and was the object of great wonder and admiration on my part. This drawing disappeared years ago: I wonder if this is what you have? I know nothing of its origin, but it must have been made at least seventy-five years ago.

My father was not a "believer" in the spiritist sense, but he was a great—though unknown—philosopher and therefore very much interested in this particular mystery. He admitted the authenticity of most of the phenomena but refused to accept the spiritualists' interpretation of them.

Very truly yours,

(signed) R. A. CRAM

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Please see the Pioneer pdf booklet, 'Psychic Spirit Art', which can be freely downloaded from the SNU website as detailed on the last page of this issue.

Recent SNU AGMs
of Historic Significance

Pioneer generally does not report on the more recent SNU AGMs unless any historic points of interest are featured. The first article it reported on was the Presidential Badge, received by SNU President Robert A. Owen at the 1927 Annual General Meeting, which is noted elsewhere in the issue in Lionel Owen's book review, *"My First Ninety Years".* Traditionally this badge would be pinned to the lapel of the new incoming President by the retiring President but for some years the badge was lost and forgotten. At the Spiritualists' National Union AGM held at the Holiday Inn, Runcorn on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th July 2017 President David Bruton wore the President's badge of Gordon Higginson. After his death on January 18th, 1993, his President's badge at some unknown date came into the possession of Eric Hatton. After Eric's death on November 6th, 2015 the badge was later returned to the Union. David passed the badge on to myself to be safely held and displayed in the Britten Museum & Library at Stansted Hall, which he would use from time to time on special official occasions.

I asked David if he knew the origin of the badge. He was aware only that it was worn by Gordon, adding that it was generally thought that the badge was made for Gordon's term of office (1970-1993). I then realised by the badge description and the engraved inscription on the back of the badge:

> "The Badge is in blue enamel on gold, with the name of the Union round the edge, the centre design showing the Setting Sun over the Book of Nature, with the words Light and Truth standing in relief. The back is suitably inscribed to commemorate the gift. It has a bar above on which is inscribed the word President".

This is the actual President's Badge presented to President Robert A. Owen at the 1927 Annual General Meeting as outlined in Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 2014: "Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists' National Union". So, *unknown to all* at the 2017 AGM, President Bruton was *in fact* wearing the official SNU Presidential Badge:

It can be noted in some of the old AGM reports that the retiring President passes on the Presidential Badge, which would have served:

Robert Owen

Ernest Keeling

John McIndoe

Frank Blake

John Stewart

Harold Vigurs

Lorraine Haig

Percy Wilson

Harry Dawson

Charles Quastel

John Winning

Charles Quastel

Gordon Higginson

Presumed Lost [17]

David Bruton

Jackie Wright

When President Bruton became the retiring SNU President at the 2022 SNU AGM, the AGMs were at this time held online owing to the pandemic, so Minister Bruton returned it to the Britten Museum & Library, and it was in turn was passed on to the incoming President, Jackie Wright. [18]

Hopefully, when the time comes,
the long AGM tradition of publicly passing on the
President's Badge will continue…



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[17] It appears that with the sudden death of Gordon Higginson the badge was not passed down in the traditional way and possibly later passed on to Eric by the Higginson family. Given Higginson's long term in office, the historic significance and origin of the badge was lost. David Bruton informed me, "I know Eric wore it when he became Honorary President of the Union."

[18] The various articles on the President's Badge can be searched for in the Pioneer 'SNU History' pdf booklet, details on the last page of this issue.

The second significant AGM article was in Pioneer, Vol. 10, No. 3: "Spiritualists' National Union – Honours James Johnson Morse".

J.J. Morse became Hon. President of the Spiritualists' National Union for his immense contribution to national organisation. This welcomed honour was given at the 121st SNU AGM by its President, Jackie Wright, at Norwich on July 15th, 2023.

Minister Jackie Wright in her Presidential speech stated of Morse:

> "… that he was called by W.T. Stead the Bishop of Spiritualism. Morse was well known for his exceptional trance mediumship, inspired orations and his work in forming our Union, and it is for his work in the formation and administration of the Union that we are appointing Morse to the position of Honorary President.
>
> "Morse's legacy deserves to be recognised, so today I am unveiling an annual award presented on the birthday of the Union, the 18th October, which will be awarded to the District Council which has been the most active in helping the churches and promoting the religion of Spiritualism in their individual area."

Further, in Pioneer, Vol. 11, No. 1: "James J. Morse – Portrait & Award".

Minister Jackie Wright, Chair of the Arthur Findlay College, commissioned a portrait of James J. Morse, together with his chief control, "Tien Sien Tie," [19] by the psychic artist Richard Stuttle, who is the son of Alan Stuttle, a senior tutor at the College. Just prior to the birthday of the Union, on the 18th October, the first J.J. Morse Award was given to the South Yorkshire District Council; this was announced on the birthday of the Union, 18th October, 2023, in the Britten Museum & Library housed at the Arthur Findlay College via a video recording by President Jackie Wright.

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Which brings us to this year's SNU AGM:

Traditionally from 1891, when the Spiritualists' National Federation was founded, the AGMs, sometimes referred to as Annual Conferences, were always held on the first weekend of July, the reason being so that every 'National Spiritualist' knew the date each year! This continued (apart from one year during the war, I believe) until recent years, where the July date was changed. This year for the first time it was moved forward to September 28th-29th and was held at the Holiday Inn, Newcastle.

Minister David Bruton drew positive attention and importance to the Fund of Benevolence (FOB), which prompted a collection at the end of its first day's business. Many readers will not know that this fund predates the Union to the days of the Federation. The Fund was originally called "The Order of Progressive Spiritualists' Sick Benefit and Pension Fund", or, in short, O.P.S. I quote below from the Pioneer article published in Vol. 1, No. 3: "Badges, Symbols, and Emblems of the Spiritualists' National Union". The full article should ideally be read to put the opening quote below in context. In short, in 1892 a proposal for a suitable means of recognition in the National Federation was put forward at the Annual Conference held in Burnley on July 2nd, 1892 but was rejected. In 1893 Mrs H.M. Wallis founded 'The Order of Progressive Spiritualists' (O.P.S.), and in 1893 introduced the first 'Spiritualist Recognition Symbol' in this country. At around the same time, the Sunflower Badge was introduced into the Association of Spiritualists in America.

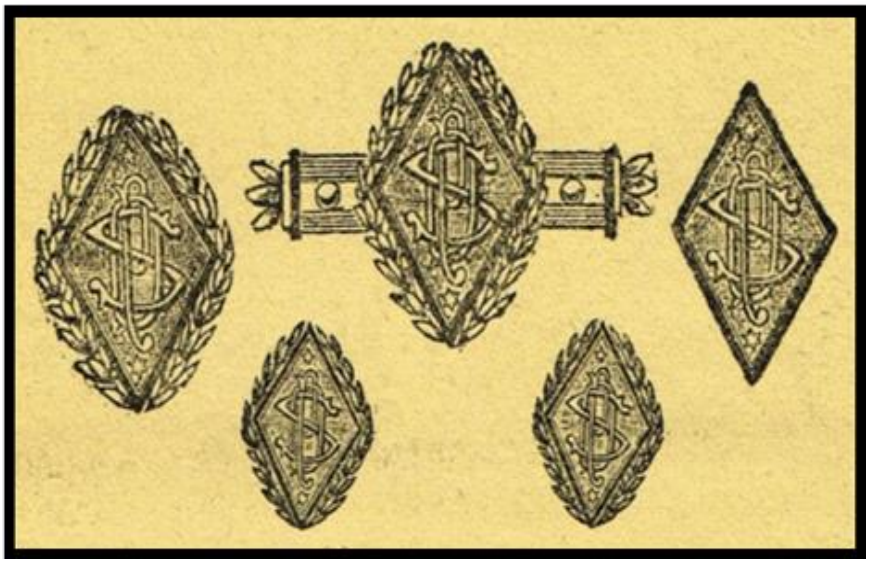
[19] For the development of James Morse and when his lecturing control, Tien Sien Tie, first announced his presence, please see Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 1: "First Public Developing Circles Robert Cogman Mrs. Mary Main".

"When the resolution was first proposed for a "recognition badge" at the 1892 Conference, Mrs M. H. Wallis was present; [20] she was also a member of the Propaganda Committee. If we look at the penultimate paragraph of the first issue of Pioneer, at the reprinted statement by James J. Morse originally written September 22nd 1896, we note:

A SPIRITUALISTS' BENEFIT SOCIETY.

> "The last special feature pertaining to our cause in Great Britain that I will call your attention to is "The Order of Progressive Spiritualists' Sick Benefit and Pension Fund," an association originated by Mrs. M. H. Wallis, and to which she is the honorary secretary. This effort has its headquarters in Manchester. For the past year it has disbursed over 200 dollars in sick relief and pensions. [21] It is the first and only Society of the kind ever established for our people in Great Britain, and is in every way well deserving of support, and its promoter deserves every praise for her endeavours."

The Order of Progressive Spiritualists would work alongside the National Federation and be supported by the Two Worlds journal. [22] The O.P.S. would introduce the first 'Spiritualist Recognition Symbol' in this country:



[20] Mrs Minnie Harriet Wallis, 1854-1939, who was very active in the National Federation and one of the original sixteen (1890) *pro tem* committee members who were co-opted as the first Executive. She married Edward Wallis in 1876. She continued her work until 1924, when she completed fifty years of public work and fifty-two years of mediumship. Her control for public speaking was called Morambo, a Negro slave who had been transported to South America, where he died.

[21] This was intended for the American readers, so the prices quoted are in US dollars.

[22] In 1892 Emma Hardinge Britten resigned her editorship of the Two Worlds; her Sub-Editor and the paper's co-founder and General Manager, Edward Wallis, took up her position. *The Two Worlds* was closely involved with the National Federation and acted as its mouthpiece and published its meetings, etc.

Published below is a brief history, its principles and objects, taken from the Two Worlds of November 10th, 1893 and December 15th, 1893 respectively:

RE THE PROPOSED SYMBOL.
BY E. W. WALLIS.



THE latest design for the purposes of recognition and union among Spiritualists seems to be one that meets with more favour than any proposal yet made. We give the design, actual size.

We have obtained an estimate of the cost of production, and find that pins, or pendants, or a badge to fasten upon the coat or dress can be made in silver, the monogram raised and polished bright, the background to be of dead silver, for 1s. 9d. each, post free 2s. If we can get orders for more than 50 we can sell them at 1s. 6d. each, post free 1s. 9d. Bar-brooches, two bars, with this design as a centre ornament, could cost 2s. 6d. or 3s. each.

The design is distinctive and sufficiently striking to be easily noticed, and is, as far as we know, unlike anything else in the market. The letters O.P.S. signify Order of Progressive Spiritualists.

It has been suggested that every person who purchases and wears one should agree to have their name and address entered on the roll of the "Order," whose principles might be expressed thus:—

Name: Order of Progressive Spiritualists.

Principles: We the members of the Order of Progressive Spiritualists affirm that we know there is no death. That intercourse between the two worlds has been established. That spirit-return has demonstrated continuity of individual conscious existence. That consequences, good or, evil, of motives and deeds of mortal life affect the status of each spirit after death and constitute the heaven or hell into which they enter. That evolution is not only the law of *this* life but characterises the realm of the hereafter; hence eternal progress is open to every one who endeavours to advance. That we are responsible by Divine Love and Wisdom *to ourselves* for the use we make of our powers and the opportunities of life, and *to others* for the influence we exert by our own conduct; and by the psychic emanations we cast off which affect others for good or ill. We therefore RESOLVE to endeavour to improve our minds, to cultivate our moral powers, to exercise our spiritual gifts, to sympathise with sorrow and suffering, to encourage and assist the weak and ignorant, to co-operate in all endeavours of a reformatory character whose aim is for humanity and the truth. Believing that *character* is more important than *creed*; that deeds, not words, are needed, we will, with charity to all and malice towards none, strive to exert a salutary influence for liberty, right, justice and love in every possible direction.

Objects: To unite spiritually minded and progressive men and women in a fraternal order for mutual encouragement and support. To inaugurate a sick and benefit fund, to assist the suffering, the needy and the aged, such fund to be raised by voluntary effort, in which every member is expected to join. To afford a means of recognition and a link of fellowship between Spiritualists, the outward and visible sign being the diamond shaped symbol bearing the monogram O.P.S.

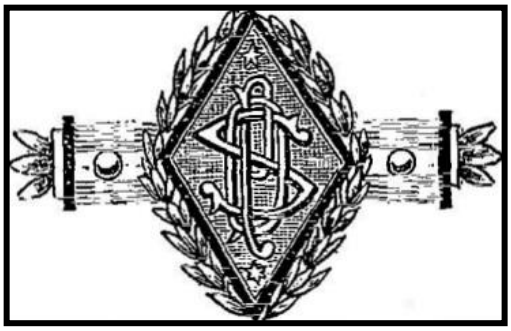
We are of opinion that the above suggestions are practical and calculated to be of benefit to all members, and will, if adopted, tend to foster good-will and fraternity among Spiritualists. We are prepared to book orders at once which will be executed in

turn as received. Friends will oblige, when writing, by stating, if the above suggestions meet with their approval, their willingness to have their name and address enrolled. All communications should be addressed to Miss Grace, 73A, Corporation Street, Manchester.

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VOICES FROM THE PEOPLE.

RE THE PROPOSED SYMBOL.



IT is now more than six months since this matter was first broached, and at last we have been able to definitely decide what to do.

The sketch here given represents the brooch, and if you simply cover up two bars at each side you will have the pendant, the scarf pin, and badge; the pendant will, of course, have a ring at the top, and the badges will be really small brooches to pin on to a dress or coat.

As will be seen, we have adopted part of Mr. Chadwick's design, the laurel wreath around the diamond, which is certainly an improvement, and renders the symbol one which will be recognised at a glance by any person familiar with it. This alteration will modify the prices somewhat, and therefore the following scale of charges is now finally decided upon: Scarf pins, in silver, solid back, 2s.; badges for dress or coat (really small brooches), 2s.; strong pendants for watch chains, 3s.; two-barred brooches with symbol as a centre ornament, 3s. 6d. Postage, 3d. extra (registered letter). Where a number can be sent together per parcel post, postage will be but a small item, hence friends should combine their orders where possible. We will offer special terms to societies or agents who sell *The Two Worlds* for quantities.

In response to a number of friends, special articles can be made with enamelled letters, or with more metal, or pendants can be engraved at the back. We have ascertained, as suggested by Mr. J. J. Morse and other friends, that the cost for bar brooches in nine-carat gold would be about 21s., pendants 17s. 6d., scarf pins and badges, 14s. Gold pendants with Mr. Chadwick's design of the globe and Latin inscription *on the back* would probably cost a sovereign.

These symbols are now ready for customers, so that they may be useful for Christmas presents and prizes. Samples can be seen at 73A, Corporation Street, Manchester.[23] Friends, send your orders at once and enclose portals.

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[23] The address was the registered office of The Two Worlds.

"To inaugurate a sick and benefit fund, to assist the suffering, the needy and the aged, such fund to be raised by voluntary effort…"



Minnie Harriet Wallis

Report of Tenth Annual Conference of the National Federation, held in Blackpool on July 1st and 2nd 1899, as published in the Two Worlds July 7th, 1899:

"The work of benevolence is, in the nature of things, a matter we shall sooner or later be compelled to recognise as a duty to our workers who may be sick, incapacitated through illness or accident, or otherwise in temporary or permanent distress, is to come before you in a resolution to be submitted by Mrs. M. H. Wallis, the founder and organiser of a fund known as the Order of Progressive Spiritualists' Sick, Benefit, and Pension fund, and it seems that the time has arrived for putting the question on a National basis, with consequent advantage to all concerned."

As the proceedings continued:

> "Mrs. Wallis then introduced her motion that the O.P.S. Sick and Benefit Fund should be taken over by the Federation. She thought the time had come when the movement should take the responsibility of providing for its sick and aged workers, and so, although she should always retain interest in the work, she asked them to take the fund into their hands as the National body of Spiritualists.
>
> "Mr. H. Lucas seconded, and Mr. Chiswell asked whether the name should be taken over also. Mrs. Wallis explained that it was quite optional, but suggested it would be wise. Messrs. Howes, Chiswell, Nuttall, and Johnson joined the discussion, and Mr. Hanson Hey said they as a movement should face their responsibilities.
>
> "After Mr. Bibbings, Mrs. Wallis, and Mr. Chiswell had spoken, the motion was carried."

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During the year the transfer of the O.P.S. Sick, Benefit and Pension Funds to the control of the Federation was carried out, the funds to be administered under the title of 'The Spiritualists' National Federation Fund of Benevolence.' The fund has grown and continued to the present day, and over the past hundred and twenty years it has collected thousands of pounds. [24] It appears that the 'Recognition Symbol' ended with the transfer of the Sick, Benefit, and Pension Funds to the control of the Federation in 1899. This would continue within the SNU, as it does today.

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[24] From the modest beginnings, I note published in the Two Worlds for May 18th, 1894: "That the Committee were pleased to report an income of £7 19s. 6d. and an expenditure of £2 14s. in relieving sickness and need."

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