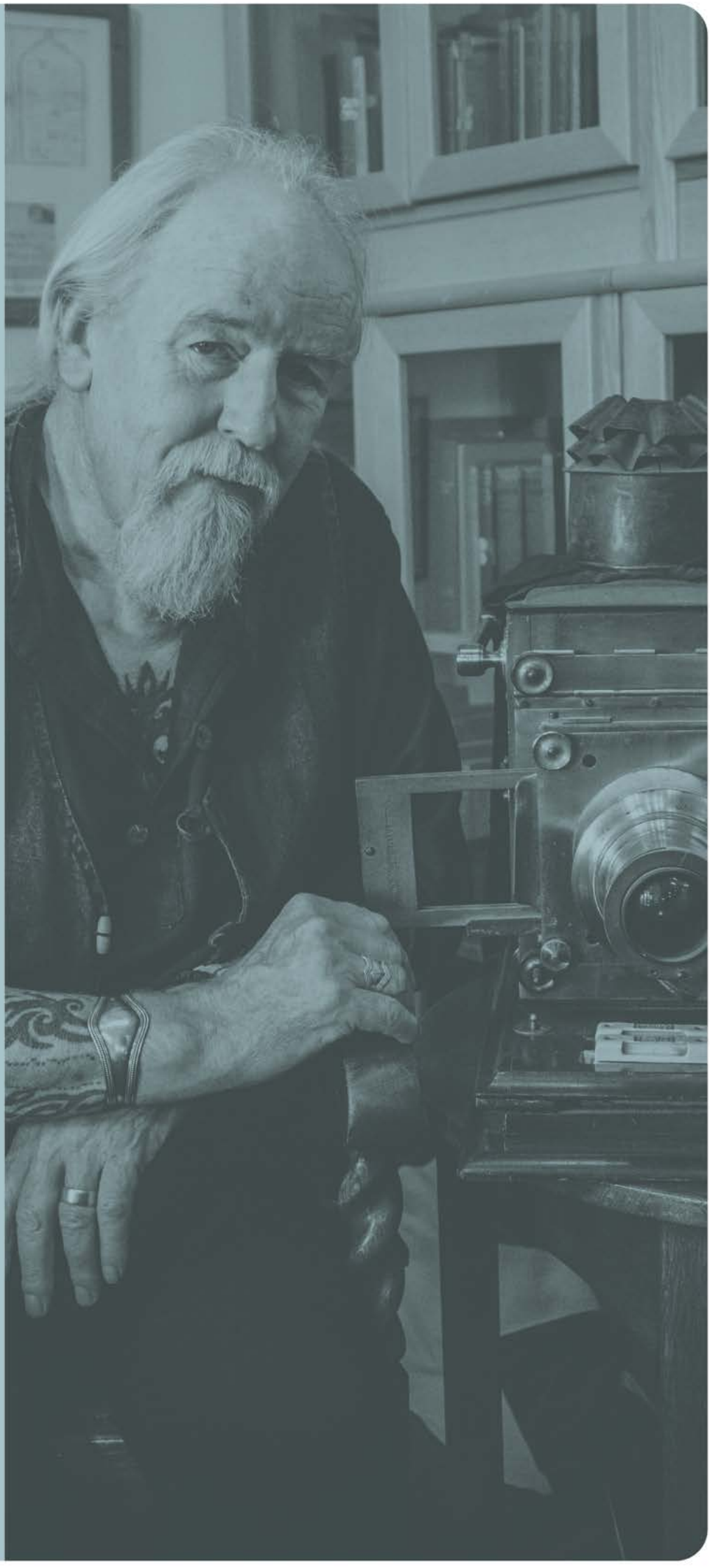
The PIONEER

The Pioneer is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.



the PIONEER

Volume 8, No. 1: February 2021

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

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

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

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

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

THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION & WORLD WAR II Continued …

I have been asked several times for the views and direction the Spiritualists' National Union took during the war years of WWII,

the general attitudes of its members and of the Movement during these dark years.

We can note below that it brings an interesting opportunity of discussing the many avenues and decisions taken in this complex time of opinions, etc.!

The first part of this was published in Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 2, concluding with the SNU's Manifesto, "Spiritualists and the War", October 21st, 1939, under the presidency of Frank Blake.

1940:

The Two Worlds, August 2nd:

S. N. U. News
General Secretary: Ernest A. Keeling

Churches in Restricted Areas
IMPORTANT NOTICE

THE Government have found it necessary to restrict the entry of persons into a considerable section of Great Britain, extending from Berwick-on-Tweed to Weymouth. As this made it almost impossible for churches in this area to maintain their platform supply, the matter was taken up by the Union with the Ministry of Home Security, who have agreed to our suggestion that Platform Workers shall be provided with an identity certificate bearing their photograph and the seal of the Union.

Speakers and Demonstrators, Please Note.

The Spiritualists' National Union is prepared to grant a "Spiritualists' Minister's Identity Certificate" to Platform Workers who have to fulfil engagements with churches in areas where entry is restricted.

Applications, accompanied by a "Passport" photograph and a postal order for 1s., should be sent to the Local District Council Secretary of the area in which applicant resides.

This was followed with the names and addresses of Secretaries of District Councils; during this period it was further noted:

The Ambulance in Sight

We are pleased to report that donations to the Ambulance Fund are rather more satisfactory, and at the present rate it seems certain that in the next few weeks we will be able to complete the Fund.

It was further noted in **S.N.U. News** two weeks later in the Two Worlds, August 16th:

Identity Certificates

From information which has reached us it would appear that the purpose of the Identity Certificates, as well as the conditions governing their issue, are not fully understood.

The sole purpose of the certificate is to enable workers to travel, without hindrance, to conduct church services, particularly in restricted areas. They are intended to meet the present emergency, and do not confer upon the holder either membership of the Union or any implied acknowledgment of the holder's qualification as a platform worker.

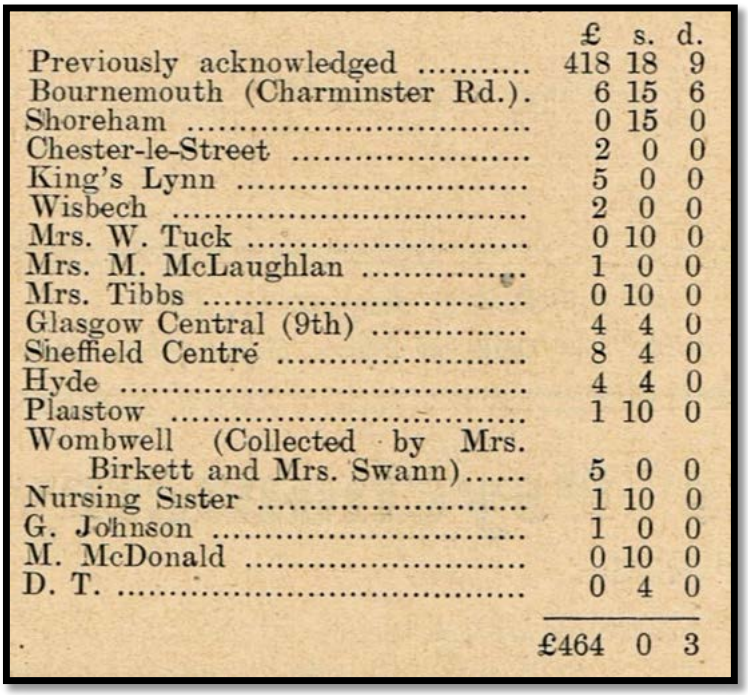
We would therefore restate the position as follows :—

"The Spiritualist National Union is prepared to grant a Union's Identity Certificate to known platform workers serving churches distant from their home town and its immediate vicinity to facilitate their travelling in areas where entry is restricted under the Home Defence regulations.''

Applications must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from a member of the National Council or from the secretary of their local District Council, together with a ''passport'' photograph vouched for by the writer of the letter of recommendation and a postal order for one shilling to defray cost.

The Ambulance Fund was updated and published in the same issue of the Two Worlds

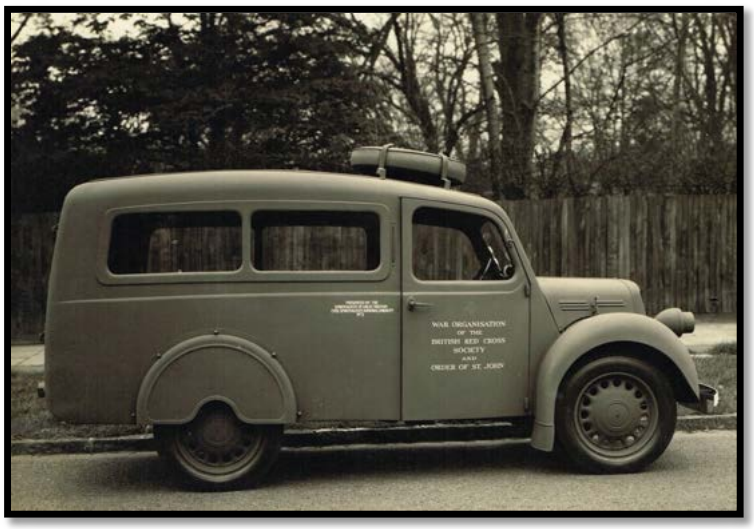
During the great war (1914-18), on the suggestion of W.H. Evans,[1] the Two Worlds under the editorship of James J. Morse opened a subscription list to provide Red Cross Ambulances for service overseas; Spiritualists rallied to the call. Spiritualist papers, Light, and Psychic Gazette supported the Two Worlds effort, resulting in five ambulances being purchased and presented to the Red Cross. Later a sixth was purchased in a joint effort of the Spiritualists of New Zealand and Great Britain.[2]



	£	s.	d.
Previously acknowledged	418	18	9
Bournemouth (Charminster Rd.).	6	15	6
Shoreham	0	15	0
Chester-le-Street	2	0	0
King's Lynn	5	0	0
Wisbech	2	0	0
Mrs. W. Tuck	0	10	0
Mrs. M. McLaughlan	1	0	0
Mrs. Tibbs	0	10	0
Glasgow Central (9th)	4	4	0
Sheffield Centre	8	4	0
Hyde	4	4	0
Plaistow	1	10	0
Wombwell (Collected by Mrs. Birkett and Mrs. Swann).....	5	0	0
Nursing Sister	1	10	0
G. Johnson	1	0	0
M. McDonald	0	10	0
D. T.	0	4	0
	£464	0	3

[1] Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: "W.H. Evans – One of Spiritualism's finest philosophers: Fifty Years with the "Two Worlds" – My Jubilee, by W.H. Evans".

[2] Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 3: "The Story of the Motor Ambulances – A Landmark in the History of Our Cause".



By August 1941 two Ambulance Cars were purchased; they were expected to be used overseas but I am not sure whether this was the case, as firstly they were used in this country for the transport of the sick and wounded.

"WAR ORGANISATION OF THE BRITISH RED CROSS AND ORDER OF ST. JOHN

"PRESENTED BY THE SPIRITUALISTS OF GREAT BRITAIN

(PER SPIRITUALISTS NATIONAL UNION LTD) NO2"

During the history of the Spiritualists' National Federation / Union their AGMs were for over a century conducted on the first weekend of July; very rarely were these changed, but one such AGM was abandoned in July 1940, with notice given under the Two Worlds "S.N.U. News" page by the Union's General Secretary, Ernest A. Keeling, Two World's issue, July 5th:

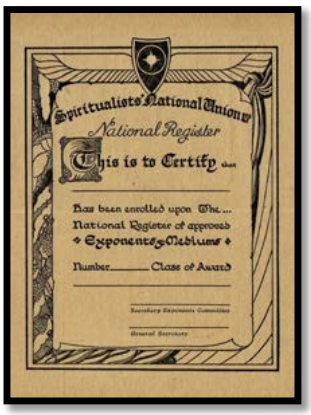
S.N.U. Conference Abandoned!

AT the expressed desire of H.M. Ministry for Home Security, the Annual General Meeting convened for Saturday, July 6th, has been cancelled. All members of the Union will be advised later of any revised arrangements which conditions may permit.

Yours sincerely,

ERNEST A. KEELING, General Secretary.[3]

Spiritualist Ministers and Military Service


Spiritualists' National Union
National Register
This is to Certify that
has been enrolled upon the
National Register of approved
Exponents & Mediums
Number Class of Award

One or two platform workers who are serving our churches have applied for exemption from Military Service on the grounds that they are Ministers of Religion. As in the last war, everything reasonably possible will be done to secure official recognition of Spiritualism as a religion. At the same time, it should be made clear that the National Union can only sponsor platform workers who are on the current list of certified exponents and/or demonstrators.

In one instance, the Ministry of Labour and National Service have referred to us the name of a worker who is neither a member of the Union nor a certified exponent.

Make them Welcome

From information which has reached us, we learn that many of our churches have been visited by members of H.M. Forces, and in several instances it has been revealed they were from some other Spiritualist church. We hope that church officials will make a special point of looking out for such visitors, making them welcome and, whenever possible, affording them whatever facilities the church may have to offer.

[3] Former SNU President, 1928-1930; see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1: Mr. Ernest Allan Keeling, A.N.S.C. – *The National Spiritualist*.

Church Delegates

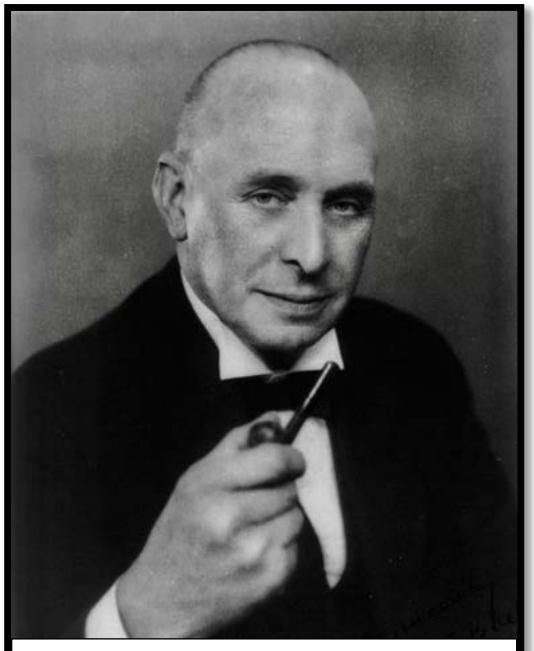
Although we have previously called attention to the matter, there is still a considerable number of churches which have not yet registered with the Union the name and address of their delegate (Class A member). As meetings of District Councils are, in fact, district meetings of Union members, it follows that those churches which have failed to register their delegate, and consequently have not had a credential card issued to them, are disqualified from voting either at a District or National meeting.

All District Councils have been advised of the names of the persons in their district who are entitled to vote, and informed that the voting must be restricted to those so entitled.

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An emergency AGM, for legal reasons, would take place at the later date of August 31st, with the meeting experiencing a series of air-raid warnings; however, it flowed smoothly. The quote below is reported in the Two Worlds, September 6th, 1940:

THE Annual General Meeting of the Spiritualist National Union was held on Saturday last, August 31st, at the Brixton Church, St. Michaels Road, London, S.W. The usual date of the event is the first week-end in July, but owing to war emergencies it was thought inadvisable to draw delegates from every part of the kingdom in times of stress and railway restrictions. However, it was found that the requirements of the Board of Trade necessitated the calling of an Annual General Meeting, and hence the gathering became an emergency meeting, and churches were notified that nothing but formal business, in addition to the reports and balance sheets, would be dealt with. Under the circumstances, an attendance of some forty members was sufficient for the purpose of the meeting.



Frank Blake

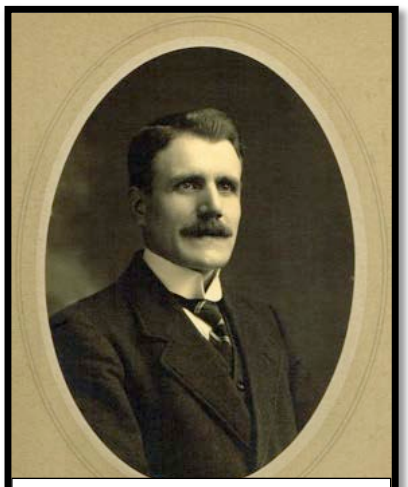
Mr. Frank Blake, President, explained the circumstances, and urged that in view of the possibility of interruptions from air activity, the business should be transacted as expeditiously as possible.

The reports and balance sheets were accepted and adopted. It was pointed out that the abnormal conditions of the present day had restricted activities at many churches, while the black-out regulations had meant decreased attendances in the winter months. Many of our workers had been drawn into the armed forces, while industrial activities are occupying the whole time of others. This was, of course, reflected in the finances. While the activities of the Union were steadily increasing, such emergencies had caused a reduction in income, and it was estimated that there may be a deficit at the end of this year of possibly £130. It was hoped that representatives of churches and District Councils would do their best to reduce the loss to a minimum. The growing activities of the Union were hindered by insufficient office accommodation; it was hoped that this, too, would be borne in mind.

Mr. Blake pointed out that although he knew many churches were suffering from reduced income, it was a fact that there had been a big increase in the amount of wages paid every week, and a large reduction in unemployment. It was his opinion that some of the added income of the workers might well find its way into the church.

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1941:



John Stewart

Sadly, the SNU President, Frank Blake, died in March and took over his work. Stewart was an ardent worker for National Spiritualism and was a founder member of Croydon National Spiritualist Church, being its President in 1930 for over a decade.[4]

John Stewart's official unopposed move to office as SNU President was announced at the Annual Conference held on July 5th and 6th at the Charnwood Street National Church, Derby. Maurice Barbanell was himself a former candidate for SNU President. In 1928 Barbanell became a member of the SNU Council, taking over from the veteran Spiritualist, Richard Boddington (brother of Harry), as London Area Representative, a position he would hold for many years.[5]

Barbanell considered a most effective path the Union should take; he published an 'Open Letter' in Psychic News, April 5th,[6] shortly after Blake's death, addressed to the next SNU President, John Stewart:

Plan For Post – War Spiritualism Now !

AN OPEN LETTER TO JOHN STEWART, PRESIDENT OF S.N.U.

DEAR JOHN,—What about a post-war plan for Spiritualism? Let me explain what I mean.

Because of the passing of Frank T. Blake, you have been called upon to fill the highest office in organised Spiritualism—the presidency of the Spiritualists' National Union.

All who know you, and have worked with you for years, are familiar with your sterling qualities, your wholehearted enthusiasm, your complete grasp of all the implications of Spiritualism.

You have been called to your high office at a time when, because of the blitz, Spiritualism in this country has been in the doldrums, from which it is only just beginning to recover.

It is a paradox, indeed an ironic jest, that at a time when this country needs our knowledge most the conditions produced by total war prevent us from broadcasting the truth of Spiritualism as we would like to do.

TO AID RECONSTRUCTION

How then, can we play our part in the great days that lie before us? I suggest it can be done by envisaging the problems of the future, by realising our post-war needs and by planning so that, when the present restrictive conditions end, we shall be ready to provide that evidence, comfort and knowledge which will aid the citizens of this country in the difficult period of reconstruction which is inevitable.

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[4] Vol. 3, No. 3: "First Croydon National Spiritualist Church – The benefits of Union affiliation! – Pioneer retires from active service – Farewell to John Stewart".

[5] Vol. 2, No. 6, November 2015: "Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U. and his Propaganda Work".

[6] Psychic News had begun on May 28th, 1932 with Barbanell as founding editor. He continued in this role until 1946, when (following a disagreement with Arthur Findlay) he left. Sixteen years later, on June 20th, 1962, Barbanell returned to his previous role and continued as editor of Psychic News and The Two Worlds jointly until his death in 1981.

The Angel of Death has been active in our land. Besides the misery caused by destruction of homes and loss of property, thousands have experienced mental and spiritual anguish. They have had to face bereavement. They have had to experience the desolate ache that comes when death separates them from the ones they love.

Thousands of soldiers, sailors and airmen, who have lost their comrades in battle, will want to know about Spiritualism. They will want to inquire for themselves, to find out whether the statements Spiritualists make will stand the test of personal investigation.

PREPARING THE GROUND

To some extent the ground has been prepared. As you know, we have distributed thousands of copies of *Psychic News* and Spiritualist books to men in the Fighting Services.

These have been handed round from colleague to colleague. There have been eager discussions. Many already have begun to inquire by visiting Spiritualist churches in their neighbourhood. Others await the end of the war, so that they can start their investigations.

I write as one who is familiar with the Spiritualists' National Union, who, for many years, took part in the deliberations of its council as area representative for London. My sympathies have always been whole-heartedly with the ideals of the S.N.U., though as Editor of *Psychic News* I have never hesitated to criticise its shortcomings if I thought I could spur it to greater action.

Now I ask you and your colleagues, who I know are anxious to spread our knowledge, and all its implications, to grasp one of the greatest opportunities that destiny has placed in your hands. I ask you to consider a seven years plan. "Why seven years?" you may ask.

In 1948, Spiritualists will celebrate the centenary of our movement. It will be 100 years since the Fox Sisters heard the rappings in their home. I ask you to plan so that we may indeed have cause for celebration.

I am convinced that the Union could take the initiative in preparing a bold, vigorous and comprehensive scheme which would fire the imagination and stimulate the zeal of Spiritualists.

It may be that not all the hoped-for ideals will be achieved, but at least we shall have tried. Better a glorious failure than sheer inertia; better a partial success than lack of vision.

NATION-WIDE PROPAGANDA

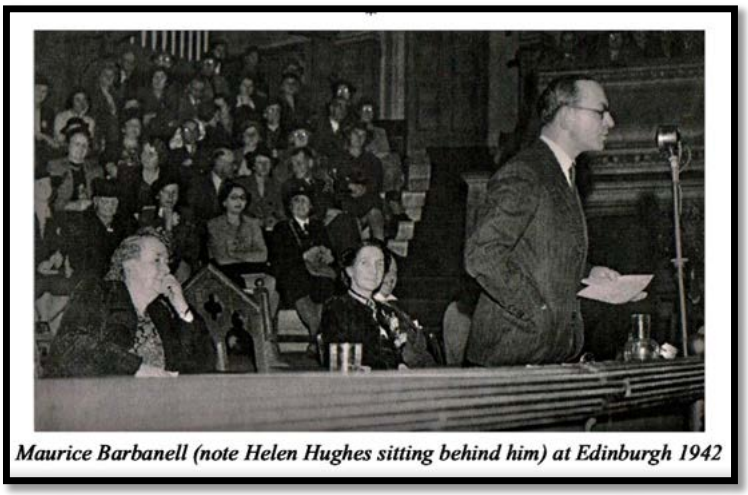
What should be embraced in the seven years plan? The first step is a national propaganda scheme to put Spiritualism literally on the map. Using an atlas there should be flagged the towns where Spiritualism is strongest. Where from your records you can see there are churches with a story of continued progress, these do not call for attention, except in one category.

Then on the map there should be indicated the areas where Spiritualism is still not represented, where there are no churches and no public activities of any kind.

In addition there should be charted the weak churches, the societies where no progress has been made for years, or even where losses have been recorded.

These territories should provide the soil of our labour. A propaganda campaign should be compiled. It should envisage the opening of mission churches to be nursed by the stronger societies, where they are in adjacent districts.

Where, at present, our message is not being given, the S.N.U. should make it its business to start new churches in conjunction with its district councils.



Maurice Barbanell (note Helen Hughes sitting behind him) at Edinburgh 1942

Propaganda meetings, with first-class speakers and mediums, should precede the effort. Then there should be trained speakers and mediums, working under the auspices of the S.N.U., who would be ready to give their services for the time that it is necessary to put the new church on its feet.

You will see that this will require careful planning, for it will require courses for speakers and a scheme for the development of mediumship. Mediumship, of course, is the backbone of Spiritualism. Without it we have little to offer.

Part of the seven years plan would be to arrange for the development of mediums, no matter how modest the beginning might be. We want, however much in miniature, a "School of the Prophets," some kind of "training college"—I am not thinking of a large building—where, under the skilful guidance of proficient and experienced mediums the powers of budding psychics can be unfolded.[7]

The plan should take into account our bombed churches, so that from the time peace is declared meetings can be quickly re-started.

Then there is the question of publications. The present method of producing our literature is haphazard. There is no central or co-ordinating body. Too much is left to chance. Our knowledge is strewn through old and new books.

OUR THINKERS' LIBRARY

I see that in "Light" a plea has been made for the formation of a Psychic Press Association modelled on the lines of the Rationalist Press Association, whose one shilling volumes, part of their Thinkers' Library, are known throughout the country.

One great defect in our presentation is that our literature is too expensive. It should be possible for us to produce one shilling booklets which lucidly set forth our evidence, phenomena, teachings and all their implications—scientific, religious, philosophical and moral.

We want books for beginners, books for students and books for the more advanced Spiritualist. Much of our literature is old-fashioned. It was written in Victorian days and is redolent of the atmosphere of the antimacassar, the horse-hair sofa and wax fruit in glass cases.

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[7] Early December 1870, "The College of Mediums" was founded at the James Burns Spiritual Institution (Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 3), with Mr Cogman as its first President. During January 1871 a term/course of six Wednesday evenings at the Spiritual Institution would cost 5s. Although this College was fairly short-lived, it is an interesting part of history; it was post-1876, following the publication of *Art Magic* (edited by Emma Hardinge Britten), that the concept of any college/school was popularised.

Robert Cogman (1810-1876) was the first in London to establish a successful training school for mediumship. His *East End Spiritual Institution* was responsible for helping many mediums develop, like James J. Morse, Frank Herne, Miss Eagar (later Mrs Wallis) and E.W. Wallis. Edward Walter Wallis (Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 5) would later credit Cogman and his "School of the Prophets" as he called it. Some of Cogman's students became key figures in the foundations of the National Federation / S.N.U.

See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 2018: – First Public Developing Circles – Robert Cogman & Mrs. Mary Main.

We have to appeal to the modern mind which is throwing off the yoke of creedalism and the dead hand of Orthodoxy and which does not worship the past just because of its antiquity.

PLACE FOR YOUTH

Our seven years plan must embrace the youth of Spiritualism so that they can take their rightful place in Spiritualism.

Yes, I know about the Lyceum movement. Its system of child education was in advance of its day when it was outlined by Andrew Jackson Davis more than 70 years ago, but now much of it is old-fashioned. It is crying out for revision and adaptation. The world has advanced in the last 70 years. We must take the best out of the Lyceum teaching and introduce new ideas, more fitted to the moods and needs of our own generation.

Then there is the Vagrancy Act, that stumbling block to Spiritualism which relegates us to the rank of rogues and vagabonds.[8] We must plan, as part of our campaign, for its repeal, so that the stigma of illegality may be removed. We must strive to win our religious freedom and compel Authority to recognise mediumship as part of man's natural faculties.

Then, too, we must revise our hymn book.[9] Many of the hymns must go. I shudder when I sing:

"Should swift death this night o'ertake
us,
And our couch become our tomb."

I have laughed during this war when I have heard audiences declare,

"They are winging, they are winging,
Through the thin blue air they come,"

and have heard whispering voices say "Parachutists!" We must ruthlessly throw out the hymns that cause ridicule. We should include some of the magnificent ones written by Mrs. M. A. St. Clair Stobart.[10]

WHAT ABOUT A TUNE BOOK ?

We also want a tune book so that at least we shall all sing the same tunes for the same hymns—something that does not at present happen at Spiritualist meetings throughout the country.

We want a volume that will give us naming, marriage and funeral services—our American colleagues have already done this. At present we only have the funeral service, the one at the beginning of the hymn book. When it was written by J. J. Morse, it was admirable, for his time. Much of it is still eloquent; some of it is out of date. It cries out for revision.[11]

Then the head office must be removed from Manchester to London. It is no longer true—if ever it was—that what Manchester thinks today . . . I cannot see any reason why the headquarters should be in Lancashire. The metropolis is the natural centre for Spiritualism, as for nearly everything else. A national body should be directed from the capital of the country.

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[8] Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 1, "The Effect of the Vagrancy Act – The Work of the Spiritualists' National Union".

[9] Vol. 4, No. 3, June 2017: "Spiritualists' National Federation – Our First National Hymn Book".

[10] Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 8: "Mrs. Mabel Annie St. Clair Stobart – Paul J. Gaunt".

[11] Vol. 5, No. 4, August 2018: "When the spirit bids adieu to mortality – J. J. Morse".

Now all this is a very rough blue print. It may mean the appointment of a national organiser. It may mean hours, weeks and possibly months of arduous frank discussion by Spiritualists who have vision and who want to see our movement take its rightful place in our national life.

MONEY WILL COME

It will require money, you may say, but that does not worry me. I am convinced that for such a campaign the money will be forthcoming, as it always has been for good causes.

I suggest, in all seriousness, that for some years organised Spiritualism has lost its missionary spirit. I ask it to recapture the evangelical fervour of our pioneers. I ask it to give a lead to the thousands of loyal Spiritualists throughout the country who are wondering how they can serve in the fateful days that lie before us.

Such a daring campaign will appeal to their imagination, to their hearts and to their minds. All petty differences will be sunk, I am convinced, in the unanimous desire to sweep the country with our great message.

Give the rules and regulations a rest. Forget about the by-laws governing district councils for a time. Set up a small committee, a planning committee, a "brains trust," if you will, so that they can draft their schemes for giving Spiritualism the greatest impetus it has ever had.

THE EDITOR

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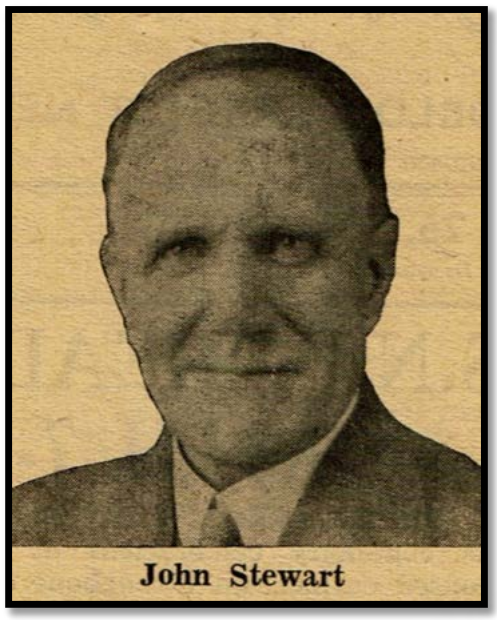
Psychic News editor Maurice Barbanell received a hearty response from the SNU under its new Presidency and published it in the April 26th, 1941 issue of Psychic News:

S.N.U. HEAD AGREES WITH 7-YEARS PLAN

Our Seven-Years Plan for Spiritualism, timed to mature with the centenary celebrations of modern Spiritualism, in 1948, has aroused enthusiasm throughout the country. It was published as an Open Letter to John Stewart, President of the Spiritualists' National Union. Here is his answer:

By John M. Stewart

IN replying to your Open Letter, I would like to say at the outset how much I appreciate the friendly terms in which it is couched. I know that you have the best interests of the Union at heart. You have shown that many times and in various directions.


John Stewart

The fact that you have an inside knowledge of the Union and its work, coupled with the wide experience gained through contact with the people in your editorial capacity, makes anything that you have to say worthy of the most careful consideration.

Let me say at once that I am in general agreement with your plan for post-war Spiritualism. A number of the suggestions made have already been discussed by the national executive, but it is opportune that you should raise

them again and set them out in such clear and comprehensive fashion. The whole statement constitutes a problem which must lie heavily upon all who seek to take a large view, and a long one, of what the Spiritualist movement may and should do for the public enlightenment.

It is quite true that the national executive devotes a great deal of time to rules and regulations in the conduct of its business; more especially is this necessary as through its trust property and pool schemes it is responsible for an ever-growing number of buildings which are dedicated as Spiritualist churches. It would, however, be a mistake to conclude that this is its only or even its main concern, for the members of the executive give a considerable amount of time, both in and out of committee, considering the best way in which the Spiritualist movement can be advanced.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE

It was for this reason that plans for the centenary celebration in 1948 were relegated to a special committee, though doubtless this was not generally known outside the executive. This committee will be meeting in London shortly and will no doubt review the whole position in the light of your Open Letter.

The need for propaganda is conceded on all hands, but our concern as an executive is to devise an effective form of propaganda which is suited to modern needs. Large and successful meetings have frequently been held in the past, but results show that such efforts have not materially added to those who are associated with us as a movement. No doubt such meetings have influenced current thought, but they have not built up an ever-increasing and solid membership.

The fact is that gifted speakers and mediums, who are available for such meetings, are all too few, and inquirers after such a meeting who follow up their interest by visiting the local church are sometimes disappointed by contrast. This is not always the fault of the church. Church officers, as a rule, are anxious to secure as good a platform supply as possible, but the shortage of really adequate speakers and properly developed mediums makes this problem very difficult.

Our best platform workers are usually booked to capacity. In fact they are overworked, and at times become psychically depleted and stale. Hence, as you rightly point out, the imperative need for a training centre where speakers and sensitives, under sympathetic and knowledgeable guidance, can be prepared to take up this pressing work. As a Union, we are anxious to correlate the problems of propaganda and platform supply so that where we hold big meetings to stimulate already established churches we shall be assured that the subsequent appeal at those churches shall be adequate.

To a lesser extent the same consideration applies to those areas where Spiritualism is not yet represented. We have a large scale map at the headquarters of the Union already prepared in the way you suggest. If support is forthcoming meetings in these virgin areas could be planned and organised, and followed up later by personal visits so that a church could be founded.

To begin with such a church would be a mission church, under the care of the local district council, as has already been done in some areas. It is an experiment which has justified itself and could be extended with obvious advantage. This is where a national organiser would be of immense benefit.

The question of cheap booklets has already been explored by the Union. Given the necessary finance, such a scheme could soon be self-supporting. We could immediately produce cheap editions of certain books, or parts of them, which should be readily available to the modern public.

When we considered this problem we soon found that our real difficulty was that certain aspects of Spiritualism could only be presented if we got down to the task of writing the books ourselves.

OUT-OF-DATE STYLE

The question of style, as you rightly point out, is a factor. Modern taste does not take kindly to the serious writing of 50 years ago. These booklets need to be modern; not only up-to-date with current scientific thought but also told in a way that appeals to the present day. In addition the public emphasis has changed. Today Survival is accepted, but the masses are quite content to leave it at that and to concern themselves with affairs of the moment. In one way that is salutary.

We really need to bring home to those same masses that without Spiritualism they are missing something that enriches life here. We have the knowledge which can completely transform life, satisfying current intellectual questionings and reconciling man's deepest intuitions. That is why Spiritualism to us is religion and that is why we need to write our books anew, showing our larger knowledge and understanding in a way calculated to meet modern needs.

CO-OPERATION WELCOMED

There is our problem. As an executive we are alive to its supreme importance and should welcome competent co-operation from any source. This war has called for a united national effort and, when it is over, the great period of reconstruction that will follow will demand that same wartime spirit of sacrifice, but directed to the progressive purposes of peace. In this campaign Spiritualism must lead. Now is the time to reorganise ourselves so that we shall be prepared for those conditions.

I would ask all Spiritualists, firstly, to ponder deeply what Spiritualism has meant to them and, if it has meant anything of real value, to dedicate their whole activities in furthering our cause.

Secondly, let us remember that finance is essential to any movement. I am of opinion that no body of people is doing so much work with so little money as the Spiritualists' National Union. In consequence, our efforts are hampered by cheese-paring economy. That is wrong. Spiritualism demands the best and we must see that progressive work is not restricted because of lack of funds. I agree with you, however, that the money will be forthcoming. I am convinced that no work for which there is a real need will ever perish for want of money while it has behind it people of faith and purpose. I believe there is a law of spiritual attraction which will draw to it all that is necessary for its support when the need is made clear.

We want effective propaganda and a modernised youth movement. We sorely need a centre to train suitable workers and an office so equipped and supplied that it can originate schemes to bring these things about.

I invite readers who are in sympathy with these ideals to join our Union and make common cause with us. Become subscribing members of the Union, if they are not already members, and then write and tell the office in what manner they can help.

In this way they will enable us to continue the work of building the Spiritualist movement till it becomes a mighty force, influencing all aspects of social, economic and religious life.

Barbanell responded:

I AM delighted to see that the S.N.U. is tackling the urgent problems of post-war Spiritualism envisaged by the Open Letter to John Stewart. I have been asked to co-operate and have been invited to join the planning committee which is shortly meeting in London.

I have since thought of two other ideals which should be included in this plan. The Spiritualist movement requires a country or sea-side home where its aged exponents could spend the winter of their lives in comfort and sympathetic surroundings. This home could include facilities for recuperation for mediums and speakers faced with illness.



Then we ought to have a psychic museum similar to the one established by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle many years ago in Westminster. All the seance-room mementoes he exhibited are still available, though they are all stored away.[12]

VALUABLE EXHIBITS

Scattered throughout the country, however, there are dozens of valuable psychic exhibits—apports, photographs, pictures, wax moulds obtained at seances—to enumerate only a few. These are at present lost to the movement.

The plea for a plan has brought a large correspondence from Spiritualists. Mainly they underline what I have already said.

James M. McLintock, a South-East London reader, points out that it is easy to get people interested in Spiritualism, but what they want is evidence. The movement needs more mediums. Pointing out that we depend on mediumship, he says that one medium who can produce results is worth ten books. He considers that insufficient is being done to produce mediums and urges a national campaign to encourage greater development of psychic powers.

SMALL CHURCHES' PROBLEM

Alfred R. Scarfe, of the Spiritualist church in Woodbridge, Suffolk, puts the problem of the small country churches. "One of our difficulties has been to obtain mediums," he writes, "for we have to have nearly all London mediums. This entails considerable travelling expenses on top of fees."

He has been considering the possibility of a federation of East Anglian churches, with a live organiser at its head. This could arrange for reputable mediums to be booked from a central organisation, large and small churches all contributing to the common pool.

He stresses the value of Spiritualist churches publicising their activities and encloses a copy of one of the large posters which is displayed on local hoardings.

J. D. Turner, a South-West London reader, points out that in the same week that we published the Seven-Years Plan "Light" printed a plea for Spiritualists to use co-operative advertising.

[12] See Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 5, May 2009: "Sir Arthur Doyle's Psychic Bookshop, Library & Museum".

"There is no doubt that action should be taken to put some of these plans in operation," he writes. "But I venture to suggest that it is not a matter for one organisation only. The best results could be obtained by a concerted effort on the part of all the main Spiritualist organisations throughout Great Britain. What can be done about it?"

I am convinced that, with bold planning, the use of vision and the marshalling of the talent this movement possesses, we could transmute the activities of Spiritualists throughout the land and make Spiritualism a leading, if not the leading, religious force in this country.

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Below is the National Conference report as published in the Two Worlds, July 11th, 1941:

NATIONAL CONFERENCE AT DERBY

THE Annual Conference of the S.N.U. was held on July 5th and 6th, at the Charnwood Street National Church, Derby. The attendance was small, owing to the inadvisability of workers leaving their own districts in the present circumstances, and by agreement it had been decided that only essential business should be done. The Council and Emergency Committee, however, have been working hard to continue and extend the Union's activities.

Mr. John Stewart presided and welcomed the delegates and friends, making special reference to the presence of Mr. Hannen Swaffer, our Hon. President, Mr. Fruin,[13] of the B.S.L.U., and Corporal Hancock, of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, a member of the Spiritualist Church at Edmonton, Alberta, who was accepted as a fraternal delegate. The visitor, who was received with applause, said he had been in England over twelve months and had found that Great Britain was home. They had their problems in Canada, but were steadily growing in strength and he hoped to learn something from his British colleagues. We want you to send the people to Canada who will help us to get legal recognition. The authorities want us to take out licences to practice mediumship at a cost of 200 dollars. We refuse to do so. We will not pay the Government for the right to worship in our own way. Religious freedom is every man's right. He thanked them for their brotherly welcome.

Mrs. Harrison (President) welcomed the Conference on behalf of the Spiritualists of Derby.

Owing to the transition of Mr. Frank Blake, in March last, the Presidential Address fell to the lot of Mr. J. M. Stewart, who said:

"In the hearts and minds of all freedom loving people to-day two resolutions stand dominant and unswerving: (I) to win the war and (2) to render impossible any repetition of the wanton aggression caused by Hitler and his associates.

As regards (I), this war has caused some strange reversals of peace time valuations and standards. We long for the stable and unchangeable, but find in time that the only everlasting thing is change.

It has always been our practice to pass a peace resolution at each A.G.M., but at London in 1937 a new note was introduced by appealing to the Government to strengthen the country's defences against possible attack. I am glad now that that resolution was passed despite opposition. It indicated a desire to make a stand against the peace breakers.

Two years later our country did make a stand against aggression, culminating in the ruthless attack upon Poland. In all, fourteen countries have one by one fallen victims in this

[13] Vol. 2, No. 3, May 2015: " "Remembering our old workers" – Albert Fruin 1888-1969".

way and it is plain that neither for us nor for any other country can there be security or hope of peace until Hitlerism is destroyed. This is a task which must come first and to which everything else must be subordinated.

When the war is over the period of reconstruction will demand the same war-time spirit of sacrifice directed progressively to the purposes of peace and the recasting of society. In this campaign the Spiritualist Movement must play its part. Now is the time to make our plans!

This A.G.M. affords us an opportunity to survey our position, to consider methods, ways and means as a preparation for a fresh advance. We must try as best we can to anticipate the issues of the future and to define our objectives in relation thereto.

A start has already been made, due to the foresight of our General Secretary, for in April, 1940, Mr. Keeling asked for the appointment of a Committee to prepare and submit plans for post-war development, including the raising of an Endowment Fund of £50,000 and culminating in special arrangements for the celebration of the Centenary of Modern Spiritualism in 1948. In this way, what has come to be known as the Seven Years' Plan was born.

Some of the things we are planning will be put into operation before our next A.G.M. Others may take longer, as, for example, the proposed publication of a series of books on various aspects of Spiritualism on the lines of the R.P.A. Thinker's Library, and plans for the achievement of a higher standard of Mediumship as well as its orderly training and development.



Shaw Desmond

Our friend, , in a recent article in the *Psychic News*, goes to the extreme when he says that the Movement is moribund. It is easy to criticise, but the man who only points out weakness and mistaken endeavour is of little value to progress.

Most of his strictures appear to be based upon experiences met while working with leading London bodies of Spiritualists. It would be unfair to apply them to the Movement at large and I do not accept them as applicable to the Union or its Churches.

There is one direct reference in his statement to the Union in which he asks if it is showing 'vital drive, constructive action, and illuminating propaganda' during what he calls 'a heaven sent opportunity of the war.' The opportunity is no doubt there, but surely it is not heaven sent.

Shaw Desmond is an Honorary Vice-President of the Union. It is a pity he is not better informed as to what the Union is doing and there is undoubtedly need for him to widen his contacts. I am sure if he had been aware of our work, even under war conditions, and particularly of the work of the Planning Committee, he would not have written in such despondent mood.

The Union exists to strengthen fraternal relations between Spiritualists and to facilitate co-operation in everything affecting their common interests. Deep in the hearts of us all there is this desire for co-operation. It brought the Union into being and has sustained it for half a century. No great movement has ever been consummated except by organised co-operation, but many Spiritualist bodies have been slow to recognise the need for a National Organisation, and this includes the very bodies Shaw Desmond complains about.

There is nothing for them to be afraid of, for the Union is essentially a free association of Spiritualist Churches, Societies and individuals. It is sufficiently comprehensive to include within its ranks all shades of opinion and should command the practical support of all sections. Until this is achieved, we will be denied the strength which comes from a united movement.

The world requires some new and unifying force to reach better times. I believe that behind all the destruction that is going on there are great purposes being worked out. The spirit people are not idle, and as long as we remember that we are co-partners with them, and in a measure co-partners with God, our Cause will radiate life and truth Spiritualism will be seen and known for what it is, a truth essential to the welfare and progress of the human race and will go forward to bless the world."

The Elections.

The election of Officers and Council were declared as follows:—

President: Mr. John M. Stewart (unopposed).

Vice-President: Mr. Harold L. Vigurs (unopposed).

Treasurer: Mr. Robt. F. Brewer (unopposed).

Area Representatives:—Midlands: No nomination. North-Western: Mrs. Lorna M. Andrews. Scottish: Election in progress. Southern: Mrs. Eva L. Vickers. National Councillor: Mr. Percy Wilson. Subscribers' Representative: Mr. E. W. Oaten.

Mr. Harold Vigurs voiced the annual tribute to "our arisen friends," which was received by a silent standing vote. Mr. Vigurs said: As we meet year by year gaps in our ranks remind us of the growing band of helpers in the larger life. We are conscious of their continued presence and interest in our work. We reverence them all—great and small—known and unknown. An exceptional case this year is that of our President, Frank Blake, who has joined greater army, and, if I speak of him in particular, it is as the representative of the whole band. Blake always struck me as an illumined mind with vision behind him. He was more a friend than a leader. He could minister not only to our earthly needs and sorrows but to our inner life. He helped us not by relieving us of our work, but by strengthening us to do it. Blake's work was not finished but he's completing it, and through him I thank the hosts of helpers and colleagues in the higher life.

The Annual Reports and Accounts were adopted. There had been a drop in membership but this was largely due to war conditions and was to be expected.

A discussion on the question of the proposed Youth Movement elicited speeches from Messrs. Fruin, Wilson, Mrs. Petz and others. It was generally agreed that something must be done to prepare for a larger future, and the President extended an invitation to the B.S.L.U. to join in the effort. The Secretary reported that, to meet the requirements of the Government, a panel of ministers—who need not necessarily be platform workers—had been formed and some sixty appointments had been made.

Amendments to the Trust Property regulations extending the scope of these measures were unanimously adopted.

Notices of Motion on the agenda were rejected by an overwhelming vote.

About 50 delegates were present and the meeting was a very happy one.

Thanks to retiring officers, Messrs. J. G. Findlay, R. Boddington and Mrs. Pickles were heartily adopted.

The proceedings ended with the greetings of the Hon. President, Mr. Hannen Swaffer, who said: We are meeting under difficulties I have often criticised, but I believe this is not the time for criticism. We are carrying on—that's as much as can be expected at present. We shall not draw large audiences when everyone is busy on national emergences work. Remember this country has not been saved only by famous generals and administrators, but by the courage of the rank and file. They will carry on till it ends. Then more difficult times will come. There must be a new world, but it must be worked for and we must be

worthy of it. We must strive for equality in colour, in religion, in social service and economics.

We Spiritualists are hampered in our work by inequality under the law—that must be mended.

Everybody knows the world's wrong been no two bodies agree as to the changes necessary. In the new world Spiritualism will be important. However humble your position, you must be true to the past and the future. Carry on ! There's a greater time coming.

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1942:

A trivial matter?

What may have been seen as a trivial matter at a time of devastation as WWII continued to rage, a speech at the 41st annual convention of the Spiritualists' National Union's London District Council, would cause turmoil within the Union. Some considered the ongoing bickering unnecessary but would continue for months; this was spurred on by the founding editor of Psychic News, Maurice Barbanell. The matter involved the editor's close friend, the Honorary President of the Union, Hannen Swaffer, and former SNU President Ernest Keeling, the SNU's Secretary. It began on the front page of Psychic News, June 6th, 1942:

Hannen Swaffer Throws A Bomb At Spiritualists

By Maurice Barbanell



Percy Wilson

INTO the Conway Hall, practically the only building left intact in a square which is the scene of devastation caused by air raids, Hannen Swaffer threw a bombshell last Saturday. The occasion was the May Meeting, the 41st annual convention of the Spiritualists' National Union's London District Council.

Swaffer, who is the Union's honorary president, flatly contradicted many of the statements made that evening by Ernest Keeling, the S.N.U.'s secretary. The climax was reached when Percy Wilson, president of the London District Council, forgetting that a chairman should be impartial, administered a public rebuke to Hannen Swaffer ! The controversy centred around the question of religion.

The meeting began on a quiet note with an address from John Stewart, president of the S.N.U., showing how Spiritualism had been effecting a reconciliation between science and religion. He regretted the many separate bodies in Spiritualism and pleaded for more co-operation.

LIVING IS THE TEST

Stewart made some references to religion. "The best exposition of a man's religion should be his life," he declared. Then he stressed the practical application of Spiritualism: "While we are demolishing superstition regarding life after death, we can join hands with those who are trying to improve the lot of man on earth."

Keeling, a distinctive figure with his snow-white hair, made an earnest speech. It was 52 years since he became associated with the Spiritualist movement. "I pledged my life to the spirit world," he said. "It was one of the most solemn moments of the whole of my life."

Then came one of the statements to which Swaffer later took exception. “I have come to believe that the Spiritualist movement has missed its way,” he said. “I cannot explain how it has come about.” Later he gave as one reason—“The average Spiritualist church is not a religious institution.”

He spoke as one who had held all the leading offices in one of the oldest churches in Britain and was fully acquainted with all the difficulties. But we had to realise that religious needs were the paramount needs.

Keeling then dealt with mediumship, which he said was the foundation on which the whole movement rested. “There would be no Spiritualist movement if there were no mediumship,” he said. “But I cannot see anything religious in the phenomena of Spiritualism.”

There were three main types to which the name Spiritualist was given. There were those who belonged to the infants’ class, who were merely convinced that life was continuous and communication was possible. There were thousands of the second class, people who were always going to our phenomena meetings in the hope of getting a message, and who were not interested in anything else.

“That is where I think we missed our way,” he said. If he had a Spiritualist church the public would be admitted to psychic demonstrations only once a month. The other Sunday services would be for “communion” and restricted to its members. What form that “communion” was to take he did not explain.

He regarded his talks with the next life as “the most sacred and hallowed experiences I have ever had,” adding, “I have a horror of parading the sacred and the hallowed.”

Keeling went on to plead for more humility on our platforms and among our church officials. He complained that there were hundreds of mediums giving public demonstrations who had not emerged beyond the apprentice stage. It would be infinitely better if they went back to their developing circles, for they were not properly trained.

The third type of Spiritualist was the one who realised the implications of the continuity of life.

HUMAN AND HOMELY



Bertha Harris followed with a demonstration of clairvoyance that was replete with human and homely touches.[14] It was mainly made up of those trivial incidents to which our critics frequently allude. The “dead” who returned showed they were still interested in all the little circumstances, the commonplaces that surrounded the loved ones they had left on earth.

There were one or two notes of drama as she referred to a group who passed because of an air raid. The group included five children who were “killed” when they left their shelter for a cup of tea. With them came a woman who jokingly referred to the fact that she and the recipient of her message “swopped furs.” The “dead” woman regretted that she could not borrow her shoes, because their feet were different sizes.

Then there was a “dead” individual who referred to a blazing car which overturned. He gave his name as Sandy and mentioned how he was wrapped in bandages as he lay dying.

[14] Vol. 3, No. 5, October 2016: “Bertha Harris Tells: How I See The Dead”.

NO RELIGION EXCEPT—

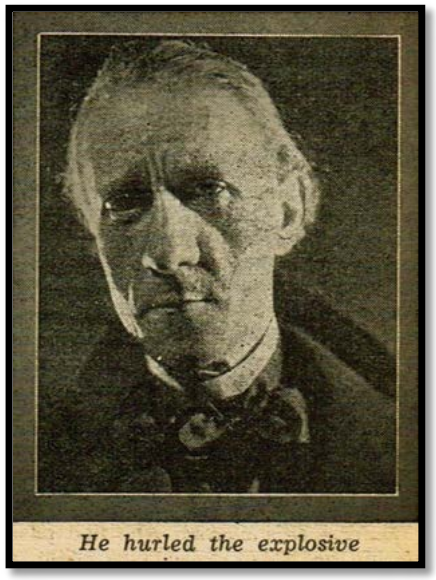
There was a woman who had passed on in the blitz, in a house near the Elephant and Castle, in South London. "I had no religion," she said, "except just doing my bit."

Whether by accident or design, the clairvoyance contradicted Keeling's statement that spirit communication was sacred and hallowed.

There was mention of a Siamese cat that would come back, and a budgerigar in which another cat was interested. A "dead" woman told her daughter that she wanted her to have her diamond ring.

A man told how, when some property was left, he was omitted in the bequest, but the two who inherited the property had played ducks and drakes with it. There was a spirit father who said he used to deal in old mangles and irons. He jokingly said that if he were on earth now he could make his fortune. There was a humorous surgeon who mentioned how he used to "carve beautifully" and who "died" because he "helped himself to gas."

Percy Wilson introduced Hannen Swaffer with glowing praise. He described the famous journalist as a columnist who stripped shams and pretences and revealed naked truths.



He hurled the explosive

Swaffer immediately began to do so. He thought it strange, he said, that Keeling should have travelled 200 miles to "say some extraordinary things." The secretary of the S.N.U. had spoken about sacred and hallowed communion. Yet the medium who followed him revealed that spirit return was merely part of a natural law. There was nothing sacred about the Siamese cat, the budgerigar, the diamond ring and property and all the clairvoyance which Keeling had obviously enjoyed.

"It has taken the spirit world 90 years," said Swaffer, "to demonstrate that communication is a human thing."

He referred to his home circle, which he had attended that afternoon, describing some of the visitors—the daughter of a marquis, a well-known knight and industrialist, and a leading Australian journalist. The circle that afternoon had been composed half of Gentiles and half of Jews.

THE GREAT LEVELLER

He mentioned all this to show that Spiritualism, and seances in particular, was the great leveller.

"I want to undo all that the secretary of the S.N.U. has done," said Swaffer. "I deny that one's religion is the 'most important thing in the world." And he referred to the woman who passed on in the blitz and who came back to say, "I haven't any religion—except just doing my bit." "That is all we have to do," he commented. "That is religion.

"The Spiritualist movement has not lost its way," said Swaffer. "It has done so much to destroy the fear of death that there is a new idea right across the world. It has brought hope into thousands of lives.

"Public worship is not the end of our movement. We shall be judged by our contribution to the society in which we live. This movement cannot fail because of the things it is teaching."

Swaffer said that he was in a position of some embarrassment. “Although I am the head of 500 Spiritualist churches, I do not believe, in public worship,” he said. “I never go to our churches, except to speak. We have a job to do, and religion is only of use as long as it helps us to do our job. What is important is not going to church, or singing hymns, or praying, but doing your job.

WORLD OF TOMORROW

“We have got to build a new order of society. Religion is not an end. It is merely a means. The end is a world in which there will be no creed, caste or colour bar, in which all races and all classes contribute to the common good.

“If there had been no religion in India there would now be a settlement instead of interminable disputes between Moslems and Hindus.

“Our task in the future is to spur on the purpose of building a new social order. The old world is gone. We have to rebuild. And, in the building of the new world, Spiritualism will either be of great use or of no use at all.”

Then came the sensation—Percy Wilson’s reproof of Hannen Swaffer ! After declaring that with much Swaffer had said he profoundly disagreed, and that with some of it he heartily agreed, Wilson went on: “I venture to say that Mr. Swaffer has not read and imbibed the teachings of the spirit world.”

Swaffer afterwards told me that, because he was seated directly behind Percy Wilson, he neither heard his fulsome flattery in introducing him nor the intended rebuke at the end! He was never concerned with praise or adverse criticism. He had thought, for example, that John Stewart’s lavish tribute to him in *Psychic News* last week should not have been printed. That issue of *Psychic News* was dated the same day as the May Meeting !

In it Stewart praised Swaffer for the “fearless way in which he so consistently upholds freedom of thought and does his best to counteract tyranny in high places. His support of unpopular causes has won for him the esteem of all true lovers of humanity.”

PAST TROUBLES

There have frequently been arguments about Swaffer’s speeches. Once, after addressing a meeting at the Queen’s Hall, at which he declared that the home circles were the strength of our movement, he was accused of attacking professional mediums. An outspoken address, given by him at the Grotrian Hall opposing Mrs. Stobart’s view that Spiritualism should be handed over, “lock, stock and barrel” to the Churches, did not please her and some of her supporters.

And, many years ago, he and two other speakers who, at an Albert Hall remembrance service, stressed the need for applying Spiritualist truths to life’s problems, were accused of being too political !

Above is the full published account by Psychic News; it would naturally create a backlash with Spiritualists in general, relationships of the SNU and the press, and, of course, within the Union itself, and would indeed call on the position and role of Honorary President of the SNU. Below, Barbanell in Psychic News, issue June 27th, 1942, continues to keep up the pressure resulting from the May meeting of the Union's District Council. This article also brings in other points of our history, its workers and their views:

CRISIS IN OFFICIAL SPIRITUALISM
FRANK WARNING TO OUR LARGEST ORGANISED BODY

THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION, OUR LARGEST ORGANISED BODY, IS NOW AT THE CROSS-ROADS. SOMETHING APPROACHING A HERESY HUNT IS BEING CONDUCTED. THERE ARE WHISPERS AND HINTS THAT HANNEN SWAFFER SHOULD BE ASKED TO RELINQUISH HIS HONORARY PRESIDENCY OF THE S.N.U.

All this is a result of the May Meeting of the Union's London District Council held a few weeks ago, when Swaffer challenged some of the views expressed by Ernest Keeling, the S.N.U. secretary.



Ernest Keeling

As inevitably happens in controversies, the main issue has become a little obscured. In the "Two Worlds," more or less the official organ of the S.N.U.—the exact relationship has never been defined [15]—Keeling recently said, among other things, of his visit to the May Meeting, "The question of whether Spiritualism is or is not a religion was raised in a rather acute term" He went on to say that Swaffer disagreed with him.

There was a disagreement—but not on whether Spiritualism is a religion. The main controversy dealt with public worship and the place of religion in a man's life.

BE ONLY FAIR REPORT

If you want to know what happened and were not present at the meeting, you could only learn from the report published in *Psychic News*. Only two papers reported the meeting, ourselves and the "Two Worlds." Ours was as fair as human beings could make it. Every news-worthy point was recorded.

The "Two Worlds" neither printed Swaffer's speech nor referred to him by name ! He was described first as "a visitor" and then as "the person." In the past Spiritualists have

[15] Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 2: "It has been stated that *The Two Worlds* is controlled by the Spiritualist National Union. That is not true. (The fact is, the Union was started as the result of agitation *in The Two Worlds*.) When the paper started in 1887, many Spiritualist Churches subscribed to its capital; they are *still* on the list of shareholders, so that many of the Churches rather than the Union have an interest in the paper. Further, every editor of *The Two Worlds* has been a member of the National Council, and *several* of them have been its President. Members of the Council of the Spiritualist National Union have *always* been invited to a position on its Board of Directors. There is no obligation in the matter, but *The Two Worlds* has always considered that an organised Movement is essential to the well-being of Spiritualism, and has considered it wise to work in the closest collaboration *with* such organisation. While individual effort can be useful in propaganda, we believe that organisation is necessary for consolidation." Ernest W. Oaten.

rightly protested against the way in which national newspapers have often unfairly dealt with our case. Here a difference of opinion in Spiritualism was fairly dealt with by a Spiritualist journal.

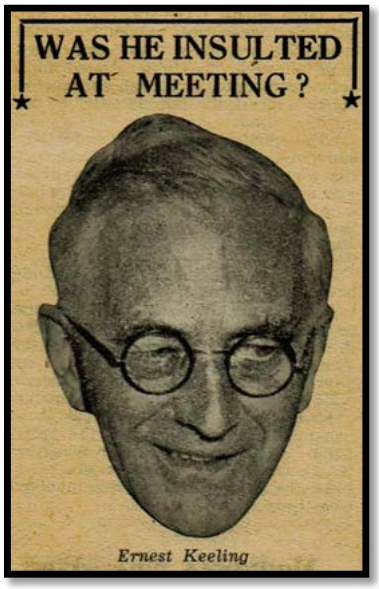
The truth is that Hannen Swaffer at the May Meeting was Hannen Swaffer. If Percy Wilson, the London District Council's president and chairman of the meeting, wanted to hear conventional views conventionally expressed, he should not have invited Swaffer to speak. Swaffer is always challenging and disturbing.

REASON FOR HIS CHOICE

That is why he is well known. That is why he is valuable to Spiritualism. That is why the Union, 12 years ago, when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle passed on, asked him to be the next honorary president.

John Stewart, its present president, who said at the May Meeting almost the same thing as Swaffer—his words were "The best exposition of a man's religion should be his life''—did not meet with any objection. But then John is more conventional. Swaffer later amplified that statement in his inimitable fashion.

When he said, "I want to undo all that the secretary of the S.N.U. has done," he did not deny, as Keeling now says he did, that Spiritualism was a religion. What Swaffer did deny was that religion "is the most important thing in the world."



He cited a "dead" woman, described that evening by Bertha Harris, who came back to say, "I had no religion— except just doing my bit." Then Swaffer made the point: "That is all we have to do. That is religion."

He criticised the idea that religion and public worship were one and the same thing. He did not believe in public worship, he said. He stressed, "Religion is only of use as long as it helps us to do our job. What is important is not going to church, or singing hymns, or praying, but doing your job."

Visualising the World of Tomorrow, Swaffer concluded, "We have got to build a new order of society. Religion is not an end. It is merely a means. The end is a world in which there will be no creed, caste or colour bar, in which all races and all classes contribute to the common good."

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Now that is the application of Spiritualism, as I understand it, and as most Spiritualists understand it. Anyway, it is what the spirit world teaches.

In last week's "Two Worlds,' in "London Topics," a similar point of view was stated another way. It declared that the spirit teachers worked "to alleviate the suffering of humanity by removing the misconception concerning 'death,' and by uplifting the mind so that the circumstances of life shall be improved."

It is now being alleged that Swaffer made an offensive and insulting attack on Keeling. I can only say that I was present and saw no offence. If there was any offensiveness that evening, surely it was in Percy Wilson's rebuke to Swaffer, rather surprising after his fulsome praise.

JOKE ABOUT NORTH POLE

In characteristic vein, Swaffer referred to Keeling's travelling from Liverpool to London by joking about the man who came from "somewhere near the North Pole." You must be very thin-skinned to regard this as offensive and insulting !

You might agree or disagree with the views expressed by Swaffer, but free speech is the essence of democracy, and healthy controversy can never harm truth.

A few years ago, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, when he was the Union's honorary president, advocated the adoption of an eighth principle, one accepting the leadership of Jesus. This was rejected by the movement. But no heresy hunt followed.[16]

CONAN DOYLE'S PLEA

Later, at a general election; he pleaded, because of a promise from the head of the Liberal Party to amend the Vagrancy Act, that Spiritualists should vote Liberal. This did not find favour with thousands of Spiritualists. But no heresy hunt followed.

Mrs. St. Clair Stobart and Shaw Desmond, both honorary vice-presidents of the Union, have propagated views diametrically opposed to those held by many Spiritualists in the S.N.U. But no heresy hunts have followed.

Now I know Swaffer's views better than any other Spiritualist in the land. I know that his outward, mocking cynicism hides a burning, passionate sincerity. I know that Spiritualism has been a tremendous influence in his life, which, ever since he became convinced of its truth, has been dedicated to the upliftment and betterment of the illtreated and the impoverished.

His political campaigning, his fight for social justice and his enthusiasm for reform are fortified by his Spiritualist knowledge.

I have spoken with him on hundreds of platforms. He and I set up the record for Spiritualist propaganda by addressing 250,000 people in three years. I have sat up half the night with him discussing Spiritualism and a thousand-and-one other subjects in cars, trains and hotels.[17]

SERVICE WITHOUT FEE

I know his embarrassing frankness. I know all about his idiosyncrasies. But I do know his great contribution to our movement—and he has never charged one farthing for his services or his expenses.

He has been the means of spreading our knowledge among thousands, who include the influential and the well known, with whom he is on intimate terms. He is our biggest draw with the public, for his name will fill the largest halls where others do not.

His advocacy has earned for our movement a respect which it never before possessed. And the marked change in the Press attitude towards us is largely due to his activities.

"MY RELIGION"

He has not changed his views on Spiritualism and its religious implications ever since I first met him almost a score of years ago. When in 1935 he contributed to a "My Religion"

[16] Vol. 2, No. 6, November 2015: "Maurice Barbanell, the S.N.U. and his Propaganda Work".

[17] As above reference.

series in *Psychic News*—his article was reprinted in its entirety four years later —he began by saying:

"I am in religion a Spiritualist and a Socialist. To me both those words mean the same thing." Then he went on, "In accepting the Brotherhood of Man as a cardinal principle of everyday life in all its aspects, I believe that Spiritualism and Socialism, when joined in the practice of the lives of all of us, will abolish all creedal differences, end all class and caste hatreds, join us all in one great human family and build up a new world, in which the only distinctions will be the degrees of our service to the general good."

We are fighting, among other liberties, for the right of free speech. It would be folly of the direst kind for Spiritualists to resent freedom of expression on our platforms—especially as we have always boasted that we possessed no creed, no dogma and no pope.

ROOM FOR ALL

The S.N.U., if it is to succeed, must be inclusive and not exclusive. It must break down barriers, not add new ones. It must find room within its ranks for all who are fired by similar enthusiasm to propagate the new-old gospel enunciated from the Other Side.

We must not create a new rigid orthodoxy. We must not introduce anything approaching a Star Chamber or a Grand Inquisition.

Narrowness is a restriction. Cliques must be avoided. Cabals must not be imported. Regimentation and dragooning are foreign to Spiritualism.

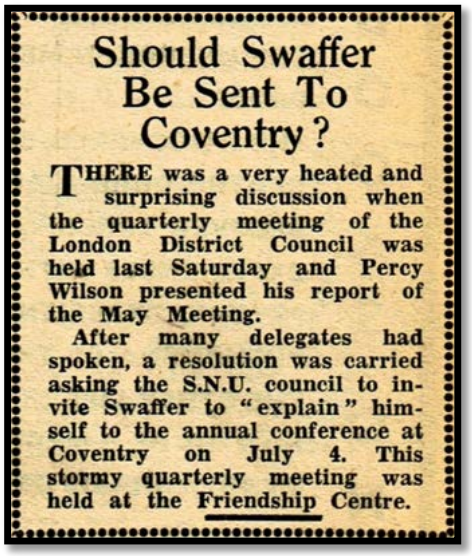
There is a hungry, bereaved world awaiting our message. That is our important task—not a new heresy hunt.

FALLING MEMBERSHIP

Besides, the S.N.U. has urgent problems claiming its attention. The number of Spiritualists has grown in the past few years. This growth is not reflected in the S.N.U.

Ten years ago it had 479 churches with over 15,000 members. Today it possesses 65 fewer churches and has lost 2,600 members—one-sixth of its membership gone in a decade. At that rate, there will be no S.N.U. in a half-century !

BLUNT WORDS



Should Swaffer Be Sent To Coventry?

THERE was a very heated and surprising discussion when the quarterly meeting of the London District Council was held last Saturday and Percy Wilson presented his report of the May Meeting.

After many delegates had spoken, a resolution was carried asking the S.N.U. council to invite Swaffer to "explain" himself to the annual conference at Coventry on July 4. This stormy quarterly meeting was held at the Friendship Centre.

"Religion attracts but the churches repel," said Cosmo Gordon Lang, indicting the Orthodoxy he led for years. Can it be that Spiritualism attracts and some S.N.U. churches repel ?

Now I am not criticising individual members of the S.N.U., many of whom have given splendid service to our cause through their churches. But I warn the Union that unless it adopts a more far-sighted policy, unless it is guided by toleration and broadmindedness, it will fail the post-war world and the spirit world.

It has reached a crisis in its history. I hope it sees the writing on the wall. I trust that when it is weighed in the balance it will not be found wanting.

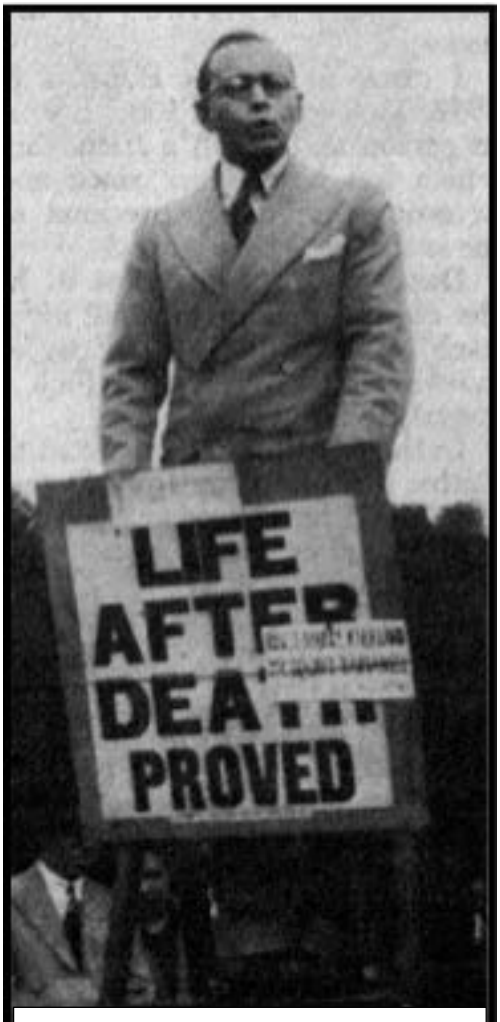
There were no signs of relenting as controversy continued in Psychic News; sliding away was not an option, especially as the 1942 AGM was soon to take place. Barbanell continued the pressure in Psychic News, July 4th, 1942:

We Are Now Accused Of Hatching A "Sinister Plot"

S.N.U. SECRETARY HAS NOT HEARD OF CRISIS !

Maurice Barbanell

THOUGH HE IS THE SECRETARY OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION, ERNEST KEELING DOES NOT KNOW THAT THERE IS A CRISIS IN HIS ORGANISATION ! IN FACT, HE DENIES ITS EXISTENCE, AND ACCUSES ME OF "APPARENTLY TRYING TO CREATE TROUBLE IN THE S.N.U."



Maurice Barbanell: Hyde Park 1936

I did not create the trouble. It was created by the S.N.U. *Psychic News* merely did its duty by reporting what has happened.

If Keeling does not know what is going on in his organisation, I am sorry for his ignorance. His own words are, "It might be thought that the Union's office would be aware if there was a crisis, but we have no knowledge of one."

Well, the office may not know, but John Stewart, president of the Union, to mention only one official, knows all about it.

THE INDICTMENT

Keeling does not like the article I wrote on this page last week. In "S.N.U. News," under the heading "Is It A Plot?" he deals with the aftermath of the London May Meeting in this fashion:

"The manner in which the whole incident has been dealt with and the somewhat extravagant innuendoes and misrepresentations which have been made all seem to point to a sinister plot. What its purpose may be we cannot surmise, but it is obvious that it is not intended to benefit the S.N.U.

"There appears to be a desire on the part of a single individual to use the power of the press to create a crisis and dictate to the members of the Union what they shall think and what they shall do."

That is the accusation. What are the facts? *Psychic News* is a newspaper. It prints the news. As part of its normal duties, it reported the May Meeting—and the aftermath.

The "Two Worlds," which publishes "SNU News," left out Swaffer's speech—that led to all the controversy—and even refused to mention that he was present!

PRESIDENT AGREES

As Keeling is so abysmally ignorant of what has since transpired, I will pierce the veil for him. Seeing that he accuses me of indulging in "extravagant innuendoes," of "misrepresentations" and of hatching a "sinister plot," I will tell him that his president, John Stewart, read the article on the day before it appeared last week and expressed his agreement with it. Will Keeling now accuse Stewart of joining in a "sinister plot" ?

It was intended, at the quarterly meeting of the Union's London District Council, held on June 20, to move a resolution that the office of honorary president should lapse. This was an adroit move to get rid of Swaffer, for he is the honorary president.

When he heard of this first step in the heresy hunt, John Stewart announced that if Swaffer were forced out of his honorary office, he would resign his presidency of the Union.

John would automatically continue in office for another year, for he is unopposed in the election that takes place at Coventry on July 4.

Keeling says that he has no knowledge of any crisis. Do presidents resign every day in the S.N.U.?

After learning of John's decision, the original resolution was dropped. In its place, one was moved and carried, as reported by us last week, asking Swaffer to "explain" himself to the annual conference at Coventry.

This meeting of the London District Council was a very stormy one. It was at first impossible for John Stewart to get a hearing ! He was shouted down by a bigoted opposition. All he attempted to do was to report Swaffer's views, following a conversation with him. And being a man of peace John wanted them to vote against the resolution. Dealing with the heresy hunt, he announced that his sympathy was with the hunted and not the hunters.

DOESN'T KEELING KNOW ?



Ernest Keeling

So disgusted was he with the proceedings that John seriously considered resigning from the London District Council as a protest. Yet Keeling says he has not heard of any crisis.

Let me repeat that if the heresy hunt is continued at Coventry, John, unless he changes his mind by then, has announced that he will no longer be the Union's president.

I pleaded at the London District Council's meeting that the right of free speech was vital in Spiritualism, that even if Swaffer was wrong—and I do not admit that—he had a perfect right to express his views on Spiritualist platforms.

MY RESIGNATION

Because of the heresy hunt I resigned from the planning committee of the Union. This is the committee that was formed to adopt the "Seven-Year Plan" I proposed in these columns. At John's request I agreed to defer my resignation until after the annual meeting at Coventry.

Because of all these happenings, which I thought and still think constitute a crisis in the S.N.U., I wrote the front page article last week. It was a frank warning. It was a plea for toleration.

I have been associated with the Union for a score of years. I have been a member of its national council. I know its virtues and its failings. But loyalty to Spiritualism must come first. I cannot place the S.N.U. before the spirit world.

The Union has wasted years on rules and regulations, on altering and revising its articles of association while a perplexed world awaited our message. If half the time spent on tinkering with its machinery had been devoted to fostering mediumship and to propaganda the Union would not be in the parlous state it is in today.

Keeling now agrees that "it should be possible to differ without quarrelling." That is why I opposed the heresy hunt. My reward is to be accused of "indulging in wild statements," and of hatching a plot."

Honest criticism never harmed anybody. If the Union or its secretary resents it, I am sorry for them. It is the life-blood of democracy. It is one of the principles for which we are fighting.

I will oppose any attempt to start a new orthodoxy in Spiritualism. I have nothing to withdraw or to retract. My warning to the S.N.U. still stands.

"The cause is greater than the Union, the church or the individual," says Keeling.

That is the lesson the S.N.U. must learn. If it does not, it will decay—as have all organisations which preferred vested interests to spiritual freedom.

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The Two Worlds, July 10th, 1942, report is partly quoted below. The fortieth Annual General Meeting of the Spiritualists' National Union was held at Parkside Spiritualist Church, Coventry on July 4th. Regarding the controversy, alleged crisis, etc., apart from Swaffer's letter shown below and a rather pointed comment noted below, it appeared to be business as usual: [18]

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE S.N.U.

"The annual Reports were accepted and were supplemented by interim reports for the last 6 months. These showed an increase over last year of 40 churches and 1,000 members, resulting in an increase of £90 in fees. Class B. (subscribing) members showed an increase of £24. The war had, of course, brought increased expenditure, including insurances and fire watching, amounting to roughly £50. The Building Fund pool had made two further advances to enable churches to secure premises, but war damage had affected the ability of some churches to keep up to their repayments. Every building society had the same difficulty to face, but these disabilities are probably temporary. A fund is now in existence to assist blitzed churches (and some have been assisted), but the response has been disappointing.

"A long discussion took place on the proposals of the Council for an organization to meet the needs of the young. These had been circulated and were presented for the Council by Mr. Vigurs. He stressed the need some organization to meet the youth of to-day. He could not agree that the welfare of the young was the sole concern of Lyceum Officers. The needs of youth were not being met. The scheme before them was placed there for discussion, and the Council asked for help in its evolution, to meet present any needs. A long letter was read from Mr. A. T. Connor. The Council stressed the point that it had tried

[18] Although I have not seen the Presidential address at present.

conscientiously for several years to secure the co-operation of the Lyceum Union, but had failed. It could no longer divest itself of responsibility for the welfare of its children and young people: but still held itself open to accept co-operation from every quarter.

"Some twenty delegates took part in the discussion, after which the following resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority, ''That this annual Meeting of the S.N.U. agrees to the proposals now before them and instructs the Council to proceeded with the scheme, and to solicit the co-operation of the British Spiritualists Lyceum Union." "

"Mr. Stewart, from the chair, moved the following resolution, "That this Annual Meeting of the S.N.U. affirms that it is one of the main objects of this Union to secure the legal recognition of the religion of Spiritualism, and whilst insisting on the right of each of its members to individual interpretation of the Seven Principles,[19] disassociates itself from certain reported statements of its Honorary President at the recent London May Meetings.

"On the contrary it expresses its appreciation of the work done by well conducted Spiritualist Churches in their public services for devotion and worship, and emphasises the value of the devotional atmosphere, not only for the highest type of spirit communion, as apart from the psychic communication, but also as an aid to individual spiritual unfoldment." The resolution was unanimously carried without a dissentient voice."

"The Credentials Officer, Mr. Lorraine Haig, reported the following attendance:— Council Members 11, B.S.L.U. 1, District Councils 8, Church Representatives 32, Visitors 15, Total 67.



"Mr. Stewart read a letter he had received from Mr. Hannen Swaffer which expressed regret that any remarks of his at the May meetings should have caused hurt to Mr. Keeling, and assuring him that the last thing he intended was to inflict hurt to one with whom he had had a long friendship. Mr. Swaffer thought that far too much had been made of a trivial incident. Mr. Keeling assured the meeting that he accepted such expression without reservation, and hoped the matter would now be forgotten.

"A lengthy discussion took place on the notice of motion by the Council to increase the capitation fee of the Churches from 1s. to 2s per member per year. The proposition was opposed by the Representatives of the Northern, South Midlands and Yorkshire districts, though Sheffield strongly supported it. Mr. McIndoe explained that costs were rising in every department of life, the Churches were continually adding to the work of the Council, which had had to carry on its work recently with an emergency committee, because they could not afford to meet as a full Council. Restricted income meant inefficiency, and this always meant waste. The proposal would double the income of the District Councils, as well as that of the Union. Over a dozen delegates contributed to the discussion. The resolution was subsequently put and carried by 23 votes to 4."

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[19] Charles Coulston, SNU Consultant, notes: "Liberty of interpretation issue: the Council of the Union, which was at that time the policy-making body of the Union, agreed to accept this [legal] advice from the Union's solicitors and the Council's acceptance of it was relayed to members at the Union's 1988 Annual General Meeting. The reference to liberty of interpretation was accordingly deleted from the Union's Articles of Association and elsewhere from that point in time."

See Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 2: Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?

Given Swaffer's rather straightforward letter, one may be forgiven for concluding that, as Swaffer put, it "a trivial matter" would be the last of this "heresy" and life would return to business for the Union and reporting on Spiritualism for Barbanell in Psychic News !

But,

Barbanell in Psychic News, July 11th, 1942, writes:

Hannen Swaffer Throws Second Bomb

HE RESIGNS HIS HONORARY PRESIDENCY OF OUR LARGEST NATIONAL ORGANISATION

HANNEN SWAFFER HAS THROWN A SECOND BOMB—ONE THAT HAS BLASTED HIM OUT OF HIS HONORARY PRESIDENCY OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION !

It was a delayed action bomb, for I carried it about with me for a whole day last Saturday, when it should have exploded. Skilful tactics on the part of the council of the S.N.U at its annual conference at Coventry last week-end prevented me from hurling the explosive then.

And yet Ernest Keeling, the Union's secretary, and the "Two Worlds," more or less its official organ, denied last week that there was any crisis !

START OF HERESY HUNT

All this is the aftermath of the May Meeting of the Union's London District Council at which Swaffer threw his first Bomb. He disagreed with some statements made by Keeling on the value of public worship and the place of religion in a man's life.



Swaffer said he spoke with some embarrassment, for he was the head of Spiritualist churches. That started a heresy hunt. He was accused of insulting the London District Council.

Because he referred to Keeling's traveling from Liverpool to London by joking about the man who came from "somewhere near the North Pole," he was told that he had been offensive and insulting!

As part of its normal newspaper function *Psychic News* reported the May Meeting and all that has since transpired. This incurred both the censure and the displeasure of Ernest Keeling. I was accused of "apparently endeavouring to create trouble in the S.N.U.," indulging in "extravagant innuendoes," I was guilty of "misresentations," and I was hatching a "sinister plot."

SELF-CENSORSHIP

You would have thought from Keeling denial of the existence of a crisis that everything in the S.N.U. garden was lovely. But Keeling had his doubts about his own views. In between sending me his usual copy of the "S.N.U. News" and its appearance in the "Two Worlds" he censured himself! He changed his reference to my hatching

a "sinister plot" in my possessing an "ulterior motive." And I, the "villain" in the piece, was not told of the lessening of my crime.

Oaten, Editor of the "Two Worlds," and a member of the Union's council, also took a hand last week. He accused me of "engineering a crisis" and declared, "This may be good journalism, but it's jolly poor Spiritualism."

This is very fifth-form—'bad show, old boy," and all that sort of thing—but what does it mean? Bad journalism cannot be good Spiritualism.

The "Two Worlds" suppressed Swaffer's speech at the May Meeting. It even suppressed, in its report, the fact that he was present, describing him first as "a visitor" and then as "the person." That is bad journalism—and bad Spiritualism.

Oaten also denied there was a crisis. Well, he must have forgotten that he was present at the quarterly meeting of the London District Council at which Percy Wilson, its president, presented his report of the May Meeting. This was the stormy gathering at which John Stewart, the Union's president, could not at first get a hearing. He was howled down by a bigoted opposition.

Oaten, who left before the meeting's conclusion, said, in answer to a suggestion that he should speak, that they were in a nice mess, he hoped they would get out of it, but there was nothing happening that interested him !

John Stewart asked me to be present at this quarterly meeting so that I should speak against a resolution that the office of honorary president should lapse. That resolution was never moved. Instead one was carried asking the S.N.U. council to invite Swaffer to "explain" himself to the annual conference at Coventry.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Two days before this conference, John Stewart and Percy Wilson called on Swaffer to discuss this crisis which according to Oaten and Keeling did not exist. John, a man of peace, tried to pour oil on the troubled waters. Swaffer immediately agreed to John's suggestion that he should write a letter, which could be read at the conference, expressing his regrets for the alleged insult to Keeling.

Incidentally, there has been no mention of an apology for Wilson's public reproof from the chair of Swaffer—"I venture to say Mr. Swaffer has not read and imbibed the teachings of the spirit world." Despite the fact that I have shown Wilson my shorthand note, he says he was "misreported."

This is the letter that Swaffer wrote to Stewart:

"*I wish you would convey to Ernest Keeling my assurance that in the speech made at the May Meeting I had no intention of causing him any hurt of any kind.*

"*Directly after he left the platform, he merely said to me, 'I still think I am right,' and it was not until you told me that I had offended that I had the slightest idea that I had done more than chaff someone whom I regarded as a friend.*

"I cannot but feel that the entire incident has been magnified out of all proportion and that, in days when the whole world is in turmoil, it is singularly unfortunate that a speech made in all honesty of purpose should be regarded as anything more than a mixture of sincerity and humour.

"Perhaps all our nerves are frayed by the happenings in the world outside.

"Anyway, as I have hurt Ernest Keeling, I am assured it is only fitting that I should express my regrets to him."

On the day before the conference Swaffer gave me a letter to read *after* the May Meeting had been discussed by the delegates. The Union's council was very adroit. Although its secretary had officially announced that there was no crisis, it produced, after "careful consideration," this resolution which was its "unanimous decision":

"That this annual general meeting of the Spiritualists' National Union affirms that it is one of the main objects of the Union to secure the legal recognition of the religion of Spiritualism, and, while insisting on the rights of each of its members to individual interpretation of the Seven Principles, dissociates itself from certain reported statements of the honorary president at the recent London May Meeting, and, on the contrary, expresses its appreciation of the work done by well-conducted Spiritualist churches in their public services for devotion and worship, and emphasises the value of this devotional atmosphere, not only for the highest type of spirit communion as distinct from psychic communication, but also for individual spiritual unfoldment."

This resolution was read to the conference and, as it was unanimously carried without any discussion, I did not read Swaffer's letter.

SMOKE-SCREEN ?

This "devotional atmosphere" sounds very fine. The conference, which began and ended with prayers, was held in what I hope is a "well-conducted" Spiritualist church. Most of the time, many of the 67 delegates, 15 visitors and council members smoked cigarettes and pipes !

Tea was generously given to the delegates in another Spiritualist church which meets above a butcher's shop. I find it hard to believe that the conditions which surround slaughtered animals make for a "devotional atmosphere." Does this come within the category of a "well-conducted church"?

What sanctimonious nonsense! All the successful seances I have attended have been human, homely and natural. The guides have always asked for brightness and not long-faced solemnity. How pompous and self-righteous is "the highest type of spirit communion as distinct from psychic communication"! It smacks, too, of ersatz mysticism.

VITAL OMISSION

There isn't much to report about the conference. I found it boring. The delegates were not asked to discuss the vital need for spreading our message to the growing ranks of the bereaved. There was no mention of the message we could give to a war-stricken, disillusioned, perplexed world.

There were two bright spots. It was announced that the Union was to protest to the Board of Education against the move to foist Orthodoxy, in the guise of "religious education," on the children.

It was announced, too, that the Union was going to sponsor its own youth scheme, and the hope—it is a very faint hope !—was expressed that the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union, which cares for the young, would co-operate.

There was some discussion on the motion, ultimately carried, that the capitation fee should be raised from one shilling to two shillings. There was some more discussion on the hypothetical question as to whether the assets of its district councils belonged to the Union if the S.N.U. went into liquidation.

There was no discussion on why the Union's membership has been decreasing while the number of Spiritualists has been growing.

Union Loses Its (Nominal) Head

This is Swaffer's letter of resignation which he addressed to Maurice Barbanell:—

I WANT you to express to the S.N.U. conference my views on the unfortunate squabble that has arisen in consequence of my speech at the May Meeting. Yet in order that the whole matter shall be thrashed out in public, and that no member of the conference shall be influenced by what I have to say, I want you to withhold the contents of this letter until some decision has been reached.

I think it most extraordinary that at a time when the whole world is in despair, when ten countries in Europe are enduring slavery, and the future of the British Commonwealth, and indeed all that we call civilisation, is at stake, a few remarks that I made out of the earnestness of my soul should have given such offence that, although it happened over a month ago, a lot of people with nothing better to do are still arguing about it.

It is reported to me—and by you, whose word I absolutely trust, and whose memory is, in my view, by far the best among the leaders of the movement—that, at the quarterly meeting of the London District Council, there was shown by some speakers spite and malevolence foreign to the spirit of any gathering which professes religion, and startling even to my vast worldly experience.

President Howled Down

Someone asked if I was gate-crashing, this although I am the honorary president of the S.N.U. Someone else accused me of being a "spoilt child" because I was "a famous journalist." Someone else asked if I had signed the Seven Principles. I was jeered at. On the other hand, so too was John Stewart, the president of the Union, who indeed was howled down during his brave and generous attempt to bring some sense of proportion into the gathering.

Now, here is a troubled world yearning for a message of hope. Here are hundreds of thousands of mourning families seeking for news of their loved ones. Here is a new world in the making. Yet all that certain members of the London District Council seem to want to do is to show spite and envy.

I was asked, when Doyle died, to take on the honorary presidency. It was a post I did not seek or desire. I thought that, if I accepted it, I might be of some service to the movement. I have spent considerable sums of money on the Spiritualist cause. I have never charged anybody one farthing, even for expenses. I have championed Spiritualism publicly in several countries on the Continent, and in America, Canada, Morocco, Egypt and Palestine. I have travelled long distances, often far into the night, during my crusade for the Spiritualist cause.

Fleet Street's New Approach

I have succeeded, in the last few years, in doing what no one could do before—utterly changed the aspect of journalism towards a Spiritualism which, before I was convinced of its truth, was made a mock of in Fleet Street.

But all that, I see, counts for nothing.

Really, I have no time to waste on such trivialities. The S.N.U. is obviously concerned more with its churches than with Spiritualism. It is not concerned with propaganda, but with holding offices. It is not concerned wiith conveying its great message to a grieving world, but in altering its articles of association and defending its property.

Believe me, more important work awaits me elsewhere. I have no time for silly arguments, pettifogging disputes, or parish council bickerings.

If at any time any one of the S.N.U. churches wants me to conduct, with you, a propaganda meeting on its behalf, I shall be delighted to do so if I am able. If at any time the Spiritualist movement wants my aid, it awaits it. But as for being the honorary president of a Union, members of which insult me behind my back, that, I am afraid, is now beneath my dignity.

To be concluded in the next issue …

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The home page gives a direct link to all the back copies of "Pioneer"; subscribe free, etc.

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"Hydesville"

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Primarily advisable for the SNU educational courses

Also, a link to all "Psypioneer" issues often referenced in Pioneer



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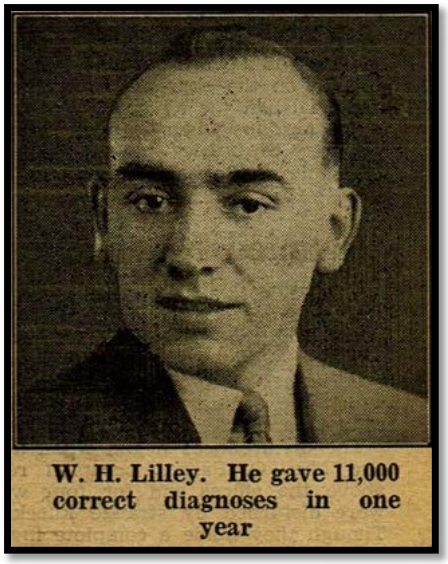


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A War-Time Remarkable Healer

W. H. Lilley


W. H. Lilley. He gave 11,000 correct diagnoses in one year

Psychic News, September 21st, 1940, quoted below:

Medium's New Psychic Healing Centre

"WHILE the bombs—and the raiders—fall Spiritualism extends its healing, never more needed than now.

"A new centre is being opened at 7, Chariot Street, Hull, as a result of the work of W. H. Lilley, the 26-year-old Leeds healer who has given 11,000 correct diagnoses in one year.

"This new centre, sponsored by the same band of workers who have made the Sanctuary at Black Bull Street, Leeds, world-famous, is opening on October 1. Lilley will be there to heal and advise every Thursday and Friday from October 3.

"All healing and advice is free, but appointments for personal treatment at either centre must be made by writing to The Sanctuary, 20, Black Bull Street, Leeds, 10.

Lilley and his associates, working under spirit guidance, are specially interested in cases which doctors say are incurable."

"Since January, 1939, when the Leeds centre opened, this band of Spiritualist healers has successfully treated cancer, migraine, epilepsy, St. Vitus's Dance, jaundice, catarrh, gallstones, cirrhosis, dropsy, asthma, pleurisy, bronchitis and so on through almost the whole catalogue of human diseases.

"Thousands have been helped, and still the work grows in a world that talks about the next air raid or what happened in the last one."

—~—☼—~—

Psychic News, April 26th, 1941, gives a rather good overview on how Lilly achieved his early healing ministry at such an early age:

Army Tribunal Gives Spirit Healer Complete Exemption

UNCONDITIONAL exemption from Army service has been given to a man because he is a psychic healer !

This decision, which made psychic history, was given by a Manchester tribunal to William Henry Lilley, the healer who is in charge of The Sanctuary at Black Bull Street, Leeds.

A year ago the decision was forecast by the medium's guide, who was persistent even when a local tribunal registered Lilley for non-combatant work. Because of their confidence in the spirit statement. Lilley's colleagues opened a branch at Hull a few months ago.

The guide, a spirit doctor, had also promised that, when the appeal was heard, he would control his medium and address its members. This promise was also fulfilled.

At the Leeds Sanctuary, Lilley has what must be the ideal psychic healing centre. It is equipped, not only for spirit healing, but for at least a score of other known forms of alleviation. The healers can give treatment by homoeopathy, biochemistry, osteopathy and colour-therapy. There is an infra-red ray apparatus. There is a well-stocked dispensary with scores of preparations in the form of herbs, pills and tinctures.

EVERY CASE DIAGNOSED

At both Sanctuaries nearly 250 patients are now given personal treatment each week. There is a long waiting list. In addition, absent healing is given to about 15,000 patients. A complete case record is kept of every sufferer and a detailed diagnosis, from a handkerchief or some object sent by the patient, is made.

All the diagnoses are done by Lilley, either in trance or using his clairaudient gift. The accuracy of these diagnoses has amazed thousands of people, including medical men. A few days ago, in trance for two-and-a-half hours, Lilley's spirit doctor gave 98 diagnoses, using two stenographers for this purpose !

To aid his ministry, Lilley has three trained healers, four women assistants and a qualified dispenser.

ANONYMOUS SUPPORT

When, nearly three years ago, the Sanctuary began its activities, no charge was made for treatments, or for herbal and other remedies given to patients. Now, however, because of rising costs due to the war, a nominal charge of 2s. 6d. is made. Nobody, however, is turned away if this fee cannot be afforded. This nominal charge, however, does not cover the expenses of the two Sanctuaries, which are maintained anonymously.

The spirit responsible for these diagnoses is a Hindu, Dr. Lejan Tari, a medical man who "died" in Peshawar in 1914. Another feature of his activities is to give trance lectures to the healers, by the aid of diagrams drawn through his medium, on anatomy, physiology, *materia medica*, pathology, chemistry and what he calls "the science of the soul."

The effects of diseases on the colours of the aura are also lucidly explained.

The spirit doctor believes that the healers should be proficient not only in the art of psychic healing, but should also be equipped with a medical knowledge of the human body. No healer is allowed to give treatment to patients until he is familiar with all these aspects of medical knowledge. In addition he receives from the spirit doctor courses in osteopathy homoeopathy and biochemistry.

Dr. Lejan Tari is helped by a spirit band of a dozen men, some with knowledge of medicine, others specialising in psychology and manipulation.

Lilley and his colleagues estimate that 90 per cent. of their patients have been given up as incurable by the medical profession. The psychic healer is their last hope. New patients come through recommendation, for there is no advertising. In addition there are hundreds of pleas for healing help from sufferers all over the country, from America and from some of our dominions.

In hundreds of cases operations have been averted. The list of diseases successfully treated makes impressive reading.

PSYCHIC FAMILY

Twenty-seven-year-old Lilley comes of psychic stock. His maternal grandfather was a medium. His mother has been a practising medium for 30 years and a healer for ten years.

His parents were disappointed when he was born because they wanted a girl. Already they had two sons. But the grandfather consoled them by telling them that young Lilley had come to do a great healing work.

Lilley was reared in a psychic atmosphere where Spiritualism was regarded naturally. At the age of ten he was taken to his first circle. He remembers hearing the hymn "Lead Kindly Light" sung, and that was all. He went three times and, on each occasion, the same thing happened.

Then, at that young age, he was controlled by an Egyptian guide who said that the boy was not to go to any more circles, but to spend the next five years at home in psychic development as a preparation for his healing career.

Night after night, for five whole years, Lilley's gifts developed and his trance condition evolved. The whole course of psychic study was prescribed by this guide.

Then, at the age of 15, he began healing. A friend was suffering from Bright's disease. Three doctors who were called in said there was no hope. The friend's parents, knowing of Lilley's promised healing career, asked him to treat their son. In three weeks the boy was cured. That was 12 years ago. There has been no recurrence since.

The news of the cure spread. The young healer was asked to visit patients and sufferers called at his home. Frequently, in trance, the Hindu spirit doctor prophesied that one day there would be a sanctuary at which the medium would devote all his time to healing. The prophecy was fulfilled two-and-a-half years ago.

Arthur Richards, the head of an engineering firm which makes piston rings, was talking to a metal merchant in his office. The merchant told him about Lilley's remarkable psychic healing gifts, and particularly specified his extraordinarily accurate diagnoses. Richards arranged to meet Lilley.

The engineer asked the healer whether he would undergo a drastic test. He agreed. Two eminent doctors were chosen by Richards. These doctors selected three patients whom they were treating, two of whom had been X-rayed. The complete medical diagnosis of each patient was placed in a sealed envelope. The doctors brought small articles belonging to each patient.

DRASTIC TEST SUCCEEDS

The result was amazing. The medium's diagnoses not only tallied with the medical ones, later taken from the envelopes and checked, but the guide supplied additional information of which the medical men were then unaware! This was checked when one sufferer passed on four months later and a post-mortem examination was held.

After this rigid test, Richards persuaded Lilley to throw up his job and devote his whole life to healing. To provide the Sanctuary, Richards used part of his commercial offices. Indeed, there is a common entrance to the engineering firm and the Sanctuary.

Within a week Richards was told by the spirit doctor that he himself was a healer. He was trained by the Other Side and now takes an active part in the spirit healing. Engineering friends, when they heard of this departure, began to make pointed observations.

They prophesied that his business would suffer. Their prediction has not matured. The business, on the contrary, is steadily increasing. And Richards is respected by engineering colleagues who have appointed him to high office in their profession.

FORMER ATHEIST

Another of Lilley's trained healers is a young man who was formerly an atheist. He, an utter sceptic, sat with Lilley every week-end, devoting the rest of the week to devising difficult questions and finding them satisfactorily answered.

Remarkable as is the progress that has been made, Lilley is confident that the future will see an extension of his work throughout the country. This amazing young medium is, apart from his healing, thoroughly normal in his habits and outlook. He has no special diet and he smokes.

And he has a sense of humour. He smilingly admits that psychic healing cannot cure everything, as he slowly touches his partially bald head.

—~—☼—~—

Some readers who are aware of this famous pioneer healer of the past and his well-known Hindu helper, a medical man who is said to have died in Peshawar in 1914, may have been a little confused, as indeed I was, with the guide's name, "Dr. Lejan Tari"; I was aware of only the name Dr. Letari. With a little research my question was answered in Psychic News, May 30th, 1942:

Guide Praises Psychic Sketch:

"As Faithful As My Own Reflection"

By A Special Correspondent

This portrait of Dr. Letari, the spirit guide of W. H. Lilley, the famous healing medium, was drawn by Frank Leah, the equally famous psychic artist. Leah executed the drawing after he had provided Lilley, by telephone, with the most accurate description of his guide which the healer had ever been given. When he was shown his own portrait, the spirit doctor sought permission to sign it, likening it to his own reflection in a mirror. Though the picture, and the story behind it, are in themselves abundantly evidential, by way of still further proof, the "dead" doctor wrote upon it Indian symbols indicating both his profession and status.

—~—☼—~—

THIS is the story of a psychic portrait produced under what I consider I am entitled to describe as "remarkable" circumstances.

I was sitting the other night in the London flat of W. H. Lilley, the famous healing medium. In the course of a Spiritualist conversation I said, "I'd like you to meet Frank Leah, the psychic artist."

There and then I telephoned Leah, and introduced the two mediums, each so renowned in his own field.

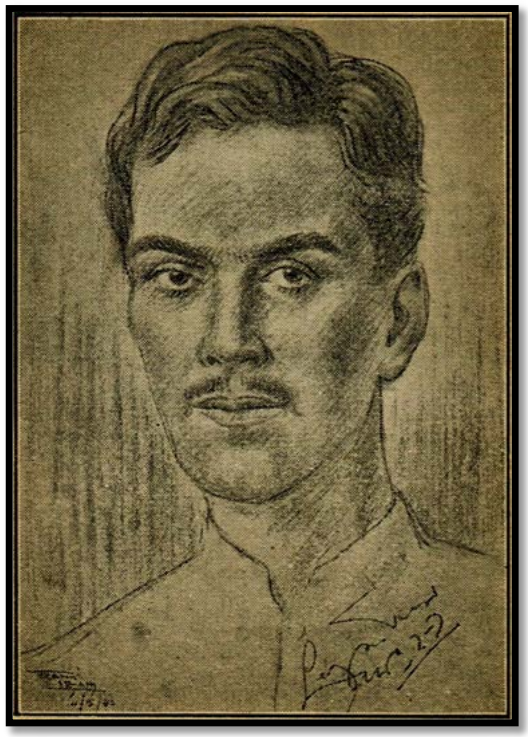
Lilley chuckled. "Do you ever," he asked of Leah, "see a Hindu gentleman walking round your studio?" He meant his own spirit guide, Dr. Lejan Tari—"Letari" for short.

"Oh, yes," replied Leah. "I feel sure he is here now. The vibration is so strong !" The artist's mediumship is frequently demonstrated in this manner in the course of telephone conversations. To this many can testify.

PROOF PILED ON PROOF

Leah then told Lilley the doctor's age when he "died," the place and cause of his passing, where he had lived and worked, and described his features, figure, and

mannerisms. In particular, he stressed the intensity of his eyes—one of his most salient features—and his short stature.



This last point was highly evidential—as, indeed, were all—because Dr. Letari was only 5ft. 1in.

Nor was this all. Leah went on to describe not only the college where the "dead" Hindu doctor had been educated and trained, but gave its exact position in Calcutta.

This telephonic picture of a man whom Leah had never met occupied less time than it has taken me to recount.

And what did Lilley say ? That "no one has ever given me such an accurate description of my guide."

Almost every fact tallied with what Lilley already knew of the "dead" doctor—with one exception. Leah said the doctor wore a moustache. At the time Lilley could not agree.

But when, in response to the artist's pressing invitation, I took Lilley down in his studio the same evening, Dr. Letari himself, through his entranced medium, told us that from 1910-12—two years before his passing—he wore a moustache during his visit to this country to study surgery!

And he confirmed as correct every statement the artist had earlier made to his "mediator," as Dr. Letari calls Lilley—a corroboration which included the place, Peshawar, at the mouth of the Khyber Pass, where he had met his "death."

While I myself continued to talk to the doctor—for he and I are old friends—Leah went to his drawing board and executed a lightning but detailed portrait of the Hindu who is beloved by thousands.

Lilley came out of trance. I showed him the picture. **"That's the doctor !" he exclaimed.**

But Leah wasn't satisfied. He wanted to keep it and render it an even more faithful likeness of the "dead" man he saw clairvoyantly.

The following day Lilley returned to the studio. The finished sketch was waiting. The healer became entranced.

Whereupon, in his own characteristically courtly manner, addressing the artist, the guide said: "If you will give me permission, I would consider it a great privilege to sign it."

SIGNATURE FROM BEYOND

A pencil was placed in his hand. Gripping it as though he were handling a dagger—Dr. Letari employs the same mannerism when illustrating many of his healing lectures—he signed it with the result you now see.

Beneath the signature he added, two symbols which I can best describe as question marks without the downward stroke, or "leg." Between these he inserted a hyphen, and below them a long pencil line.

"Any Indian seeing these symbols will understand them," he said. "That which you call the hyphen between them shows my calling; the line indicates my status."

Mark what he then added. If he had seen that portrait, he said, as his own reflection in a mirror he would have been well pleased at the spectacle.

Every time Dr. Letari gives treatment to a patient of The House of Divinity—the name by which Lilley's healing organisation is known—Survival, his own and that of all mankind, is proved. Now, in a different place and in different circumstances, he has proved for the thousandth—shall I say the ten thousandth time ?—that he lives beyond the grave.

—~—☼—~—

A similar story with Frank Leah is published in Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 6:
"Harry Edwards – *For 15 years Edwards did not know which spirit guides were using him*."

In the next issue Pioneer will continue with the work of the *psychic* healer, W. H. Lilley

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Britten Museum & Library

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Research - Study Weeks at the Arthur Findlay College

2021 Dates

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A Supplement to the December issue:

A MEANS OF SPIRIT COMMUNICATION

Designed from the Spirit World!



The Pioneer article on the Reflectograph and the Communigraph (as shown), which is displayed in the Britten Museum and Library housed at the Arthur Findlay College, see Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 4, August 2016:

Britten Memorial Museum & Library – *enters into its original purpose.* [20]

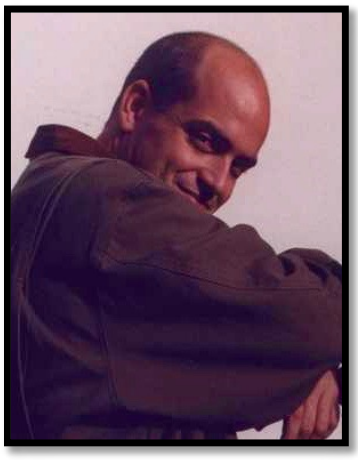
The Pioneer December article, "A Means of Spirit Communication – *Designed from the Spirit World!"*, has generated much international interest from psychical researchers, Spiritualists and historians alike.

Historian Marc Demarest, who runs the excellent research website:

"The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" (IAPSOP) [21]

It can also be noted that IAPSOP archives Psypioneer, so often referenced in the SNU Pioneer. Marc contacted me on the publication of the December issue and kindly offered to further research primarily the people instrumental in the production and working of the Reflectograph and the Communigraph.

Below is Marc Demarest's valuable contribution:



Some Notes On The Reflectograph And Communigraph – December 2020

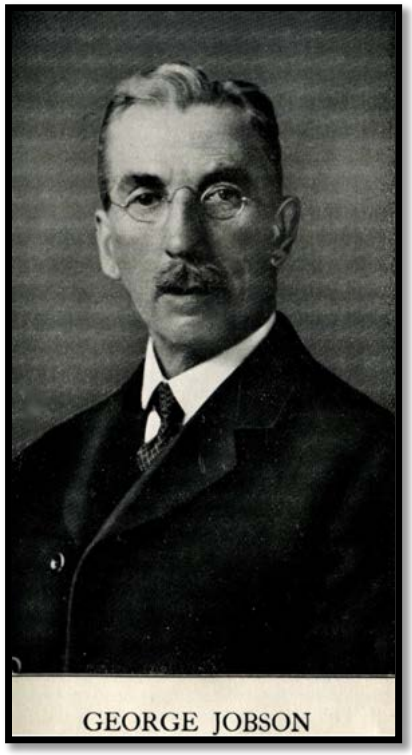
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The article on the Reflectograph and the Communigraph in the December 2020 issue of *The Pioneer* was a gift for a group of researchers who have been working on the history of those devices and their promoters for some time. As a gloss on Paul's fine article, we offer these notes on the historical figures associated with the design, development and promotion of the Reflectograph and Communigraph.

[20] Later renamed "Britten Museum and Library".

[21] See: http://iapsop.com

George Jobson


GEORGE JOBSON

George Jobson was born in July of 1862 in Horncastle, Lincolnshire, and appears to have lived there throughout his life, dying on September 9, 1925 in his semi-detached home on Southfield Place, in Horncastle (which, as far as I can tell, is still standing, for those of us inclined to pilgrimage).

Jobson was the son of John Jobson (1825-1886), a carpenter and joiner sufficiently prosperous to leave an estate worth his family's while to fight over in court, and to allow his widow, Susan Needham Jobson (1821-1915), to live "on her own means" for the balance of her life. George had no higher education, entering the workforce at age 16 and becoming, before his 20th birthday, a "photographer's assistant", according to the 1881 census records. In the 1901 census records his occupation was listed as "assistant commercial traveler" and he was on the road, plying his trade in London, at the time of the census. In the 1911 self-reported census results he is living with his mother Susan and lists his occupation as "commercial traveler (photographic)". He never married.

When Jobson died in September of 1925, he left a variety of what local papers referred to as "novel" bequests in his will, worth enumerating as they tell us a great deal about Jobson the man, and his values. According to the Boston *Guardian* for 17 March 1928 (p. 2):

[Jobson] left £1,800, from the income of which there were to be provided, among other things, £20 per annum for two lectures on popular scientific subjects – one on Trafalgar Day and the other on the anniversary of the death of Sir Isaac Newton, 'he being a Lincolnshire man'; £10 per annum for a popular lecture to the children of Horncastle; £4 per annum for the town band for playing on Waterloo Day; and £1 per annum for playing on Boxing Day….Other bequests were 21s. and 10s. 6d. per annum for the ringing of the church bells on Waterloo Day and Boxing Day…; £30 per annum for a treat for the school children on Waterloo Day, when the political and historical results of the Battle of Waterloo were to be explained to them; £10 per annum to provide two prizes for two boys and two girls who 'best show by character, conduct and work that they will grow up worthy, reliable and respectable townspeople'; and £5 per annum for a bonfire on Guy Fawkes Day 'for the amusement of the children and townspeople of Horncastle.' Out of the residue 500 guineas was left in trust to apply the income for the benefit of the Horncastle War Memorial Hospital, on condition, among other things, that one bed was named the 'Jobson Bed.'"

Jobson's entry into the Spiritualist record occurs, for the first time, in late May of 1925, when Jobson gave an interview – or perhaps the draft of an article – to an unnamed reporter for the Lincolnshire *Standard*. In that article (23 May 1925, p. 8) we learn that Jobson had suffered a debilitating stroke in November of 1924, which "left him paralyzed in the lower part of his body; so much so that he has since been confined to his bed." Jobson tells his readers that he had his first experiences with spirit communication in the family circle as a child, and that he was pronounced a good medium, but (he implies) any youthful tendencies he may have had in that direction were scoured out of him by a decade of Wesleyan Sunday School lessons. Jobson claims that he went to work at the age of sixteen, that he

implemented the first telephone in Horncastle (consisting of two directly-connected stations in two classrooms in the Wesleyan Sunday School building "as a side-show during a bazaar"), and that he was responsible for bringing X-ray radiography to Horncastle, something entirely consistent with his lifelong occupational association with the photography industry. Readers also learn that he experimented with radium and that he constructed a wireless receiver that was able, in January of 1913, to receive "signals from the Eiffel Tower clock" – a reference to the time signals sent by the transmitter on the Eiffel Tower, which could be received as far away as the Atlantic coast of the US. Jobson describes his trip to the US for the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, his adventures in "astronomical photography", and, finally, his conversion to the Spiritualist hypothesis, which he prefaces by saying, "I trust my critics will give me credit for reasoning these matters out, and not show their criticisms by condemning me as a 'crank.'"

Jobson's conversion story is remarkable. Shortly after his stroke, in November of 1924, "I was visited by the unseen and for five nights demonstrations were made to me [MD: by spirit visitants] in my well-lit bedroom. The experiments were so impressive and so astounding, that as I lay in bed I was practically dumb-founded, until I was absolutely sure of my surroundings and conditions." These physical, visual and auditory experiences – which Jobson does not detail or describe in any other way – were sufficient to convince him:

"1. That there is certainly a life after death. 2. That we are seen. 3. That our conversation is heard and understood. 4. That gravitation seems to be ignored or overcome."

These unspecified physical demonstrations, which apparently involved levitation of some kind, were followed, in March of 1925, by persistent aural phenomena. "For three weeks during March I heard an unseen orchestra, which appeared to play at any time between daylight and 11 p.m.", during which times Jobson also heard "invisible spirits, conversing together, just through the wall near the head of my bed. There were two men and one woman." His attempts to drown out the invisible orchestra and the conversing spirits using his wireless radio headset and a broadcast London concert were signal failures (as it were): he reports that doing so amplified, rather than drowned out, the spirit conversation.

As the diligent self-taught scientist, Jobson offered the *Standard*'s readers his explanation for the mechanism that produced his aural experiences: "The only solution I can suggest is – the great length of nerve contained in our nervous system may act as a sort of indoor aerial, and so convey a wireless message or sound directly to the brain without operating the hearing organs," which, in his experiment, were in his view preoccupied with the sounds of the London concert broadcast.

This article is important for two reasons: [1] it is the source for later, less specific and consequently less accurate claims about Jobson's life and accomplishments (including the incorrect suggestions that he was employed as a wireless or telephony engineer) and [2] it brings to Jobson's door some time after its publication, a local milliner and property developer, Basil Keightley Kirkby (1887-1967), eager to bolster and shape Jobson's emergent faith in Spiritualism.

Basil Keightley Kirkby



B.K. Kirkby was born in April of 1887, in Lincoln, to William Kirkby (1855-1929) and his wife Sarah Keightley (1855-1923), and died in 1967 in Merton. William Kirkby was a coachman, who (unlike John Jobson) did not manage to rise economically, but Basil's upward mobility was unimpeded by his father's struggles. At 24, in the 1911 census, Basil lists his occupation as "hair dresser", and his position as "employer", suggesting he is running his own hairdressing establishment and employing others. A year later he is sufficiently well situated financially to marry one Sarah J. Peach (1886-1973), a draper's assistant, who no doubt introduces Basil to his next occupation: as a millinery establishment owner. By 1924 Basil is a man of property in Woodhall Spa, where his millinery is located, contributing substantially to the (ultimately unsuccessful) efforts being made at that time to make Woodhall Spa a watering destination in Lincolnshire, and is also clearly involved with the Spiritualist community there, as it is from Woodhull Spa that Kirkby tells us he travels, in 1925, for his first meeting with George Jobson in Horncastle – some seven miles from Woodhall Spa – beginning the interpersonal relationship that will give the world, in time, the Reflectograph.


THE REFLECTOGRAPH.

How involved Kirkby was with the Spiritualist communities at Woodhall Spa and Skegness (where he moved some time c.1927) is unclear, as neither community reported its doings in the Spiritualist press we have readily available to us. Kirkby himself tells us that his conversion experience occurred when his mother communicated to him through "an old woman clairvoyant who did not know him at all" (*Psychic Science*, January 1933, p. 325), that is, some time in or after 1923, when Sarah Keightley Kirkby died. We do know, from the pages of the Lincolnshire *Standard* (23 March 1929, p. 3), that in 1928 – the year that the Reflectograph first came before the public [22] – Kirkby was the President of the Skegness Spiritualist Church (sometimes referred to as the Lighthouse Church, and one of two distinct communities of Spiritualists in Skegness, as the **other** community pointed out whenever opportunity afforded), and that Louise Eliza Bolt (1895-1982), known at that time as Mrs L.E. Singleton, was his church's primary medium.

[22] Curious readers may be led astray, as I was, by the registration, in November of 1922, of the Day Reflectograph Company Ltd. This company has naught to do with our Reflectograph; it pursued a line in cinema equipment and filmstocks.

Louise Eliza Bolt (Mrs L.E. Singleton)



Louise Bolt was born on 26 December 1895 in Brixton, Devonshire, to Simon Bolt (1850-1908), a stable hand, and his wife Miriam Voisey (1853-1924). As one child in a large working-class family, it seems logical that Louise was expected to make her own way in the world, and this she appears to have done, marrying her first husband, Robert E. Singleton (1895-1975), a mineworker, in Catsfield, Sussex in June of 1918. Louise and Robert had one child, Ronald Singleton (1921-2007), who was born in Hastings and who remained with his mother when she separated from Singleton sometime in the later 1920s.

Louise was a materializing medium, but – like the Spiritualist communities in Woodhall Spa and Skegness – we have been able to learn virtually nothing about her mediumship. Louise Bolt (whether we look for her as Miss Bolt, Mrs Bolt or Mrs L.E. Singleton) appears rarely in the Spiritualist record prior to the advent of the Reflectograph (of which she is the primary operator) in 1928.

From October of 1928, when the Reflectograph is demonstrated at the British College of Psychic Science, until 1935, when the Reflectograph ends its life as a rented novelty available from Kirkby for private parties,[23] Louise is associated with the Reflectograph as its **only** operator – even after the development of the Communigraph, which makes its debut in the fall of 1930.[24]

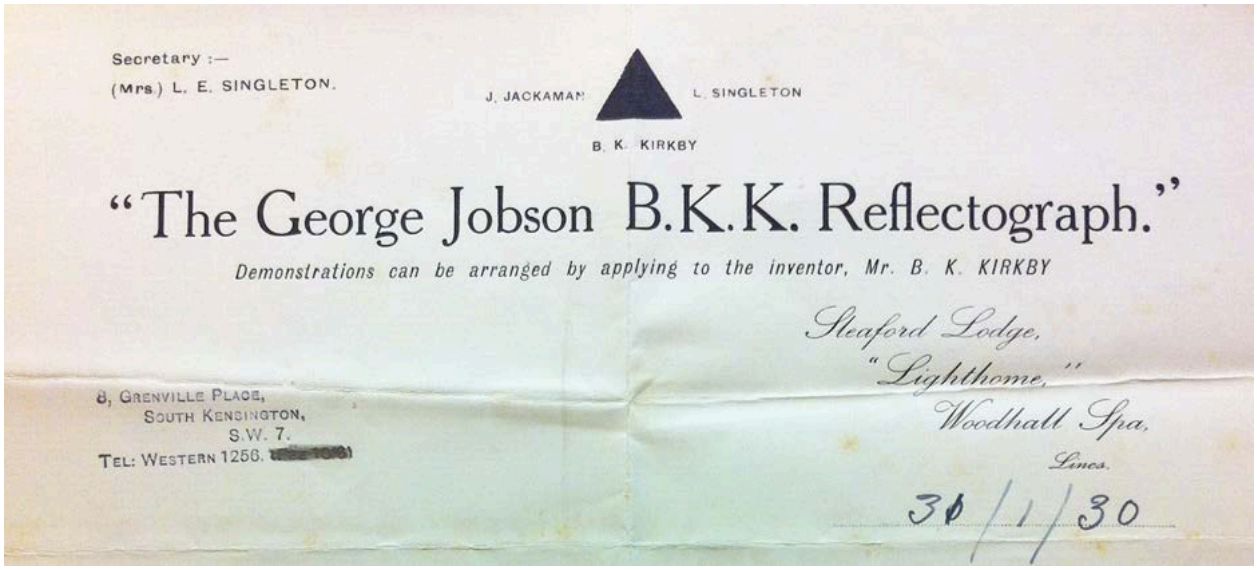
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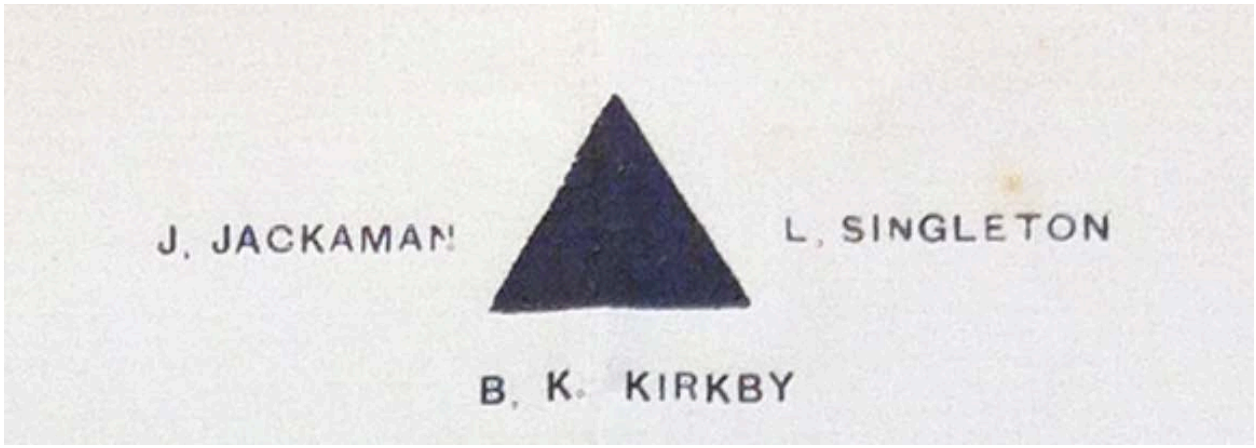
[23] A (to my mind, sad) advertisement in the *West London Observer* for 19 February 1937 (p. 10) is worth reprinting in full: "Sittings with the REFLECTOGRAPH, the wonderful machine for spirit communication referred to recently in the Daily Mirror, the Daily Sketch, the Sunday Chronicle, and other important London Newspapers can now be booked for private parties. Apply for details and a free interesting Booklet to B. K. Kirkby, the Jobson Research Centre, 10, Blenheim Road, Bedford Park, W. 4. Phone Chiswick 5110. Service each Sunday at 6:30. Direct Voice Séance on Thursdays at 3 p. m." The "interesting Booklet" was likely A.J. Ashdown's *The Ashkir-Jobson Trianion* (1931, available from IAPSOP's SSOC collection). The Blenheim Road address in the advertisement was used by both the Jobson Research Center and the Society of Progressive Souls, Ltd. (see the *Sunday Mirror* for 4 January 1937, p. 2), which had formerly met at Lady Zöe Caillard's home, the Belfry, in Belgravia. The Society of Progressive Souls, Ltd. itself warrants further investigation. Registered as a limited company in July of 1934, George Viscount Molesworth was its president, and Lady Molesworth its vice-president. Lady Caillard, its chairman, bequeathed her entire estate to the Society on her death in 1935. The Society's membership, according to secular press reports, included Kirkby, Singleton, a Native American known as Os-Ke-Nan-Ton, and a young Maurice Barbanell. In early 1937, at the time of the final mention of the Reflectograph in the public record, the Society of Progressive Souls (which may have succeeded in retaining Lady Caillard's modest bequest after several court challenges) was receiving from the spirit of Lady Caillard, through the Communigraph, a book – a sort of successor to *A New Conception of Love* – entitled *The Bird Goes Home*, which was mentioned in secular press reports but of which I can find no trace. After 1937 the doings of the Society are a complete mystery and the limited company is described as "defunct" in publications in 1938.

[24] Interested readers may find a summary of a Singleton-Kirkby séance featuring **both** the Reflectograph and the Communigraph in *The Two Worlds* for November 28, 1930, available at IAPSOP. The early public history of the Reflectograph is still somewhat murky, but the records of the secular press allow us to determine that, after its

J. Jackaman

Like the Ashkir triad – the three figures shepherding the Communigraph into the world – the Reflectograph was managed by three individuals represented as a triad: B.K. Kirkby, L.E. Singleton and a J. Jackaman, who appears on the letterhead of the Reflectograph group but who has otherwise disappeared from discussions of the Reflectograph's history.





The disambiguated identity of J. Jackaman and the details of his role within the Reflectograph triad have yet to be discovered, but I offer as a likely candidate J(ohn?) L(ionel?) Jackaman (1904-1983), who was, in July of 1930, living at Linden Lea, Wainfleet Road, in Skegness, and operating as the leader of the Skegness Spiritual Lyceum. A year later, in 1931, Jackaman was the spokesperson for the United Spiritualist Church in Drummond Road, in Skegness. He was active in Spiritualism, in Skegness and elsewhere throughout the 1930s.[25]

private demonstrations at the British College of Psychic Science, Kirkby announced that it would be publicly unveiled at Horncastle to honor Jobson, promising in November of 1928 that it would be ready for unveiling "in a few months" (Skegness *Standard*, 14 November 1928, p. 8). In fact, the first advertised public demonstration of the Reflectograph was held in June of 1929 at Kirkby's Spiritualist Church in Skegness (Sheffield *Daily Telegraph*, 14 June 1929, p. 5). That public demonstration was followed in late July or early August by a specially-arranged demonstration for Conan Doyle and Lady Doyle (according to the Nottingham *Journal* for 14 August 1929, p. 5).

[25] See *The Lyceum Banner* for July of 1930, p. 124. As John L. Jackaman and J.L. Jackaman, Esq., he was active in the Spiritualist community throughout the 1930s; see, for example, the Lincolnshire *Standard* for 25 April 1931 (p. 7), Chester *Chronicle* for 11 February 1939 (p. 6) and the Manchester *Evening News* for 19 February 1939 (p. 10).

Presumably, Jackaman's skills and abilities offered, to Kirkby and Singleton, something that pair lacked, perhaps in technical areas, as there is no evidence that either Kirkby or Singleton had any technical training whatever. Certainly, A.J. Ashdown, Jackaman's successor and the identified "inventor" of the Communigraph, was such a person.

Albert Jasper Ashdown

The Communigraph – very different mechanically and aesthetically from the Reflectograph – owes its genesis to the inventor Albert Jasper Ashdown (1887-1983), who claimed to have received the details of the device from George Jobson directly (that is, through Mrs Singleton's mediumship). A well-educated, professionally-credentialed mechanical engineer and a naval telegraphist in the First World War, Ashdown had, by the time he joined Kirkby and Singleton in the development of the Communigraph, prospered sufficiently to marry Grace Iverna Gillham (1893-1967) in 1915 and to establish the commercial firm of A.J. Ashdown Ltd. c.1926, which manufactured and marketed his most well-known invention, the Ashdown Rotoscope.[26]

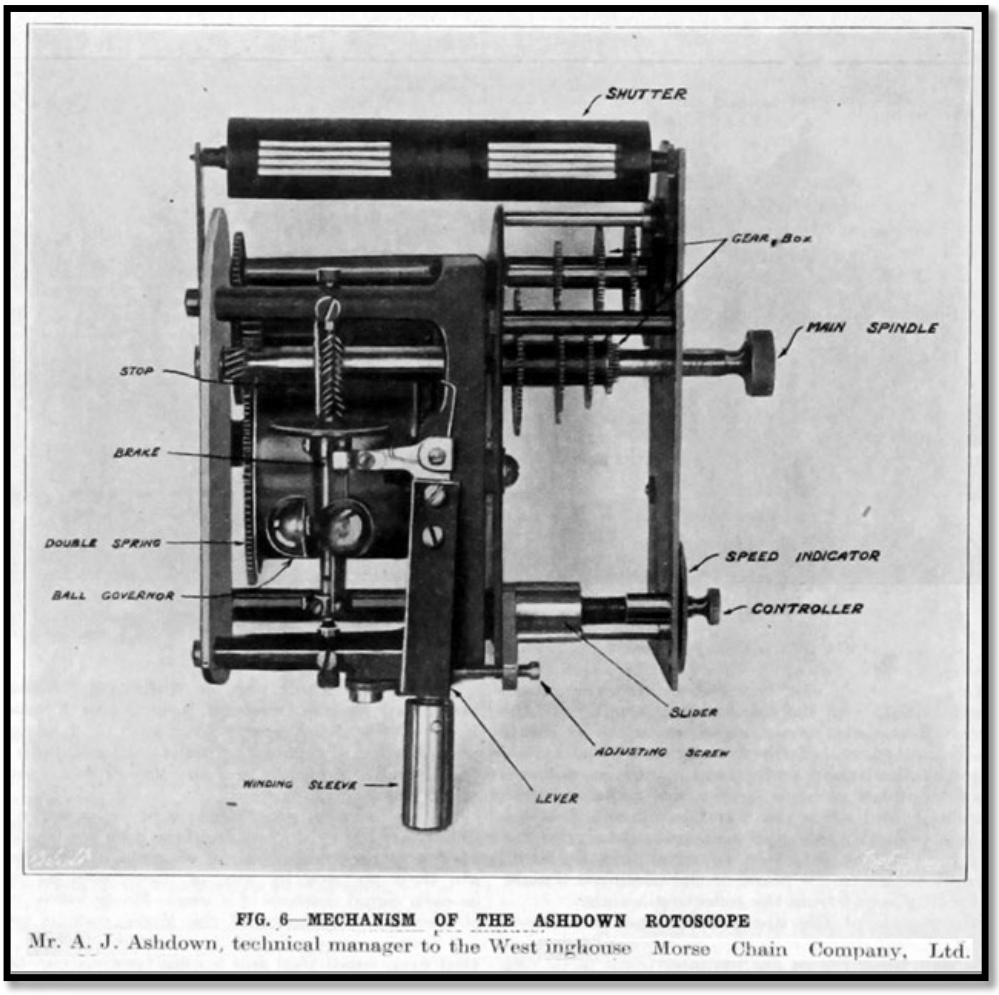


FIG. 6—MECHANISM OF THE ASHDOWN ROTOSCOPE
Mr. A. J. Ashdown, technical manager to the West inghouse Morse Chain Company, Ltd.

How Ashdown became associated with Kirkby and Singleton I have been unable to determine; there is no record of him in the Spiritualist press, prior to 1930, when he appears at the Stead Library (in September of 1930), lecturing on "The Communigraph and other

[26] The Rotoscope was a hand-held stroboscopic device, used to determine the revolutions per minute of a revolving object, and was, for a time at least, used to gauge the RPMs of aircraft engines. Many examples of Ashdown Rotoscopes are to be found in museum collections and, periodically, at auction – a Google search on "rotoscope" will produce interesting results. Curious readers who would like to examine Ashdown's 1934 application for admission to the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, which details his early education and work experience, should contact the author.

Aspects of Psychic Revelation" [27] and later (in October of 1930) giving lectures on "Some Scientific Facts with Regard to the Reflectograph." [28]

Ashdown appears to dominate the Ashdown-Kirkby-Singleton triad completely by the middle 1930s, much as his name appears first on the Ashkir Trianion. Kirkby fades from view entirely after the (Magna) Jobson Research Centre moves from London to East Molesey in early 1938.[29] Mrs Singleton – to judge from electoral records – moves into Ashdown's neighborhood some years earlier than that, and the 1939 England and Wales Register records both Ashdown and Mrs Singleton living in Ashdown's house, Tumbling Bay, Hampton Court, with a redacted third person, who may be Grace Ashdown. That record is ambiguous; what is much less ambiguous is Grace's location, alone in her home region of Glamorgan, in the 1946 electoral register, hard upon A.J. Ashdown's marriage to Louise E. Singleton, in Exmoor, in the spring of 1945.[30] A.J. and Louise remained married, as far as I can determine, until Louise's death in Exeter, in October of 1982

The last documented public appearance of the Communigraph – which was not advertised for sale or widely noted within the Spiritualist press – occurs in June of 1939, in an extended article by Bernard Gray in the *Sunday Mirror* for 11 June 1939 entitled "A Voice Said to Me 'You Will Never Die.'" Beginning with a dramatic hook – "In a house by the River Thames, at Hampton Court, a fully qualified engineer and an extraordinary woman medium are working together to apply modern science to Spiritualism" – the article describes Bernard Gray's afternoon spent in spirit communications with Ashdown and "Mrs. Louisa Bolt," an afternoon that led Gray to remark that "for the first time in my experience, a 'dead' relative whom I could identify spoke to me personally."

Ashdown and Louisa first demonstrate for Gray an unnamed communication device using an unwired and unpowered telegraph key on a glass-topped table, before shifting Gray's attention to the Communigraph:

"an ingenious bit of apparatus which everybody can understand. A metal rod, or pendulum, swings freely over a kind of circular track on which there is a stud for every letter of the alphabet. By depressing the pendulum a little, the circuit can be completed with any of the letters. Above, on a glass screen, the corresponding letters are illuminated, so that it is possible for anybody to see just what words are being spelled out. One of the stops below connects with a bell, which is rung at the end of every word. As the pendulum clattered around the stops, letters appeared on the glass screen with remarkable rapidity, staying long enough only for one to recognise them, then being replaced by others…. My knees went cold, due, I was told, to my proximity to the spirit influence."

The Communigraph was followed, both in history and in Gray's séance, by a third device, about which we know almost nothing: the Televox, first mentioned by name in the *Sunday Mirror* of 2 October 1938 (p. 2). Gray described the Televox in his June 1939 article as follows:

This [device] takes the place of a trumpet. It is rather difficult to describe, so it is simplest for me to say it is nothing but a revolving acoustic apparatus, with no wires, batteries or

[27] See, for example, *The Two Worlds* for 26 September 1930.

[28] See, for example, *The Two Worlds* for 24 October 1930.

[29] The Research Centre's address in February of 1937 is the Blenheim Road address shared with the Trianion and the Society of Progressive Souls. In January of 1938, when A.J. Ashdown contributes money to supplement the Jobson bequests in Horncastle, it is referred to as the Magna Jobson Research Centre and is addressed at Molesey. In November of 1938, the Centre's address is Tumbling Bay, Hampton Court Road, A.J. Ashdown's home.

[30] I have been unable to locate a record of Ashdown's divorce from Grace.

tricks attached to it. The televox was placed on a stand in front of us. A small bulb on its extremity gave enough light for us to determine its position exactly. And anyhow, there was enough light in the room for me to see its outlines. After a few moments it began to revolve slowly. With startling clarity came a voice. 'I am Lady Caillard,' it said."

It is possible that the Televox is the device described by Lady Zoë Caillard some years earlier as designed by her departed husband, Sir Vincent Caillard: "a microphone was installed, and through the trumpet, spirit voices used to speak into the microphone. Still following instructions from the Other Side, Lady Caillard arranged to have a special recording set made, so that permanent records could be kept of the spirit voices" (Skegness Standard, 1 November 1933, p. 8). This device, which was used to produce phonograph records of the voice of the spirit of Sir Vincent Caillard (among other things), is sometimes referred to as a communigraph in secular press reports (particularly at the time of Lady Caillard's death in 1935), though clearly it bears no similarities to the Communigraph proper.

Beyond this, the best device curator I know – Brandon Hodge – has been able to find only a single mention of the Televox in use anywhere in the Spiritualist record: a passage in Allan Barham's *Strange to Relate* (1984), in which Barham recounts Ena Twigg's remembrance of a séance "during the war" with "Mrs. Ashdown" and the Televox, which Twigg described as:

"a mushroom-shaped object, three feet wide, made of paper mâché, balanced on a jewel point so that it could revolve with the minimum of effort. Two spots of phosphorescent paint were on the mushroom, so that in the complete darkness, which was thought to be necessary for its use, it could be determined whether it was stationary or revolving. Why the Televox should help in the production of paranormal voices I have never been able to find out, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and on this particular occasion several voices were heard, their point of origin seemingly a little above the Televox. This was after the latter had begun to turn without any of those present touching it."[31]

No known image of the Televox survives. There may have been only one such device ever made.

Whether there was ever more than one Communigraph built is, to my way of thinking, an open question. It seems likely, given its complexity and bulk, that only one Reflectograph was ever made, and I have yet to find a record of a Communigraph séance **not** curated by Ashdown and Mrs Singleton/Mrs Bolt/Mrs Ashdown personally. Unlike the Reflectograph, the Communigraph was, clearly, **intended** for manufacture and sale: an offer in *The Ashkir-Jobson Trianion* allowed enrolled associates of the Trianion "to purchase from the Trianion or its licensees the Ashkir-Jobson Communigraph, and such other special instruments developed in the Trianion laboratories as are not available to outside persons and centers" (p. 14) and asserted that the Trianion "which is not a trading concern" had negotiated "a sole license to a large London firm of engineers to manufacture and sell its products" (p. 14). Yet no evidence of a Communigraph not in the possession of the Ashdowns has been found in the Spiritualist record to date. That suggests to me that the Communigraph in the collection of the Britten Museum may be not only the only surviving Communigraph but **the only Communigraph ever made**.

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[31] Allan Barham. *Strange to Relate* (London: C. Smythe, 1984), p. 32.

See also Psypioneer, Vol. 10, No. 1: "Allan Barham, Early Worker for CFPSS – *Quarterly Review*", "Direct Voice Mediumship – Allan Barham", and "Afterword – Brandon Hodge".



The Britten Museum and Library hold two photographs – ref BMT 0461 a, c.:

a) –Inside the 'Church of the Spirit', Skegness 1925. b) –Car in front of Clock Tower at Skegness c.1927; the notice on top of the car reads:

TRUTHS OF SPIRITUALISM
Services held each week end in the Co-operative Hall

This hints that there were two separate locations: photo a) is a Spiritualist church, as against the Co-operative Hall. It can be noted that the "Manual and Who's Who of Spiritualism and Psychic Research", edited and compiled by James Leigh, published in London, January 1st, 1936, gives only one address – Skegness National United Spiritualist Church, Drummond Road, Skegness, as noted in the above article. This suggests that the image inside the 'Church of the Spirit' is Drummond Road. The people in the photograph may be considered a striking resemblance to the church's primary medium, Mrs L.E. Singleton, and its president (centre), Basil Kirkby.

