The PIONEER

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



James Arthur Findlay

the PIONEER

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All references to Psypioneer in these issues are archived at http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/

Special thanks to Charles Coulston for his work in sub-editing these issues – also acknowledged to Minister David Hopkins and Leslie Price for their past work in sub-editing the issues.

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The founder of the Glasgow Psychical Research Society was James Arthur Findlay. Details can be noted below as published in the weekly journal, *Light*, on April 8th 1922 (p. 22):

GLASGOW SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

We have received a copy of the first Annual Report (1921) of this Society. It records the origin of the Society on October 27th, 1920, when, after the reading of a paper on Psychical Research, by Mr. J. Arthur Findlay, a resolution was passed that the Society be formed from those present with power to add to its numbers. A further resolution appointed a Provisional Committee to draft a Constitution, outline a scheme of work, and nominate officers. The proposals of this Committee, together with the Constitution, were adopted at a subsequent meeting of the Society, held on December 14th, 1920.

The Report expresses its recognition of the honour conferred upon the Society by the acceptance of its Presidency by Sir Arthur Balfour, and records the series of addresses delivered to the Society by Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir William Barrett, amongst others,, The generosity of Mr. Edward J. Thomson, one of the Vice-Presidents, Mr. J. McLennan Boyd and other members and friends has resulted in the establishment of a library of substantial size, which is growing daily under the direction of Dr. Knight. Of the work of the Investigations Committee it is stated that it has been so far without substantial results. The Council acknowledges with thanks the services of the Honorary Secretary, Miss Irwin; of Mr. John G. Findlay, the Honorary Treasurer; and of Mr. J. Ronald Young, C.A., for auditing the accounts. The Balance Sheet shows that the financial position is very satisfactory.

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We can note from the report that the Honorary Treasurer was Arthur Findlay's brother, John Galloway Findlay;[16] Findlay's investigations with John Campbell Sloan (1869-1951) were featured earlier in an address given at the London Spiritualist Alliance[17] on Thursday, April 3rd, 1924, titled "The Independent Voice. A Critical Examination of the Phenomena." This was published (over a number of issues) in their journal, *Light*, starting on April 19th, 1924; Findlay's typed lecture draft and his handwritten amendments/corrections, etc. are held in the Britten Memorial Museum at Stansted Hall.

John Sloan's mediumship is mostly associated with Findlay through his investigations, lectures and books but in the Psypioneer journal for December 2012[18] we find a rare report on Sloan's mediumship in London at the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS).

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

[17].—Arthur Findlay would later become President of the London Spiritualist Alliance; today it is called the College of Psychic Studies, 16 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2EB, UK.

[18].—Volume 8, No 12: December 2012:—*John Campbell Sloan (1869-1951) – Paul J. Gaunt* & *A Scotch Materializing and Voice Medium – Mrs Hewat McKenzie*.

I received a couple of e-mails asking me if there was another photo of Sloan apart from the rather poor photo normally found (usually with his wife cut off) on websites, which was taken in 1936 and used in some editions of Findlay's books. In one of Findlay's scrapbooks in the museum I found this photograph of Mr and Mrs Sloan, although it is not very detailed. The photograph was sent to Findlay shortly after Sloan's death (May 1951 at the age of 82) by a Mrs D. McLean, Stornoway, Scotland, dated June 19th 1951 (she is in the photograph but edited out).



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

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



Dearie later notes she was going to ask the Sloans' daughter, Ethel, for a photograph of her father or where they (Dearie/Findlay) might get one. However, she was advised by a Miss C…,[19] "No; keep the family out of it", asking Findlay what he thought. This may explain why there is only one previously known photo of Sloan and may have resulted in Findlay being sent the photo by Mrs McLean, which shows the younger image of the couple, predating the only other known photograph taken in 1936.

Also in this issue of the SNU Pioneer journal there is another unpublished photograph of Arthur Findlay, taken while giving a lecture on "The Effect of Religion on History" to the Marylebone Spiritualist Association (founded in 1872) on August 27th, 1952. Today this Association is known as the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain – S.A.G.B.[20]

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

[20].—The Spiritualist Association of Great Brittain:—http://www.spiritualistassociation.org.uk/

JAMES ARTHUR FINDLAY

1883 - 1964

Arthur Findlay needs little introduction. Below is a short overview of his life and work; it is dated March 11th 1957 and was written by the former Editor of the "Two Worlds", Ernest Thompson. Whether or not this has ever been published is unknown; it is taken from one of Findlay's scrapbooks:

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Arthur Findlay
His Life and Work

All who have read Arthur Findlay's Trilogy – "On the Edge of the Etheric", "The Rock of Truth", and "The Unfolding Universe" will agree that he has succeeded in making religion and philosophy both intelligible and rational. He has removed religion from the darkness of faith into the light of knowledge, and in "The Unfolding Universe", the last of the three, the reader is carried forward to the heights where further and enlarged vistas open up. Undoubtedly the credit is due to him for putting Spiritualism on a scientific and realistic basis.

To bring light into dark places, to enlarge the vision and increase humanity's intellectual horizon, has been the aim of many pioneers in the past, and, in the realm of religion and philosophy, Arthur Findlay ranks with the other torch bearers who have carried forward the light of knowledge.

On leaving his preparatory school he went to Fettes College, and then to Geneva University. At the age of twenty-five, on the death of his father, he became senior Stockbroking partner of one of the leading Stockbroking and Chartered Accountant firms in Glasgow. After a remarkably successful business career he retired from active business at the age of forty, when he bought the estate of Stansted Hall in Essex, where he and his wife now reside.[1] As a Magistrate for Essex and Ayrshire, and

[1] There are some conflicting dates as to when the Findlays moved to Stansted Hall; this information is compiled from Findlay's autobiography, *Looking Back*, 1955. James Arthur Findlay and Annie Gertrude Walker were married on July 15th 1913 and started married life at Woodside, North Ayrshire. Annie, known as Gertrude, was very happy at Woodside and prepared to spend her life there. Arthur Findlay had lived in the west of Scotland for forty-one years but he longed to move to the south of England.

Findlay looked through estate agents' catalogues of nearly a hundred houses; in January 1923 he travelled to Essex to view Stansted Hall. He later returned with his wife Gertrude and they decided to buy the mansion and all the other houses and farm on about four hundred acres of land. They moved to Stansted Hall in February 1925.

Chairman of Administrative councils in these counties, he has given much of his time to county work.

Arthur Findlay was born in Glasgow in 1883, and comes of a long line of ancestors who have been famous in Scottish history. He is a direct descendant of Allan FitzFlaand, whose son Walter became the first High Steward of Scotland in 1158, founded the Stewart family and gave to Scotland its line of Stewart kings. In the fourteenth century one of Arthur Findlay's ancestors so distinguished himself at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 that he was given the Barony and Lordship of Kilmarnock, besides large tracts of land in Ayrshire. The following century, in the reign of James III, one of his ancestors became Lord Chancellor and Regent during the King's minority.

Ayrshire is his home county, and there his ancestors, in the seventeenth century, played a prominent part in their opposition of being forced to attend the Episcopalian Church, one being hanged in the Grass Market at Edinburgh in 1688, while another was imprisoned, awaiting the same fate when William of Orange landed and he was pardoned.

Coming to more settled times we find his forbears, over the past two hundred years, prominently connected with the commercial and financial life of Glasgow and the west of Scotland. He is a Freeman of his native city, and during the First World War he was awarded the Order of the British Empire for his organization work in connection with the British Red Cross Society.



Agriculture is one of his many interests, and the improvements he effected in methods of production are generally well known. As chairman of several companies he still retains his interest in finance, on which he has written many articles.

Arthur Findlay, however, is best known to the public through his books and addresses on History, Spiritualism, Philosophy, and Religion. As Chairman of Psychic Press Ltd. the proprietors of "Psychic News", [photograph[2]] he has

[2] The "Psychic News" Charter was hung at its office in 1957. Findlay is shown with P.N. editor Fred Archer, who became editor in 1953, taking over from A. W. Austen. Incidentally, Billy Austen was the assistant editor to Maurice Barbanell. In 1946, following a disagreement with Arthur Findlay, Barbanell resigned (and would not return until 1962); Austen replaced Barbanell as editor. Billy Austen was the first stenographer of the teachings of Silver Birch; the first book, *Teachings of Silver Birch*, was issued in March 1938, edited by A.W. Austen, with a foreword by Hannen Swaffer. For more information see the Britten Museum booklet "Silver Birch": http://www.shop.snu.org.uk/new.html

It was Austen who published the leaked report on the Archbishops' 1937 appointed committee to investigate Spiritualism in "Psychic News", 1947: "The Church of England and Spiritualism". See Psypioneer, Volume 1, No. 9, January 2005: "The secret report on Spiritualism".

taken a prominent part in the furtherance of the knowledge of Spiritualism. He has spoken in the largest halls of most of our great cities and in several of the capitals of Europe, and his books have been read in almost every country throughout the world. He, moreover, took a prominent part in the Church of Scotland enquiry into Spiritualism.

Always a student, and a great reader, he had read many of the standard books on Comparative Religion and Mythology before he was twenty-one years of age, and since then he has made a special study of this branch of science. Readers of his Trilogy will realise how intimately this subject is connected with Spiritualism. How thoroughly he has covered this entire field of thought by these three books will be best realised by turning over the pages of the "Index to the Trilogy". Here we find nearly sixteen thousand references to their contents, which, in itself, emphasises the amount of labour and research involved in their compilation.

After completing his Trilogy, Arthur Findlay then started to rewrite history from the psychic angle of thought, and in his two books "The Psychic Stream" and "The Curse of Ignorance" (in two volumes) he gave his readers a new interpretation of the past. The former book made rational the origin and growth of the Christian faith, and some day, when truths of Spiritualism are accepted, it will be recognised as having prepared the way for the removal of the mystery associated with the origin of Christianity and all other supernatural religions.

When "The Psychic Stream" was completed he then turned his attention to the history of mankind, and wrote the two remarkable volumes to which he gave the name "The Curse of Ignorance", the reason for this title being that so much in history can be traced to ignorance and folly. Herein he recorded the story of mankind from the time of primitive man to the end of the Second World War, and made clear what an important influence psychic phenomena has had on world history. These supernormal occurrences have been responsible for the origin, beliefs, ritual and ceremonial of all religions.

At least half the events of history are shown to have been caused by religion, a fact which both past and present historians have ignored because they have been unable to explain the cause and origin of religious beliefs. This ignorance of their origin, namely psychic experiences, has caused the influence of religion to be largely passed over, the consequence being that many of the great events of history have been left unexplained.

Arthur Findlay's last three books "Where Two Worlds Meet", "The Way of Life", and "Looking Back" are just as popular as all his previous writings, and quite as interesting.

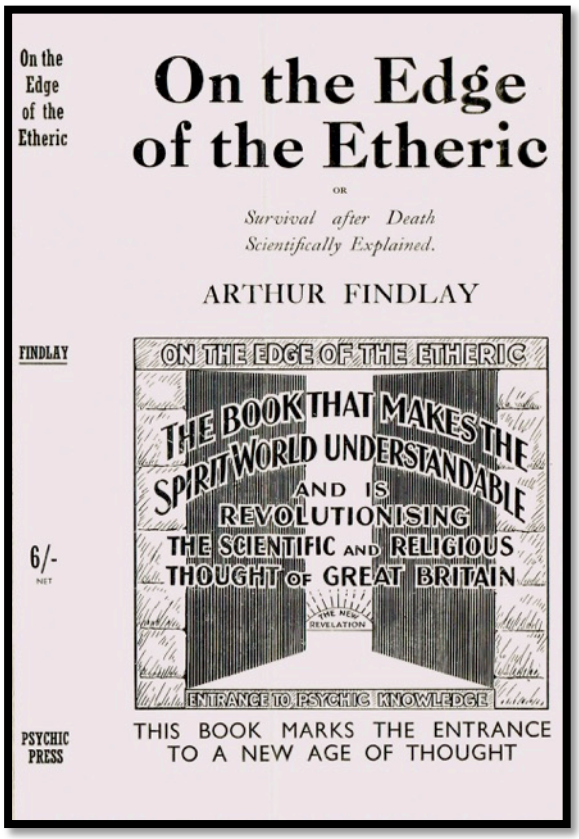
Slowly but surely the truths that Spiritualism stands for are becoming known, but not until this knowledge increases further will the writings of Arthur Findlay receive their due place in world literature. This, however, I can safely prophesy of them, that a hundred years hence they will be read by a much wider public, with the same intense interest as they are read today by a smaller number of advanced thinkers, because they deal with the vital things of life from the angle of observation and experience, which is the true scientific attitude.

Theological literature, past and present, has confined itself to the realm of faith, and entirely lacked any scientific basis for its assertions, but its day is passing as we are advancing mentally out of the supernatural into the natural, from the age of miracles to the realisation that supernormal happenings do occur, but that these are subject to natural law which dominates both this world and the next.

With religion now raised to the realm of science, and with history now rewritten from the psychic angle of thought, future generations will, in an age of greater enlightenment, look back on the past as a time of theological darkness and historical misinterpretation. The truths of Spiritualism will some day fill the world with intellectual light!

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Below I have listed Findlay's major books in date order; it can be noted that in the above article there is no mention of *The Torch of Knowledge*, published in 1936. This book may be described as a propaganda novel; Findlay puts his views and knowledge of Spiritualism into the mouths of the book's characters. Under this fictional guise, Findlay uses genuine Spiritualist information to put over the case of Spiritualism.



On the Edge of the Etheric (September 1931);[3] *The Rock of Truth* (August 1933); *The Unfolding Universe* (March 1935); *The Torch of Knowledge* (August 1936); *The Psychic Stream* (June 1939); *The Curse of Ignorance* (two volumes) (1947); *Where Two Worlds Meet* (1951); *The Way of Life* (1953) and, finally, his autobiography, *Looking Back* (1955).

A combined index of Findlay's first three books, containing 15,630 references to the contents, was compiled by Dr. Albert Neale and published by Psychic Press, London. The book is undated but Findlay's preface in accepting Albert Neale's "great work" is dated September 1936, Stansted Hall, Essex.

A booklet was also published, titled *The Effect of Religion on History,* by the Marylebone Spiritualist Association (MSA), taken from a lecture by Findlay to the Cambridge Historical Society and the MSA, not dated.

[3] Twenty-three editions in the first six months, a total of 20,000 copies initially sold at 3/6, initially published by Rider & Co, London, later published by Psychic Press.

Findlay was connected with numerous major Spiritualistic organisations. He was President of the London Spiritualist Alliance in 1934;[4] today it is called the College of Psychic Studies, still situated at 16 Queensberry Place, South Kensington. He was the Chairman for the International Institute for Psychical Research[5] and an Honorary Vice-President (as was his brother John) of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, founded in 1872,[6] today known as the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain (SAGB), now situated at 11 Belgrave Road, London. The photograph below is taken while lecturing on *The Effect of Religion on History* to the Marylebone Spiritualist Association on August 27th 1952.

Senior Spiritualists will recall that each year the MSA/SAGB would hold a Remembrance Service each year at the Royal Albert Hall, where many of our finest speakers and mediums would address the large audiences; Bertha Harris, Harry Edwards, Robin Stevens, Doris Collins, Coral Polge and many others have graced the famous stage.

On November 7th 1948, Arthur Findlay addressed the large gathering at the Albert Hall;[7] he was followed by MSA President (1947-1950) Percy Hitchcock, and Estelle Roberts was the demonstrator, reportedly in her best form. Below is taken from Findlay's typed address from one of his scrapbooks held in the Britten Memorial Museum at Stansted Hall, Essex.

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[4] See Psypioneer, Volume 2, No. 7, July 2006: – Findlay Resigns from the L.S.A.

[5] See Psypioneer, Volume 7, No. 2, February 2011: – Amalgamation of the British College of Psychic Science and the International Institute for Psychical Research Under The Name of the International Institute for Psychic Investigation.

[6] See Psypioneer, Volume 2, No, 12, December 2006: – The Story of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association 1872-1928.

[7] The "Daily Mail" gave 3,000 in attendance. This was the second big event at the Albert Hall in 1948. On March 31st the Centenary of Modern Spiritualism was celebrated, where all sections of the Spiritualist movement united for the celebration. It was presided over by Ernest Oaten and speeches were given by Harold Vigurs (SNU), Percy Hitchcock (Marylebone Spiritualist Association) and Mr H. Bendall (Greater World Christian Spiritualist League). Hannen Swaffer and other well-known figures sat on the platform: Winifred Moyes, Lord Dowding, John McIndoe, Percy Wilson, etc. The demonstrators were Estelle Roberts and Helen Hughes.



Arthur Findlay in 1952

Arthur Findlay at the Albert Hall

Ladies & Gentlemen,

I have been asked to open this large service of remembrance by giving you a short address, and I think I cannot do better than tell you what Spiritualism means to me and many millions throughout the world.

It is now 30 years since I first began to investigate the phenomena produced in the presence of a medium, and it is interesting on this occasion to sum up what I have discovered and what I now believe to be true.

Spiritualists know what happens after death because they have reached their conclusions by the scientific method of observation and experience. All orthodox religions, the world over, take the believer as far as the grave and leave him there. The rest, he is told, is a matter of faith, and consequently every religion has a hazy and different idea as to the life hereafter. Spiritualism, on the other hand, takes us beyond the grave and tells us what we may expect. We do not rely on faith or tradition but on experience, and because of this we can claim that Spiritualism is a natural religion and one that is founded on the rock of truth.

Let me therefore tell you what we may expect to experience when we die. Our physical body will return to earth as it relates to earth substance, but our etheric body, which is an exact duplicate of our physical body, free of physical imperfections, continues to function in another order of vibrations of greater frequency than those which make up the earth. The etheric body is the real body on earth though we do not see it, but nevertheless it keeps together the atoms which make up the structure of the physical body.

Our mind, which is really ourselves, because it is always imaging our surroundings, leaves the physical body at death. The mind takes with it the etheric body, which it controls in another environment, just as it controlled the physical body on earth. When functioning through the etheric body our mind responds to the finer vibrations of the etheric world to which the etheric body is related. Consequently we are still ourselves and think and act as we did on earth. Our memory is intact and we can remember all our past life on earth.

Just as a baby enters the physical world naked, so we enter the etheric world naked, but our clothes are provided for us and they, and everything about us, appears as solid and substantial as did our surroundings on earth. Our etheric body enables us to function as solid substantial beings in a world similar to this earth.

When we have become accustomed to our new surroundings, and, if we have the knowledge and the will to do so, we can lower the vibrations of our etheric body and again respond to the vibrations of the physical world. Consequently we can hear and see what takes place on earth, and many a departed man, woman and child have attended their own funeral and seen their physical body laid in the earth.

Not only can we come back to earth, but, if we make use of a medium, we can make ourselves both seen and heard by our friends whom we have left on earth. We can re-materialise our etheric body, we can be heard by means of a materialised throat and larynx, and we can control a medium in trance and use this medium's vocal organs to speak through.

Our friends who come back tell us of their new life and the world in which they now live, and, as we are all bound for this other country, it is interesting to know what they have to tell us. Everything to them is as natural as our world is to us here. They have houses, universities, schools, fields, trees, flowers, music, clothes and all the pleasures the mind desires. Life is intense and active.

The family tie again unites those whom affection held together on earth. There is no working for money, and they move from place to place, as we do, but much more quickly than we can. All is real and tangible, composed of substance in a higher state of vibration than the matter which makes up our world. All in the same plane can see and touch the same things. If they look at a field it is a field to all who look upon it. It is no dream world. Everything is the same to those in the same condition of mental development.

They can sit down together and enjoy each other's company, just as they did on earth. They have books and they can read them. They have the same feelings and aspirations as they had on earth. They can go for a long walk in the country and meet friends whom they have not seen for a long time. They can gather the flowers in the fields and in their gardens, and these give off aroma the same as our flowers do.

In the etheric world our etheric body grows more and more refined as time passes, and we rise to higher and higher planes of consciousness. Any deformities we have here will be corrected there, and, if we have lost a leg or an arm, or are blind or crippled in any way, we shall have it corrected there, as it was the physical body which was the cause of our troubles.

Our understanding will be enlarged, and we will become more conscious of the beauty of our surroundings than we were in the physical body. Our scope of usefulness will be extended beyond the limit of our imagination. We grow to maturity but there is no old age. We will not have to trouble about earning a livelihood, about eating or about clothes, or about a house to live in, as our mind will be in so much greater control of our surroundings that it will be able to mould our surroundings to meet our desires.

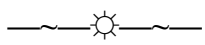
After our loved ones on earth have joined us, there will be no more grieving about separation, and, by rectifying our past mistakes, we shall cease to regret the errors and mistakes we made on earth. There character counts like nowhere else, and that is why Spiritualism advocates the development of character, practice of the virtues, and the increase of our understanding here on earth, because everything we learn on earth is remembered by us when we reach our new abode. As we sow on earth we shall reap hereafter.

The foregoing is no flight of imagination, but a brief summary of what I have been told on many occasions by my friends who have passed on before me. These friends have proved their identity in many ways, and, from utter scepticism, I gradually came to believe that what they told me was the truth. What a wonderful revelation this is, and it makes us realise that here on earth we are just like children in the nursery, with greatly expanded opportunities before us after we make the change called death.

Death to a Spiritualist is like turning the bend of a road. He becomes unseen to those behind him, but he is still alive and still himself in every way. We no more change our identity at death than we do when we move from one room to another in a house. The illusion and mystery of death has been resolved. No longer need we cry aloud and only hear the echo of our voice. Life is no longer a narrow vale between two bleak eternities, as where the so-called dead have gone our reason now can go. All that they tell us can be understood, on the basis of our latest scientific discoveries with regard to the constitution of the substance which makes up the universe.

Spiritualism is founded on fact, because it is the result of observation and experience. Science is also founded on fact for the same reason. Consequently Spiritualism will someday be recognised as an important branch of scientific knowledge. Likewise, if supernatural religion some day adopts the scientific method, and comes down to facts and reality, the people of this earth will then be able to join together in one grand cathedral whose dome is the firmament and whose true and only priests are the interpreters of nature.

If that time ever comes, mankind will be joined together in a common belief of a common destiny, to the lasting happiness, peace and brotherhood of the human race.



James Arthur Findlay also expressed his views:

MR. J. ARTHUR FINDLAY



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

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

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

J. ARTHUR FINDLAY.

JAMES ARTHUR FINDLAY

Stansted Hall & Elms Farm – The early years



Arthur Findlay, as he was more generally known, came to the forefront as a psychical researcher. This led to the publication in November 1931 of "On the Edge of the Etheric", based on a series of sittings with a Glasgow trance and direct voice medium, John C. Sloan. The first publication of the book was in November 1931. Previously, in September 1924, Findlay published a small booklet titled "An Investigation of Psychic Phenomena"; this was basically a summary of his notes of his experiences with Sloan.

In the early part of the twentieth century Findlay's family moved from Hillhead near Kilbirnie, North Ayrshire, on the west coast of Scotland to Woodside, situated a mile from Beith and just three miles from Hillhead. It would be at Woodside where the young James Arthur Findlay would meet his future wife, Gertrude Walker; Findlay records in his autobiography, "Looking Back", first published in 1955, pages 146-147:

To FALL in love, as the saying is, then to become engaged, and then to marry, is one of the most important events in one's life, and everyone who has gone through this experience has some story to tell as to how it came about. My story is simple. My brother, when an undergraduate at Cambridge, became friendly with a fellow student, and through this friendship I came to know his parents who asked me to stay with them at their lovely place in Argyllshire, where they spent several months in the year. The rest of the time they lived in Leicestershire, and it was when visiting them there at a later date that I met their niece, Gertrude Walker. She lived near, her home being called Glenn Hall, close to the village of Great Glenn.

I first met her when she came to dine in the evening. I sat next to her at dinner and we talked of her travels abroad, which had been extensive, she always having accompanied her father and mother who generally went abroad for the Winter. I found that, except for Australia, New Zealand and southern South America, Gertrude had been to most of the other countries in the world, including a voyage round the world when she was nineteen years of age.[1] We got on well together, and she asked me to come the next day for afternoon tea. This I did, to find other subjects in which we were both interested, and so it went on. I again visited her aunt and uncle, and Gertrude and I met again, to end in our becoming engaged within a month of our first meeting.

[1] Annie Gertrude Walker (known as Gertrude) died July 19th 1963.

Her father, Theodore Walker, was a director of Wolsey Ltd., a charming cultured man with the mind of a university professor. He welcomed me as his future son-in-law in such a kind and cordial way that I knew I would like him. We always remained the best of friends, and I found him as good a father-in-law as a man could have. His wife, who could claim direct descent from the Welsh King Ludd, had died at sea a few years earlier coming back from South Africa, and he and Gertrude came home alone. Gertrude took her mother's place in looking after her father and their home, but my coming on the scene changed this arrangement and, following our marriage six months after our engagement, her place was taken by her sister.

My mother and brother decided to leave Woodside and live elsewhere, so that when we returned from our honeymoon we began our married life at Woodside.[2] The Hon. Edward Carr Glyn, Bishop of Peterborough, and two other clergymen officiated at our marriage, to which came many of our friends, and this took place at Great Glenn church on 15th July 1913. My father-in-law kindly put his car and chauffeur at our disposal and the honeymoon was spent in Devonshire and Cornwall. When we returned home we received a great welcome from the people of Beith. The train entered the station to the sound of fog signals going off and we were pulled to Woodside by ropes attached to our car. We certainly never expected this great reception.

Thus it was we married and lived happily ever after, …

—~—☼—~—



WOODSIDE FROM THE GLEN.

[2] Findlay records on pages 137-138: "The year 1907 meant much to me, to my mother and my brother, as in that year my father died on 24th July. He became ill when sitting out on the lawn one afternoon at Woodside and went to bed. He developed acute appendicitis, and a surgeon from Glasgow was called in. He said that an operation was the only hope, but that at the best there was slight prospect of his recovery. He never recovered from it, blood-poisoning set in, and he passed peacefully away at the age of fifty-one to the sorrow of everyone.

I remember making this remark to the surgeon before he returned to Glasgow. "I wonder," I said, "what death means. Does it mark the end of life or the beginning of another?" He replied: "The end, to be sure, there is no life after death. Your father only lives on in you and your brother." How wrong he was, …"

The Findlays remained, by all accounts, happily at Woodside. After the Great War (1914-18) Findlay received a letter from the Home Secretary on behalf of the Prime Minister, Mr Lloyd George, informing him that he proposed to submit Findlay's name to King George V for the appointment as a Member of the newly established Order of the British Empire (MBE). This was duly awarded by the King at Buckingham Palace. A few years later the Lord Lieutenant of Ayrshire appointed Findlay to the position of Justice of the Peace, after which he devoted as much time as possible to work as a magistrate on the Bench.[3]

Findlay was also asked to become a member of an ancient Guild, a member of the Incorporation of Hammermen,[4] and later was given the Freedom of Glasgow.

Findlay records in his autobiography, page 192:

> I was now at a fork in my road of life. I had two ways I could go. I might then have stood for Parliament, or gone in for Glasgow municipal work, with the expectation of one day becoming Lord Provost with the title and honours attached to this office, but neither appealed to me.
>
> My grandfather once said, when asked why he had not stood for the City Council, that he had no desire to work his way up through the intrigues, malice and backbiting with which it is surrounded, and I felt much the same.

Findlay further stated on pages 193-194:

> So neither a parliamentary nor a municipal life attracted me, and yet I was now a free man to do as I liked, because I had all that I needed, quite apart from my business. With heavy taxation, as it then was after the First World War, and has remained since, I was just as well off out of business as in it. By taxing the taxpayers' income on a graded scale the Inland Revenue deprived me of nearly everything I made from my business. All incentive to work for gain had gone.
>
> By such methods the war was in part paid for, and those who had the largest income had to pay the most in taxes. This method kills the rich man's desire for remunerative work, as my energy was now devoted to making money which was just handed over to the State. Why, therefore, should I not be free to live as I wished, and not be tied to the daily attendance at the office?

Findlay preferred country life to work in the city. Gertrude was happy to remain at Woodside for the rest of her life but Findlay "longed for the south of England. Western Scotland is very beautiful, but the climate is bad, as sometimes it rains for days, and Woodside, situated as it is in a valley amongst high hills, got all the rain coming in from the Atlantic."

Findlay records in his autobiography on pages 194-195:

> So we decided to find a house in a drier part of the world. We must have gone through the catalogues of nearly a hundred houses when at last one came from my agents relating to Stansted Hall in Essex. This seemed to us just the place we wanted, convenient to, but not too near, London, in one of the driest and sunniest parts of England. There we would

[3] Later in the late 1920s Findlay became a Justice of the Peace for Essex.

[4] Throughout Europe, from the 11th century onwards, a system of guilds of craftsmen and merchants developed to regulate the trade and commerce of their communities. In towns and cities, including Glasgow, a highly developed system of guilds – or incorporations, as they came to be known – controlled the government of the Burgh, headed by an officer known as the Deacon Convenor.

not have the hills, but the countryside was rural and dotted everywhere with magnificent trees. A beautiful landscape, with large and stately trees, was to me ideal.

So off I went in January 1923 to see the house, which was situated on the Essex and Hertfordshire borders. I was so taken with it that my wife came with me on a return visit, to end in my buying the estate comprising the mansion and all the other houses and farm on about four hundred acres of land. My partnership had still two years to run, and, as the house required redecorating, we did not leave Scotland for England until February 1925.

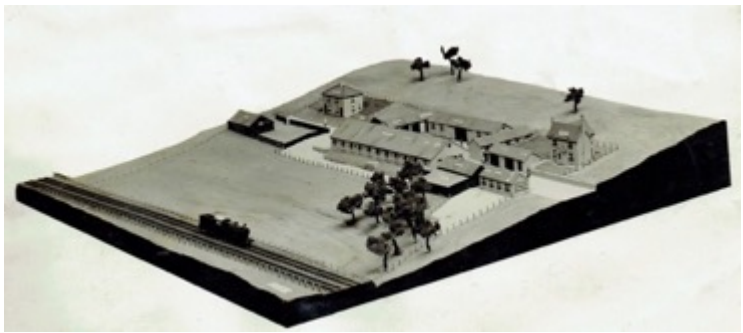


Findlay purchased the estate from Sir Albert Ball in 1923. Today the grounds are in glorious splendour, as shown in the photograph taken on June 11th, the start of Japanese Week this year. Full credit must be given to the College's head gardener, Will Crowley, and his assistant, Robert Watson. Under the long arch on the left-hand side lies the original gravestone of Emma Hardinge Britten, her mother, Anne Sophia Floyd, husband William, and her sister and her husband, Margaret and Gilbert Wilkinson.

Findlay turned his hand to farming and with no formal training turned Elms Farm into a Grade A farm, the first in the district! The images shown below are from Findlay's scrapbooks, held in the Britten Museum & Library at Stansted, and are under copyright.

Findlay records in his autobiography on pages 269-271:

"It is said that if a man retires from his profession he should do so when he is young enough to take up something new, and, if he is too old for that, he should not retire at all. Fortunately, I was young enough to be able to interest myself in all the opportunities which had opened up before me. I was forty-one years of age, strong, healthy, and energetic. So I bent my energies to farming, and for six years gave much of my thought to building up a dairy farm, for which the land was specially suitable.



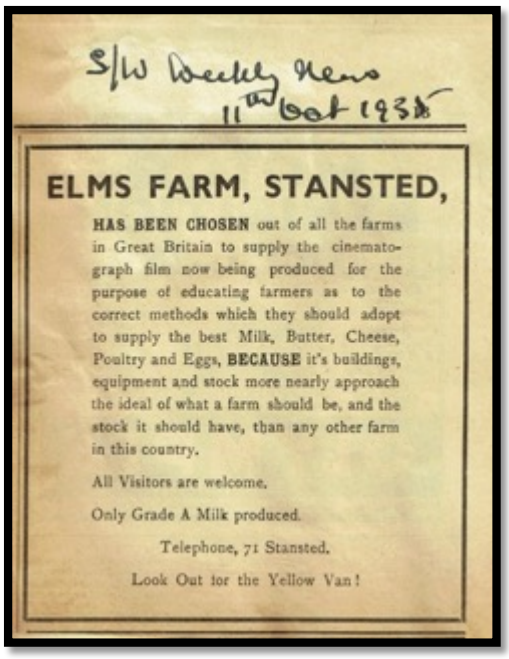
"The existing farm buildings, half a mile from Stansted Hall, were old-fashioned and out of date. So everything was removed and new buildings erected,→ after I had made a close study of modern farming methods. Consequently, it became a Grade A farm, the first in the district. I never had any training as a farmer, but I am glad to say, after many years of experience, that if I rebuilt the farm to-day I would do so exactly as I did then. When completed, I engaged an experienced bailiff to look after a herd of eighty Shorthorn cattle and the cultivation of the land.

"When all this was done a business of some size had been created, and this gave me much pleasure as the work of creation should always do. Over three hundred acres of land were thus used for agriculture, the rest of the estate being made up of woodlands,



garden and the pleasure grounds surrounding the Hall. Some ten miles of fencing had to be maintained, and, besides this, private roads and many houses, large and small, on the estate required to be kept in repair. So gardeners, farm-workers and other craftsmen were employed and had to be supervised, all of which meant work, but it was all enjoyable and of great interest. Nevertheless, the fact remained that I had not really retired, when I gave up my business in Glasgow, as I had only exchanged one interest for another, but my new one was in the country and not in a town. Moreover, I could spend the day as I liked, which made all the difference."

Findlay continues:


S/W Weekly News
11th Oct 1935

ELMS FARM, STANSTED,

HAS BEEN CHOSEN out of all the farms in Great Britain to supply the cinematograph film now being produced for the purpose of educating farmers as to the correct methods which they should adopt to supply the best Milk, Butter, Cheese, Poultry and Eggs, **BECAUSE** it's buildings, equipment and stock more nearly approach the ideal of what a farm should be, and the stock it should have, than any other farm in this country.

All Visitors are welcome.

Only Grade A Milk produced.

Telephone, 71 Stansted.

Look Out for the Yellow Van!

"I now discovered that there was much dissatisfaction amongst dairy farmers about the way magistrates were dealing with those who occasionally sold milk which had less than three per cent of butter fat. Adulteration of the milk was presumed, and the retailer too often convicted. The truth was that the cows themselves were in many cases giving poor milk, and the retailer was not to blame. The law allowed for this, but the honest farmer found it difficult to prove his case, as cows vary in the percentage of butter fat they produce. The sample complained of one day quite possibly would have complied with the standard of three per cent. if taken the next day. Several convictions in our neighbourhood made me look into the matter, and see what could be done to secure justice for the honest farmer.



"Everyone who sold milk was in danger of being in this unenviable position sooner or later, and to right a wrong I had a long correspondence with the Chief Inspector of Weights and Measures for Essex. He said he had to administer the law and could not help me. I then went to the Ministry of Agriculture and saw several leading officials, who sympathised, but could not do more than that. One stated that as the law was administered he would never be a milk-producer. Finally I decided to make out my case in pamphlet form, and send a copy to each Member of Parliament and the Chairman of every Justice of the Peace Court in the country. The pamphlet, entitled *The Law Relating to Butter Fat in Milk*, stating the case

and giving copies of the correspondence which had taken place, ran into twenty-seven pages and received much publicity. I am glad to feel that, when the position was understood by the magistrates, honest farmers who were summoned obtained greater justice than they had received in the past. The pamphlet still circulates and goes on doing its good work to this day."

The Elms Farm land is now (2017) under development, with proposals of around sixty new houses to be built, and community allotments, etc.



Here we have an interesting story:

We can note in the above quotes that Arthur Findlay was a well-placed employer in Stansted, with household staff, gardeners and farm workers. When the editor was first employed at the Arthur Findlay College in 1973, there remained one of Findlay's housemaids, Edith. She was elderly but each day she would be out with the feather duster keeping the house in good order, as she had done for many years. She told me Mr. Findlay was strict but very kind and generous; after all, he had secured her well-being in so much that she would be looked after for accommodation, food, etc. at Stansted Hall for as long as she wished.

In 1975 age had caught up with Edith and she decided to go into a home to be cared for. She was given a big send off, my car was covered in balloons, etc. and the College chef, Ken Fullard, drove her to her new home.

At Open Week this year, which was featured in the previous issue of "Pioneer", my breaks for lunch, etc. were covered by one of the 'Stansted Healers', Beryl Jay. She told me her father worked delivering milk for Arthur Findlay from 1930.

Beryl told me her father,

> "Alan Garnet Patmore, known as Garnet, was born in Stansted in 1916, left school at 14 and went to work at Arthur Findlay's farm (Elms Farm) in Stansted.
>
> His job was delivering milk as far as Saffron Walden on a bicycle with several crates fixed to it.

When Dad married in January 1940 Arthur Findlay gave him a wedding present of a carving set.

My dad served in WW2 from 1940 to 1945. He was in Cairo, the desert, Belgium and Sicily. He brought a German doll home for me. It had human hair; I wonder where the hair came from!

When he returned from the war, he went back to work at Arthur Findlay's farm. He no longer had to ride a bike but was issued with a white van."



The photograph shows Garnet Patmore on his milk round

Beryl continued an association with Stansted Hall, as she told me:



Beryl Jay

"I used to accompany my mother to services in the Sanctuary in the 1960s and 1970s and often saw Gordon Higginson work.

In the early 90s I went on a Coral Polge course at the College and decided I would love to work there. I started in the still-room washing up in 1995 and progressed to housekeeping, reception, and finally worked in the bookshop for eight years with the lovely Sheila Keener, then with the equally lovely Magda Korsak.

My husband Jack worked in the College bar for some years.

I joined the Friends of Stansted Hall Fellowship soon after it started. When June and Geoff Hughes took over the FOSH they trained some of us as healers. I became an Approved Healer in 2006 and joined the Stansted Healers soon after.[5] I have also had some success as a psychic artist.

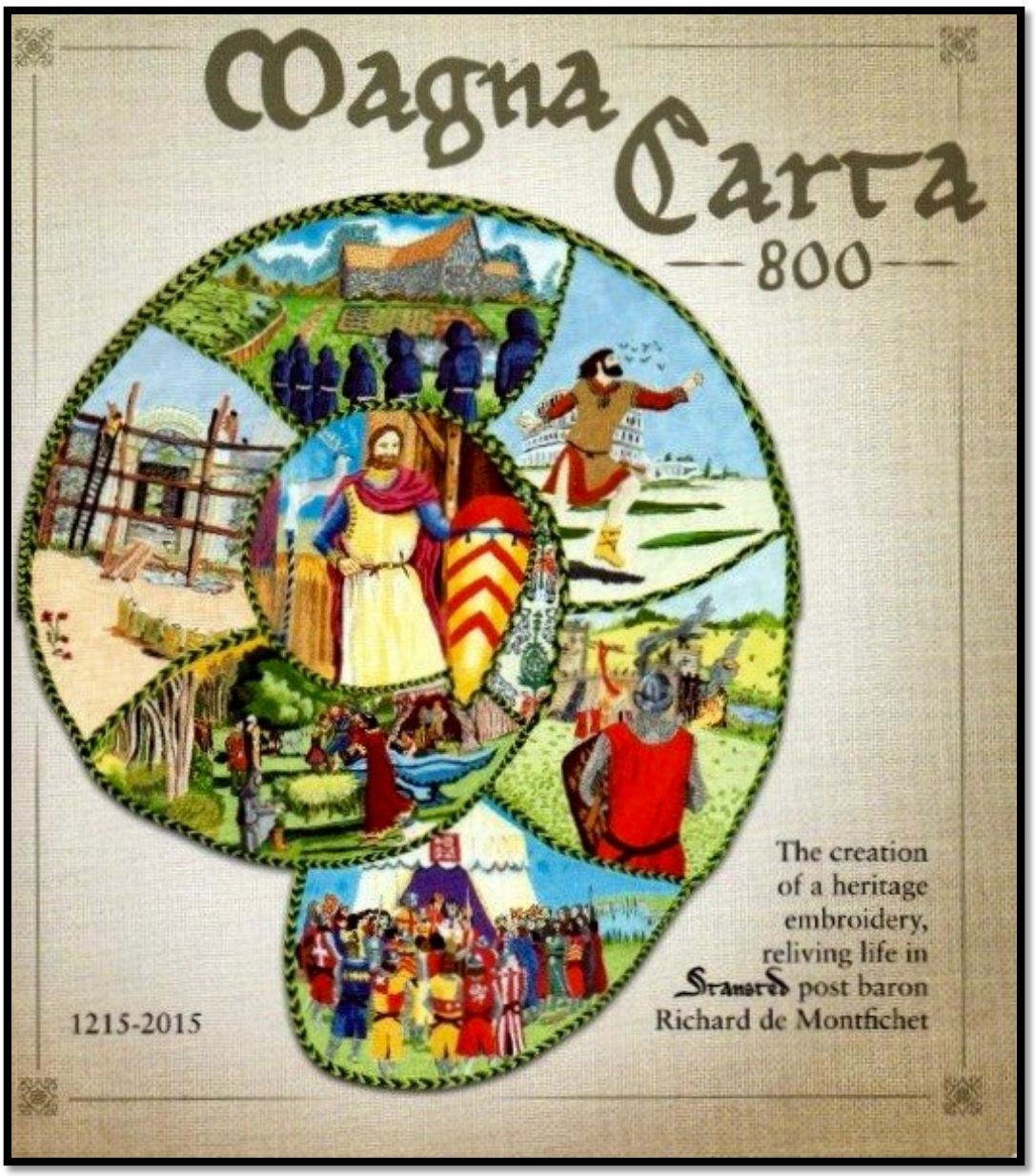
Arthur Findlay's wedding present to her parents was used consistently until Mrs Patmore's death in 2004. Beryl has passed on the carving set to the Museum.

Seventy-seven years later it returns to Stansted Hall!

[5] The 'Stansted Healers' are a working healing group, meeting on Tuesdays and the Open Week at the Arthur Findlay College. The Saturday 'SNU Stansted Hall Healing Centre' is an official SNU entity specialising in training SNU Healers. Both use the Pioneer Centre situated near the Sanctuary.

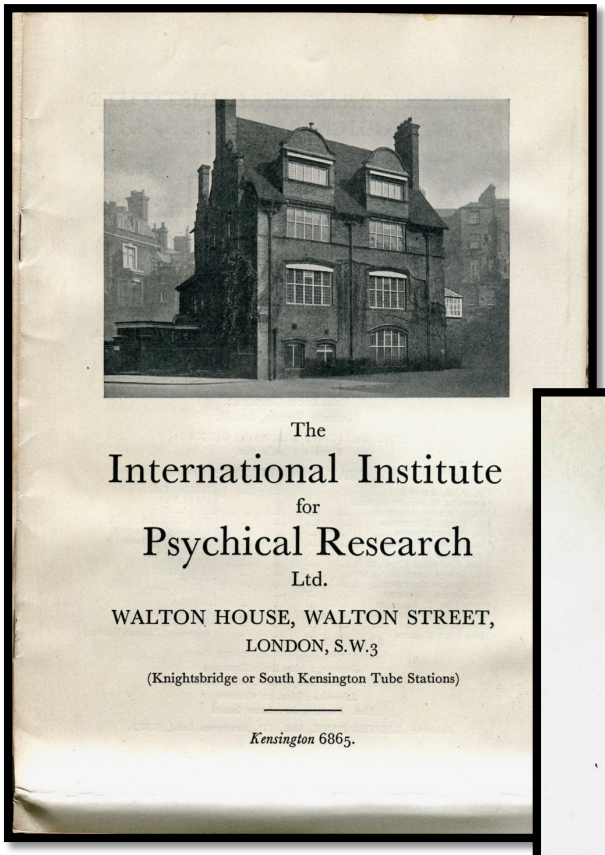
Beryl continued:

> I have a sister, Carole, who is also artistic. Carole drew all the figures, which were stitched into a tapestry to celebrate the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta. The tapestry is at present on show in the Sanctuary at the Arthur Findlay College.[6]



[6] A special day was held at Stansted Hall - please see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 4, July 2015: "Epic scenes for the signing of the Magna Carta – Stansted Hall".

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH



The
International Institute
for
Psychical Research
Ltd.
WALTON HOUSE, WALTON STREET,
LONDON, S.W.3
(Knightsbridge or South Kensington Tube Stations)

Kensington 6865.

The International Institute for Psychical Research was formed in 1934 for the purpose of investigating psychic phenomena on strictly scientific lines; it enrolled a number of distinguished scientists both in an active and in a consultative capacity. For further information please see "International Institute for Psychical Investigation", by Leslie Price, Psypioneer, Vol. 1, No. 17, September 2005.[10]

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH, LTD.

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No President has been elected in place of the late Sir Grafton Elliot Smith, F.R.S., M.A., etc. who was the Institute's first President.

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Later, on January 1st 1939, the "International Institute for Psychical Research" amalgamated with the "British College of Psychic Science", founded in 1920 by Mr Hewat McKenzie, changing their name to "International Institute for Psychic Investigation". In addition, it took over the BCPS journal, which continued, retaining its name, "'Psychic Science' Quarterly Transactions of the International Institute for Psychic Investigation", with Mrs Hewat McKenzie as editor, Barbara McKenzie being the widow of Hewat McKenzie.[11]

It appears that with the outbreak of war the organisation had a difficult time; its library and records are said to have been lost or destroyed by bombing and the IIPI collapsed in 1947.

[10] I note that the title is incorrect and should read at this point: "International Institute for Psychical Research" (not "Investigation").

[11] For further information see Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 2, February 2011: "Whatever happened to the British College? - *Psychic Science*" "The International Institute for Psychic Investigation (IIPI)".

The article below was written by Arthur Findlay, showing him as a sympathetic researcher; it was published by "Psychic News", January 9th, 1937, pages 7 and 8:



THE CASE FOR REAL PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

By ARTHUR FINDLAY, who is chairman of the International Institute for Psychical Research.

WHAT is the right attitude for Spiritualists to adopt towards psychical research?

All Spiritualists who have reached definite conclusions as to the truth of what Spiritualism stands for have been, and perhaps still are, psychical researchers. There is no reason why a Spiritualist cannot be a psychical researcher or why a psychical researcher cannot be a Spiritualist.

I would define a psychical researcher as one who seeks for evidence of a supernormal nature in a thorough businesslike, scientific manner. In his investigations he tries entirely to eliminate sentiment and emotion and obtain evidence which cannot be disputed.

World's Greatest Force

Most people who obtain evidence do not approach the matter in this matter-of-fact way and often get evidence, satisfactory to themselves, under the strain of emotion caused by the "death" of someone they loved. When the psychical researcher approaches the subject he eliminates emotion entirely and thus is at a disadvantage, so far as receiving definite evidence of Survival is concerned.

Love is the greatest attractive force in the world, and it is not difficult to understand how much more easily a "dead" husband can return to the wife he loves and give her evidence of his survival than for this evidence to be obtained when the emotions, and when the affection, are eliminated.

For that reason those who have lost their dearest can generally obtain evidence of Survival, completely convincing to themselves, which is denied the psychical researcher. Such people, having thus obtained this evidence, naturally see no object in the scientific methods adopted by psychical research.

Yet, in my opinion, psychic phenomena must be approached from these two angles, which I might term the scientific and the emotional.

I freely admit that much which went on under the name of psychical research in the past was crude and foolish. In so far as what is called physical phenomena is concerned, I have never believed in the tying up of mediums, or other similar attempts, to eliminate fraud.

Defeated Their Ends

So as to eliminate fraud psychical researchers of the past have defeated their own ends, and in their anxiety to obtain genuine results they have inhibited the very phenomena they were so anxious to produce. Again, so many psychical researchers treated mediums as if they were a species apart, who were to be continually watched for the slightest sign of trickery. This attitude has likewise inhibited phenomena.

We now know that the mind plays such a part in the phenomena that the last thing a psychical researcher should do is to make the medium feel that he or she is suspected of being watched. Though this attitude towards mediums has been too general in the past, yet there have been notable exceptions.

Past Investigations

I can recall to mind the supernormal phenomena obtained by Sir Oliver Lodge, Alfred Russel Wallace, Sir William Crookes, Sir William Barrett and Dr. Crawford, of Belfast, so far as the British Isles are concerned, Lombroso, Richet, Bozzano and Schrenck-Notzing abroad. In Canada, one calls to minds the wonderful phenomena obtained in Winnipeg at Dr. Glen Hamilton's seances, which were carried on under strictly scientific conditions.

These and many others lend a glory to the name of psychical research, and have helped to raise Spiritualism from being considered a superstition to the rank of a science. It is doubtful if this would ever have come about had these, and other investigators, not carried out their investigations under strictly scientific conditions, entirely free from emotion.

So much for the past. What of the present and future?

A good deal has lately been discovered with regard to photographing in the dark. The day has now passed when the medium need be treated in any way different from an ordinary human being. There is no need to shackle him or tie him to his chair or bolt the chair to the ground. There is no need now to cover him with luminous paint, or, at a direct voice seance, the trumpets with luminous bands.

It is now possible to photograph in the dark what occurs in the seance room by means of cinematograph cameras, operated by infrared light, so that after the seance is over everything that has occurred can be reproduced on the screen, just as quickly or as slowly as is desired.

This, of course, is an expensive method, requiring expensive equipment and expensive films, but it is well worth the money. After the séance is over and the film is developed, the psychical researchers then adopt the attitude of critics of what they see on the screen, and, if the pictures reveal that anything doubtful has occurred during the seance, it is carefully noted. Thus, the conclusion can be arrived at without difficulty as to whether the phenomena are produced normally or supernormally. So much for the dark seance.

As, however, much supernormal phenomena occur in the daylight infra-red and ultra-violet light, which help the researcher so much in the dark, are of no use to him in daylight seances. Here, other methods are adopted, in the field of what is called mental phenomena.

Checking Mental Phenomena

Mental phenomena are produced when the medium is on a state of trance, or is hearing clairaudiently, or is seeing clairvoyantly. What is spoken by the medium is all-important. The psychical researcher tabulates carefully what is said, makes certain that it was impossible for the medium to have known it normally, and lastly that the information given is accurate. Each one, of course, can do his alone, but it only satisfies the person concerned.

If you wish, in any way, to influence the general public with the weight of evidence, it is only possible to do so when they can be made to realise that everything said was taken down correctly at the time, that investigations have proved that the medium could not have known normally what was said, and lastly that what was said was correct.

Thus only can the outside public be convinced of the reality of these supernormal messages, as due weight is given to the evidence when it is realised that it has been obtained by people who specialise in the subject.

But this is not all that the psychical researcher can now do. Doctors have very delicate instruments which immediately register the state of the body in health and in sickness. Doctors have so much data to go upon that, by means of vibrations, they can now tell the state of health and even the disease by means of the vibrations from the human body which are picked up by these instruments. Blood tests, and other means, are also used by the medical profession to determine the state of the human body.

So much for the normal individual. But what happens when these scientific methods are adopted towards a medium when in trance, or when supernormal phenomena are occurring in his presence? From the records now obtained by the International Institute for Psychical Research, we find that when a medium is in trance all normal records are broken, and the instruments employed show a range of vibrations which never occur in a normal person.



NANDOR FODOR, LL.D.
Research Officer of The International Institute for Psychical Research

This method of investigation is only a beginning and the results are being tabulated. But we are not yet able to express definite conclusions. What seems evident, however, is that the trance condition has a very decided effect on the human body, and I am hopeful that when these investigations are concluded it will be possible to draw conclusions about trance which it was impossible to do in the old days before these instruments were invented.

Changes In Temperature

During a seance our instruments have also recorded changes in temperature to a supernormal degree, and we also know that both the medium and the sitters alter in weight to a supernormal extent. All this is being carefully tabulated and recorded by Dr. Nandor Fodor, a very capable research officer of the International Institute for Psychical Research.

After months of preparation and thought, we recently succeeded, at the International Institute, in securing a cinematograph film of the movement of an object without visible contact.

In this instance, we secured a continuous picture of a carnation being taken out of a vase, standing in the middle of the floor, and carried some feet up into the air, and then falling down some distance on the side of the vase away from the medium.

This film has just been taken and is now the subject of microscopic study on the part of the research officer and his assistants. It will be enlarged to such an extent that any trickery used to cause the movement will be discovered, if such were the cause.

By such methods we should someday be able to arrive at a better understanding of what many believe takes place at so many seances, at which the sitters are unable to see with their own eyes because the phenomena take place either in the dark or in a very dim light.

Now, however, we have a camera which can see in the dark by means of infra-red light. It requires little imagination on the part of anybody to realise how infra-red photography must prove the genuineness of psychical phenomena or, on the other hand, that it is all due to fraud.

Now that we can record what takes place in the dark, what has been mysterious will become clear, and what has been doubtful will become certain. Thus the International Institute is steadily, day by day, accumulating results which are available to members, and I cannot foresee the day when its work will be finished.

The supernormal side of men and women has, until recently, never received any scientific consideration. If, as I believe, Man is a trinity and the physical is only a portion of his make-up, where can the end be?

Within the last 200 years, the physical part of him has received consideration, but the etheric and mental parts have received little or no consideration at all. These may be found, and I believe they will be found, to be just as important, if not more important, than the physical part.

Psychical research is just in its infancy and, like everything in its infancy, has to withstand criticism. But infants grow up to be men and women. So also will this new science some day take its place with the other recognised sciences.

The International Institute has never had any difficulty in obtaining mediums because mediums are treated by all the officials of the Institute which kindness and respect. If we find a medium defrauding, as unfortunately we have done, then his or her services are dispensed with and that is the end of the matter.

No publicity is given to the discovery. We do not glory in exposing mediums. We are only too sorry when we discover fraud. We are building up this science on genuine phenomena, not on fraudulent phenomena, and when fraud is discovered, it just means that so much time has been wasted, which would otherwise have been applied to the investigation of genuine phenomena.

Some of the best mediums in this country have sat for investigation in the seance room of the International Institute, and are still sitting. I shall not mention them all by name, but only two who have given their services for work of a special nature, namely Miss Naomi Bacon and Mrs. Garrett. The services of these two women have been particularly helpful in connection with our investigation of haunted houses.

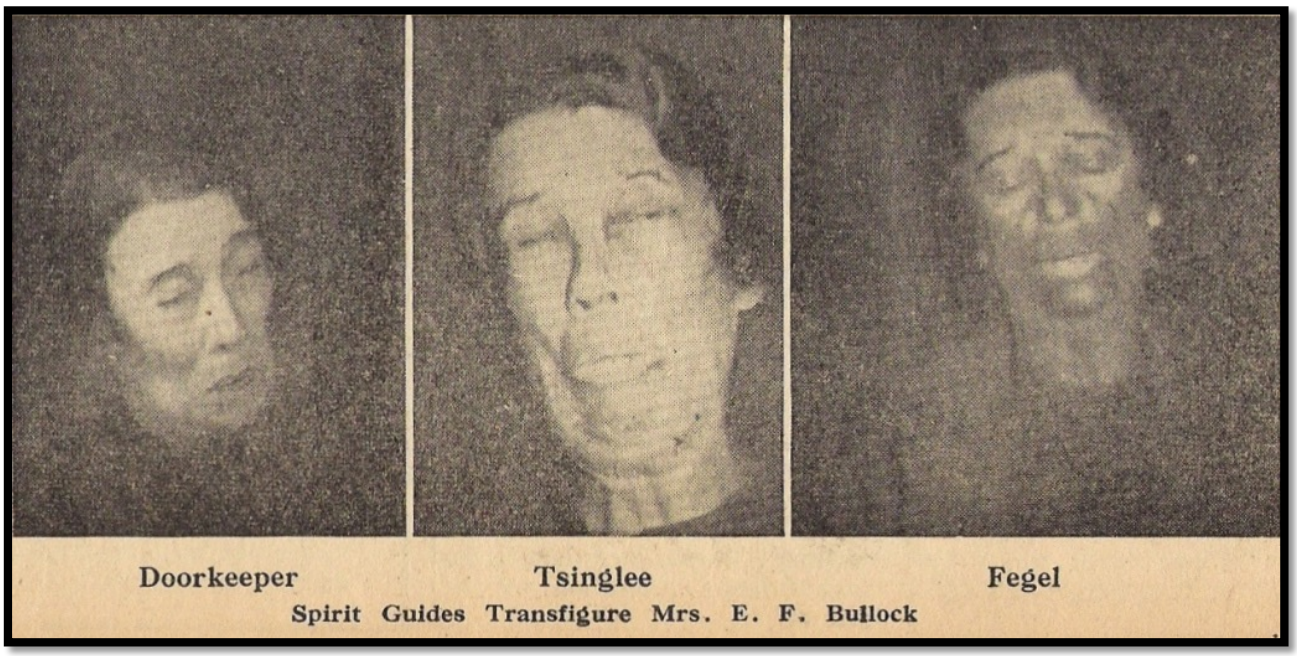
Our work has never been hampered through lack of mediums. I am glad to think that, once mediums have experienced the methods we adopt, they are not afraid of returning to the Institute and helping onward our work of tabulating, recording and investigating psychic phenomena, the better shall we be able to determine the place of Man in the universe, and the meaning of existence.

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To have all the records lost of the cinematograph camera, which is noted to be operated by infrared light, so that after the seance is over everything that has occurred can be reproduced on the screen, is naturally a great loss to research and to the subjects they investigated; for example, there is reference that Helen Duncan attended.

However, we do have transfiguration reports. Leon Isaacs was Honorary Photographer to the International Institute for Psychical Research and he was responsible for some of the first infra-red film of séance happenings. For this, Isaacs invented and manufactured all his own apparatus. It was at the International Institute that Isaacs photographed the transfiguration medium, Mrs Elizabeth F. Bullock, with the Research Officer, Nandor Fodor; however, the reports on transfiguration are of interest and are published in Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 6, June 2012.

This set of photographs was published in the "Two Worlds", April 15, 1950, "Spirit Guides, Past and Present, of Mediums, Healers and Speaker". There is no indication as to their origin but quite probably these were taken by Leon Isaacs.



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JAMES ARTHUR FINDLAY



Findlay is probably best known for his books, his first major publication being "On the Edge of the Etheric", September 1931. Findlay was a 'Glasgow Investigator', achieving astonishing results from the non-professional physical medium in direct voice, John Sloan. Sloan's mediumship is mostly associated with Findlay but in the Psypioneer journal, Vol. 8, No. 12, we find a rare report on Sloan's mediumship in London at the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS).

We can note in the SNU Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 1, that Findlay founded the Glasgow Psychical Research Society on October 27th, 1920; it can be noted that Findlay's association and experiments with John Sloan started a couple of years earlier. Below is taken from the *National Spiritualist* for November 1925:

THE TESTIMONY OF A GLASGOW INVESTIGATOR

Experiences of psychic phenomena were related before the Birmingham and Midland Society for Psychical Research on October 1st, by Mr. J. Arthur Findlay, vice-president of the Glasgow Psychical Research Society. The lecture was largely a record of a series of sittings the speaker had had with Mr. John C. Sloan, the Glasgow trance and direct voice medium. Mr. Findlay said in his careful investigations, which had lasted over seven years, he found from his notes of 44 different seances that 77 separate voices had spoken to him, or to personal friends he had taken with him; 271 separate facts had been given to him or to them, 169 of which facts he classed as Al, as it was impossible for the medium or anyone else present to have known them. The other facts he classed as A2, because by means of newspapers or reference books the medium could have found them out.

Mr. Findlay gave examples of the communications which he and his friends had received, and described how, in his opinion, it was possible for the departed to re-materialise their vocal organs sufficiently to communicate with this world. He said his father had given him good evidence of his continued existence on a number of occasions. In relating the communications he had received, the speaker declared them to be fraud-proof and telepathy-proof.

Pioneer has featured Arthur Findlay in various issues, for example: "James Arthur Findlay – Stansted Hall & Elms Farm", Vol. 4, No. 3; "The Case for Real Psychical Research – by Arthur Findlay", Vol. 6, No. 5; "The J. Arthur Findlay College, for the Advancement of Psychic Science – The early years", Vol. 1, No. 2; "Arthur Findlay: His Life and Work – Ernest Thompson" and "Arthur Findlay at the Albert Hall", Vol. 2, No. 3.

Below gives another example of Findlay working with famous mediums publicly like Estelle Roberts,[1] who often worked with the likes of Maurice Barbanell[2] and Hannen Swaffer in large halls in the promotion of Spiritualism. The article below is taken from the Two Worlds, May 27th, 1932:

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

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

3,000 AT GLASGOW MEETING

BY OUR SCOTTISH CORRESPONDENT



UNUSUAL interest was shown in a meeting arranged by the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists, and held in the St. Andrews Hall, Glasgow, on Wednesday, May 11th. The hall, which has a seating capacity of 3,000, was crowded to hear Mr. J. Arthur Findlay speak and Mrs. Estelle Roberts demonstrate clairvoyance.[3]

It was the first time in Glasgow a public demonstration of clairvoyance had been given before a huge audience, and a most successful experiment it proved to be, though entirely novel to a large portion of the audience.

Seven people were given descriptions, and all were recognised. Only one woman did not appear to understand the purport of the messages, but the medium was able to later bring the information to her mind. The demonstration lasted for half-an-hour.

Mr. J. Arthur Findlay spoke on "Survival Scientifically Explained." He submitted that definite proof of life after death had been provided. Death was, in fact, just a change of appreciation.

The world in which we live is mental, and we only know the world from the point of view of imagination," he said. "When we die we simply change our appreciation and experience a higher range of vibrations, because we begin to think in an etheric sense."

Mr. Findlay made a stirring appeal to the leaders of the Church to move in the matter. If they remained with the old conceptions and creeds, fewer and fewer people would attend their services, while more and more would support Spiritualist churches.

The meeting was a great success, and a credit to the local organisation.



J. Arthur Findlay at his home in Stansted Hall

[3] Photograph of Estelle Roberts at the Royal Albert Hall in 1934.

List of Arthur Findlay's books about Spiritualism and Religion

First Edition Dates

On the Edge of the Etheric: September 1931.

The Rock of Truth: August 1933.

The Unfolding Universe: March 1935.

The Torch of Knowledge: August 1936. *

The Psychic Stream: June 1939.

The Curse of Ignorance: Two volumes, 1947. **

Where Two Worlds Meet: 1951.

The Way of Life: 1953.

Looking Back: 1955. ***

* The story is based on Findlay's psychic experiences; he noted: "One thing I would like to emphasise, which is that all the characters in this story are fictitious and are not portrayed to resemble anyone. Having said this I wish also to emphasise the fact that all the psychic phenomena, which run through this story, have actually happened. What I have done has been to change their setting and the details." (JAF, August 1936).

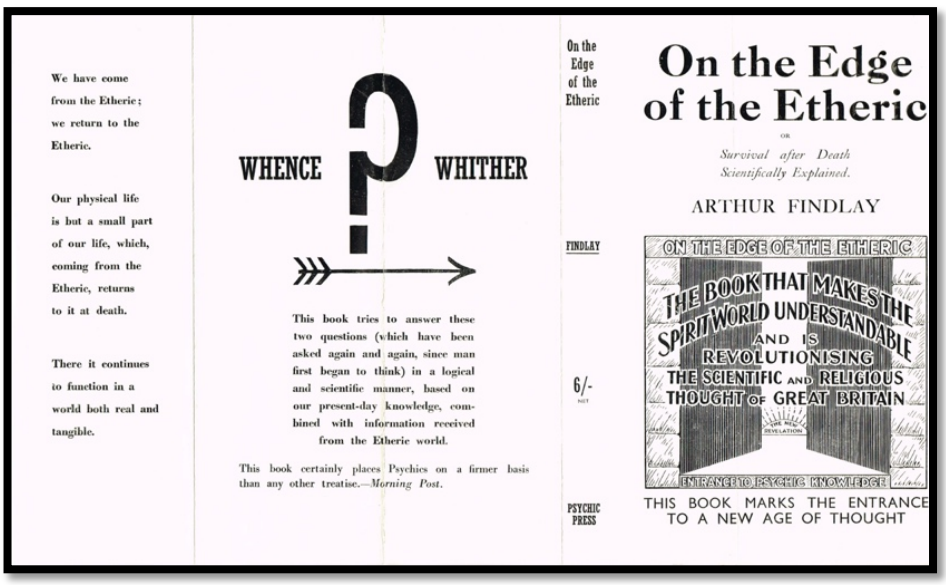
** These two volumes in some references are titled "A History of Mankind".

*** Arthur Findlay's autobiography.

Other related information

The Effect of Religion on History: A lecture to the Cambridge Historical Society at Cambridge. Booklet privately published 1930s.

Combined Index to Arthur Findlay's trilogy on Spiritualism (contains 15,630 references), compiled by Dr Albert Neale, published by Psychic Press, Ltd, c1936: On the Edge of the Etheric, The Rock of Truth, The Unfolding Universe.



The Rock of Truth

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Is Spiritualism a religion?

J. Arthur Findlay caused a storm of protest within and outside the Spiritualist movement with the publication of his second book in August 1933, "The Rock of Truth", followed by his public address at Grotrian Hall, Wigmore Street, London W1. The weekly journal, *Light*, published some of the exchanges of debate. In an open letter Findlay replied to some of his critics in December 29th 1933:

> The storm of protest raised with regard to my book, *The Rock of Truth*, and my Grotrian Hall address, is largely due to a complete misunderstanding and ignorance of Christian history. Consequently, I have been misrepresented and accused of having written and said things I have never written or said at all.

Light was the journal of the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA). [7] One formidable opponent was Mrs St. Clair Stobart; the name Mabel Annie St. Clair Stobart [8] may not be familiar to some readers but most who attend Spiritualist churches will know the healing hymn she wrote:

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

Findlay gives in his 1955 "Autobiography of a Spiritualist – Looking Back" an overview of the adverse criticism he received from Mrs St. Clair Stobart regarding the publication of his "The Rock of Truth"; he remarks on pages 321-23:



> "One day I received a letter from Mrs. St. Clair Stobart inviting me to attend her next Sunday service in the Grotrian Hall, as she thought I should hear her criticism of *The Rock of Truth,* which she proposed to make the subject of her address. This eloquent and voluble old lady, with her fuzzy white hair which, as she once said to me, made her look more like a witch than an ordinary human being, had become an ardent Spiritualist, but retained many of the religious beliefs she had been taught in childhood. She had never studied comparative religion as I had done, and her beliefs were as simple as are those of a child. Consequently, *The Rock of Truth* came to her as rather a shock, and she rushed in to refute it with all her eloquent zeal.

[7] Today the LSA is known as "The College of Psychic Studies", based in South Kensington, London; *Light* continues to this day.

[8] For more information on St. Clair Stobart (1862-1954) please see Psypioneer, Vol. 9, No. 8: "Mrs. Mabel Annie St. Clair Stobart – Paul J. Gaunt".

"I attended the service because of curiosity, but not expecting any reasoned intellectual nourishment. Eloquence and rhetoric I expected, and received, in fact she carried the large audience with her from start to finish, which shows the power of oratory over the masses. Never did she reply to the facts I gave in my book, these being passed by in her emotional eloquence, and when she had ended her audience knew no more than it did before she started. Before I published this book I gave it to Professor Burkitt, the Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University, in manuscript form, to read over to check my facts. This he kindly did, and then he and his wife came to lunch with us, when he told me that everything said was true; and honestly set out. Nevertheless, this much esteemed old lady, who gloried in her eloquence, disposed of it in this reckless manner."

"Consequently when the Grotrian Hall service ended that Sunday morning I congratulated Mrs. Stobart on her eloquence, though I said I could not agree with the way she had handled her subject. Moreover I thanked her for her forceful condemnation of the action of the Council of the London Spiritualist Alliance towards me, as expressed in an article she wrote which appeared in *Psychic News*. We have since remained friends, just as people of all shades of opinion stay with us at Stansted Hall."

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This is what Mrs Stobart said about Findlay's book, "The Rock of Truth," as published in "Psychic News", October 7th, 1933:

MRS. STOBART ON THE WARPATH

SHE ATTACKS "THE ROCK OF TRUTH"

"J. ARTHUR FINDLAY, in his new book, 'The Rock of Truth,' has stolen the thunder of Jesus—and he has written 321 pages to justify the theft," declared Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, leader of the Spiritualist Community, at Grotrian Hall, London, on Sunday.

"Mrs. Stobart maintained that so far from Spiritualism being the "only religion for the future," as Findlay claimed in his book, it was in fact no religion at all, unless it be the real Christian religion.

"I will not attempt to define Religion, but in my opinion it is not morality, it is not ritual, it is not worship, and it does not consist of dogmas, creeds and doctrines.

"There is, however, one thing we can predicate on religion—in almost every case the religion connotes the teachings which were given by the founder of that religion. We cannot divorce Christianity from the teachings which Jesus gave to the world. I am speaking of Christianity—not Churchianity.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

"However much Religion may be impaired by subsequent accretions imposed by councils and churches, the religion must be judged by the teachings of the founder.

"Is Spiritualism synonymous with Religion? Is it a religion? Does it follow as a logical inevitability that all Spiritualists are more or less religious?

"There are Spiritualists confessedly interested only in the scientific aspects of the subject. They would resent being told they had joined a religious cult.

"There are Spiritualists who are only concerned with establishing contact with their friends who have passed, and it is a travesty to suggest that this practice has anything necessarily to do with Religion.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

"A Spiritualist is one who believes that there is a spirit plane, and that it is possible under certain conditions for human beings to communicate with that plane. Beyond that, it would be unsafe to predicate what Spiritualists believe. Anyone who believes these two axioms can be called a Spiritualist. I am attacking the proposition held by many Spiritualists that Spiritualism is a religion.

"Mr. Findlay not only regards Spiritualism as a religion, but as the one and only religion worthy of the human race. He belittles Christianity in words which, I am afraid, must deeply offend those whose sympathy with our case I personally wish to enlist.

CONVERTING THE CHRISTIAN?

"And yet we are told, on the cover of the book, that 'this is a book that should help more than any other to bring Christianity over to Spiritualism.' By the scruff of the neck, I should think !

"In the first place, Mr. Findlay confuses the Christian faith with the accretions to that faith added by councils and churches. The churches today are, through individual spokesmen, realising the fact that they must throw over some of the tenets which they realise are untenable today. These are not part of Christianity.

"Are not the seven principles of Spiritualism almost identical with the principles that Mr. Findlay says are the teachings of Jesus ? Should we not ask, Which came first, the S.N.U. or Jesus ? How can Mr. Findlay ask us to replace Christianity by what is a plagiarism of Christianity ?

"If he is correct in what he says, that 'There is no basis for the beliefs of Christianity,' then there can be no basis for the beliefs of Spiritualism. The teachings are in the main identical. Those who derive their information from the same source come to the same thing.

"There is no reason for claiming a monopoly of Truth. If Spiritualism is a religion, then it is that of Christianity.

WHAT IS A SPIRITUALIST?

"Spiritualism, at its best, is a corroboration of Christianity. And at its worst it is the antithesis of all Religion. You can be a Spiritualist, believing in Survival and the possibility of communication, and be utterly indifferent to Religion.

"Mr. Findlay reminds us of what is common knowledge, that Christianity was grafted on to the religions that had preceded it, and that is supposed to detract from its value. There are certain basic fundamental truths of all religions. The wisdom of the wise consists of reform, not iconoclasm. Mr. Findlay says Jesus was a reformer; all true religious teachers are reformers.

"Jesus was a reformer, reformers are not iconoclasts. Spiritualists would serve better if they were reformers. They should not attempt to throw out the churches, but to reform those things which have deformed the Christian faith.

RELIGION'S DIEHARDS

"There are diehards of Christianity, who will never depart from their dogmas, which have become rocks of truth to them; but Spiritualism has permeated the clergy to an extent that is perhaps not appreciated by Mr. Findlay.

"lf a more Christian spirit and a desire for co-operation with the churches prevailed among Spiritualists, the day would not be far distant when a clergy would return to the Christianity of early days.

"Spiritualists would then be able to bring to bear the results of culture, education and experience. Democracy is all very well, but there are spheres in which literacy and lack of responsibility to any recognised standard of competency are to be deplored.

"Few people seem to realise that, in the early Christian Church, clairvoyance and clairaudience were part of the church services.

"Spiritualists should meet the churches on those foundations they have in common—those foundations being the teachings of the author of Christianity. Let us admit those teachings were not all original to Jesus—but surely that makes them of greater value. Jesus very wisely built on old foundations and we should do the same.

"Are not Spiritualists adherents of other religions? Hindus believe in Survival and communication. Spiritualism corroborates all Religion—and that should be its role. The world will never be brought to uniformity in its religious beliefs, but it can be brought to a sense of unity between all beliefs. Spiritualism is, in effect, one of the points of unity synchronising all Religion.

"Mr. Findlay says that when the principles of Spiritualism are accepted Mankind will be knit together by one common belief. Even among Spiritualists today, do we find them all knit together by one common belief? Whose belief would it be—Harry Price's, Hannen Swaffer's, the L.S.A.'s, the S.N.U.'s, Findlay's or mine?

"There is as much harmony as is desired, and we all respect each others' viewpoints, but there would never by such uniformity as to recognise one religion. Men will not all follow blindly in a single rut, and women certainly will not.

"Spiritualism corroborates every religion, and it makes these religions real by the proofs it affords of the spirit world, but it cannot be both a corroboration and that which it corroborates.

"Mr. Findlay has, in his zeal, overstepped the mark of reasonableness. His book will alienate rather than gain adherents, I am afraid.

THE STUMBLING-BLOCK

"The views of some Spiritualists are a great stumbling-block to the acceptance of Spiritualism in Christian countries. Spiritualists already tacitly accept Christianity, and books such as 'The Rock of Truth' would seem to me to be a stumbling-block in the path of unity. The churches have stood and will stand for the religious sense, for Religion is a force in the lives of men.

"Their ministers are dedicated to the service of God. That is their ideal. Though this might be said of individuals, can we say it of Spiritualism as a whole ? Spiritualism, as distinguished from psychism, is based on revelation.

"Revelation, to be worthy of the name, is not to be obtained in scientific laboratories or in ordinary back parlour seances, but in the holy places, in sanctuaries set apart, and such sanctuaries would be found in the churches.

AID TO THE HIDEBOUND

"Mr. Findlay's book will be of value in helping the hidebound to break away from worn-out dogmas, but not as a means of converting the churches and Christian non-Spiritualists to a belief in Spiritualism.

"We Spiritualists should not seek to form a new church, which would divide at once into sects. We should use Spiritualism to bring back to the churches that Pentecostal experience which was of old the mainspring of their power.

"We should obtain from Spiritualism, and the valuable aid of the best mediums, conviction of the reality of the spirit world, and then, being convinced that Spiritualism is a reality, we should pray for light, for the inward light of which George Fox spoke so much, and for the silence. Draw aside the curtain of material thought and open wide the window of the soul.

"When the curtain of mundane things has been completely drawn aside, one day the soul will surely be illuminated with light from the Divine and we shall be led through the psychic to the spiritual plane, where alone is found that higher knowledge which is wisdom—the wisdom of those who have seen God face to face. That will be, not Spiritualism, but Religion."

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By invitation of Mrs Stobart, Findlay made his reply on November 26th, 1933 at the Grotrian Hall, London; this was published in *Light*, December 1st, 1933. Given that the "Spiritualist Community" is often mentioned, *originally* closely associated with the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA), below is a brief overview published some years later in *Light*, then a monthly publication for October 1946:

THE Community (formerly The Spiritualist Community) has issued a leaflet, entitled *A Venture of Faith*, in which is set out some of the history, as well as the present aims and objects of this organization. The leaflet speaks of three main phases in the life of the Community; the early days under the leadership of Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, at Grotrian Hall, the difficult period during the War, when Mr. Ernest Hunt was Chairman, and now, since the passing of Mr. Hunt, the third phase under the new Chairman, Major O. G. Villiers, D.S.O.

It was during the chairmanship of Ernest Hunt that The Community adopted, as a sort of motto, the three tenets of belief: Survival—Reincarnation—Jesus Christ, which the leaflet describes as "established facts." The Community claims to stand for something new in Spiritualism. "The direction of the work," it says, "has now shifted from the investigation of psychic phenomena as such to the deeper investigation of spiritual awareness and illumination."

* * *

IT is interesting to recall that the original Spiritualist Community was, one might say, parented by the London Spiritualist Alliance at its old headquarters in Queen Square, the Secretary of the Alliance acting as honorary secretary of The Community for the first year of its existence. It began its activities with a series of Sunday evening meetings at the (old) County Hall, Spring Gardens, the first being held on December 7th, 1924, when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle presided and the Rev. G. Vale Owen gave the address. Sir Arthur said that their object was to appeal to intellectual people and especially to the West End. From the beginning, healing services were a special feature of the Spiritualist Community Meetings. As its activities grew, it was thought desirable for the Community to have an independent existence, and this began at the Grotrian Hall in the autumn of 1925, under the chairmanship of Vale Owen. This change was announced he expressed the gratitude of the Community for the co-operation by the Chairman in a letter to LIGHT of August 15th, 1925, in which he expressed the gratitude of the co-operation and hospitality of the L.S.A. Council.

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Findlay's reply to Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, leader of the Spiritualist Community:

WHY SPIRITUALISM MUST BECOME THE ONLY WORLD-RELIGION

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MR. J. Arthur Findlay's book, *The Rock of Truth*, has on two recent occasions been adversely criticised in addresses by Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, leader of the Spiritualist Community, and on Sunday morning last (November 26th), by invitation of Mrs, Stobart, Mr. Findlay made his reply in an address delivered at the Grotrian Hall, London. Mrs. Stobart had, in particular, taken exception to Spiritualism being regarded as a religion, holding that it is the basis of all regions; and she has repeatedly expressed the view that Christianity is the heir of the great ancient religions and the hope that the Churches would be induced to "absorb Spiritualism lock, stock and barrel."

Mr. Findlay took as his subject: ''Why Spiritualism must become the only world-religion."

"I do not mean," he said, "that the word 'Spiritualism' will be adopted by everyone throughout the world and that everyone will label themselves Spiritualists. What I mean is that the truths for which Spiritualism stands will be accepted in time by all races, by all peoples, and that creeds, dogmas, rites and ceremonies which surround this basic truth in all religions will be dropped. As I say in *The Rock of Truth*, some day all such labels as Christian, Moslem, Hindu and Buddhist will disappear and there will be no need for the label Spiritualism, as all will merge into one great religion of humanity. Spiritualism is not a religion, it is religion."

Proceeding, Mr. Findlay said there would be no question among those listening to him that they need not believe the myths surrounding the lives of Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster or Osiris. When, however, he made the same comparison with Christianity, the trouble started.

"Although *The Rock of Truth* has now been under the severest criticism for over three months," he added, "not one single fact in it has been questioned or challenged. The reason, of course, is that the facts are undeniable, the facts are there and can be verified by reference. Abuse is cheap, therefore anyone who propounds an unpopular subject receives it in plenty."

EVIDENCE FOR CHRISTIANITY

Christianity, Mr, Findlay continued, was not the teaching of Jesus. There was no more similarity between the Christianity of to-day and the teaching of Jesus than between chalk and cheese. Jesus taught a simple religion.

"There is no question or doubt," he said, "that the evidence for Christianity, so far as the New Testament is concerned, is quite valueless." He gave a number of eminent opinions. The Bishop of Gloucester bases his belief as a Christian on the findings of the early Christian Fathers, as will be found in his book *What it Means to be a Christian*, Christianity was conceived in Alexandria and born at Nicaea. What took place before that is clouded in uncertainty. That is no basis for real religion.

"There is no historical basis for the Christian religion and the name Christian cannot stand only for all that is good while the bad is ignored. We are in a transition stage to-day and Spiritualism is the cause. Spiritualism is satisfying the longings of humanity, Christianity is doing so less and less. If we have got to call ourselves something, why not call our religion by a name that we can be proud of, and that has had an honourable history in the past ?

"Some of you may say that there has been fraud in Spiritualism, but that is not the fault of Spiritualists. Wherever you have human nature to deal with you will find some trying to take advantage of others; but that is the worst that can be said about Spiritualism, and every day it is becoming better and more honourably conducted. On the other hand, Christianity has been the cause of more war during the Christian era than any other religion. It has been the cause of more cruelty and crime than any other religion. Why should we be proud of the name Christian ? I freely admit it has given comfort to countless millions, so have all religions, but we now know that this comfort was based on what was untrue, and as the truth must always prevail, and people become more educated, so the comfort must decrease.

"Some of us have now been able to drop the name of Christian; and, as a name for our beliefs was needed, until the world has a universal belief, we call ourselves Spiritualists. As the seven principles of Spiritualism fully satisfy all the needs of humanity, its aspirations and its longings, in my view the time will come and is here now when people will gradually adopt the name Spiritualist. To be a Spiritualist is logical; to be a Christian is illogical, as no Christian lives up to the official beliefs of Christianity or the teachings of the Bible. If he did so, he would be put out of society into an asylum or prison.

"Remember this, that the only true religion is the religion that can be accepted universally throughout the world. You will never make the Moslem a Christian Spiritualist, but you will be able to make him a Spiritualist. No Moslem will be able to make you a Moslem Spiritualist, but he will be able to make you a Spiritualist. Christian Spiritualists, Buddhist Spiritualists and Mahomedan Spiritualists are all in the half-way house: they see the errors in the religion they have been brought up in up to a point. Because of that, I welcome the work done by the Christian Spiritualist movement. Rome was not built in a day, neither can most people become Spiritualists all at once.

HALF-WAY ACROSS

"It is not the Spiritualists who have attacked *The Rock of Truth*, but the Christian Spiritualists, those who are half-way across. Hence the so-called dissensions in Spiritualism, which are caused by some still retaining some of the beliefs of Christianity. What I want to do is to bring the Christian Spiritualists the whole way across, to become Spiritualists only, and drop the prefix.

Mr. Findlay added that Christian Spiritualists said the Christ-spirit would conquer the world, but they might equally well speak of the Buddha-spirit. What did they mean ? To some it meant all that was good, but this need not have a sectarian name given to it. Also, to hold up Jesus as a perfect man was to him (Mr. Findlay) just as wrong as to hold him up as God.

"I am not a mystic," he said, "but I can assure you that in my view the philosophy of Spiritualism should be enough to satisfy the mysticism of the most mystical and the longings and aspirations of every type of mind of mankind. That is why I believe that Spiritualism must become in time the only world-religion.

"I wish now to come to the point at which Mrs. Stobart and I are at variance. It is the only serious matter of difference between us. We have talked the matter out privately and we can see eye to eye, with this one exception. I refer to her policy towards the Church. Mrs. Stobart thinks that if we are tactful we should be able to induce the Christian Church to adopt Spiritualism, lock, stock and barrel, and then there would be no need for us lay people carrying on what is really the Church's work. I have given very serious consideration to this question and I am fully convinced that the Church has irretrievably lost its opportunity. Time and again it has had the opportunity over the last 85 years of adopting Spiritualism, and its most favourable opportunity was in the conclusion of the

great war. Mule-like and stubborn, it would have nothing to do with it, and to me the reason is obvious. Should the Church adopt Spiritualism, the whole organisation would fall to pieces. Its power lies in keeping the people ignorant, in keeping up the mysteries—in other words, in bluff.

"Once the people know the truth, once the people realise that salvation and reaching Heaven is not dependent on a belief or the performing of some rite or ceremony, the whole Church organisation falls to pieces like a pack of cards. If the clergy to-day in every pulpit in the land told the people the truth that survival was scientifically proved, and that we all entered the etheric world at death, and that our place there would be determined by our characters and our lives here, and not by our beliefs—when the people came to believe this, the entire ecclesiastical organisation of the Christian Church would cease to function.

"Spiritualism is not dependent on churches, on clergy, on holy books, on rites and ceremonies. Spiritualism is a scientific fact, which can be discovered by anybody in their homes; and once the principles of Spiritualism are accepted by the people there will be no further need for parsons or Churches as presently constituted."

[The above abbreviated report is taken from a typescript copy of the address kindly supplied to us by Mr. Findlay.]

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Editor's Note:

The various strands of the different Spiritualist organisations have mostly stayed independent and on some points it can be understood in Mrs St. Clair Stobart's criticism that not *all* Spiritualists see Spiritualism as a religion as does the Spiritualists' National Union based on its Seven Principles. But on a more negative side of Stobart's address Maurice Barbanell makes a strong point in his editorial comments:

"Back-Parlour Seances"

Mrs. M. A. St. Clair Stobart is a woman for whom we have a great admiration, but we do not always agree with her views.

Speaking on the subject of "The Rock of Truth," J. Arthur Findlay's new book, on Sunday, she said, "Revelation to be worthy of the name is not to be obtained in scientific laboratories, nor in ordinary back-parlour seances, but in the holy places, in sanctuaries set apart, and such sanctuaries would be found in the churches."

We want her to tell us of the revelations which have come through these sanctuaries.

It cannot be said of the revelation of Buddha, who revolted against the exclusiveness of the Brahmin priesthood.

It does not apply to Mohammed, who was a camel-driver. It does not apply to the revelations of Joan of Arc, which she received in the fields of her native village.

Incidentally, she was burned by the Roman Catholic Church.

Where are these people who receive their revelation in the sanctuaries of the churches? George Fox was not one of them; Wesley was not one of them; Andrew Jackson Davis was not one of them.

Were it not for the revelations received in the "back-parlour" of the Fox home by two little girls, Mrs. St. Clair Stobart would not be a Spiritualist today.

We deny that a church, because it is a church, is a holy place. God is not to be found only in churches. God cannot be captured by stained-glass windows, by altars, by steeples, by bricks and mortar.

Revelation is not the exclusive property of the churches. The story of revelation is usually the story of opposition by the churches. In fact, revelation had to come to oppose the teaching of churches.

Whilst in the churches there are many admirable men devoting their lives to the cause they espouse, you do not become a minister of God by preaching sermons in churches, or being trained in a theological college.

Charles Bradlaugh, who was an Atheist, rendered great service to God and Man.

Science has revealed some of the infinite wonders of God's universe, and has enabled us to have a grander conception of the Being Who is behind all life.

Thousands of mourners who could obtain no satisfaction from the Church in the hour of bereavement have received communications from their beloved "dead" in a "back-parlour" seance.

Who are we to say whom the spirit of God will move? Who are we to say where the truth of God will be found? Usually it does not come to us through men of culture and education, but through those the world calls illiterate and uneducated.

—~—☼—~—

In May 1934 Findlay became the President of the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA) but before the year was out he resigned. Maurice Barbanell reported the story in some detail in Psychic News as its founder editor on December 15th, 1934:

FINDLAY RESIGNS FROM THE L.S.A.

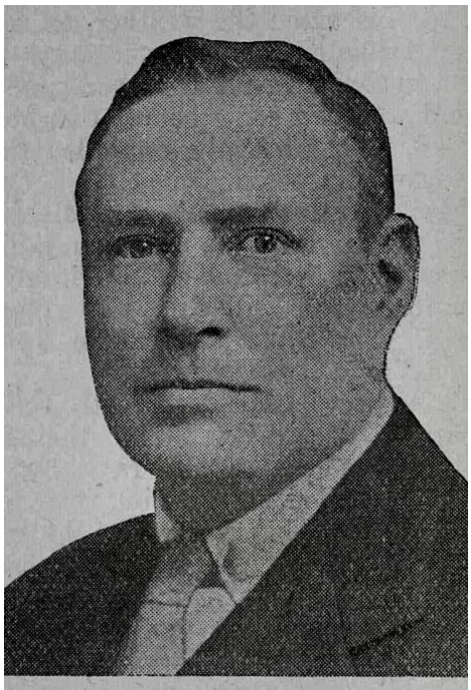
STORY OF INTRIGUE BEHIND THE SCENES

ARTHUR FINDLAY has resigned his presidency of the council of the London Spiritualist Alliance, and his chairmanship of the company that owns "Light."

In an interview I had with him, he gave the reason.

"My resignation has been caused by the action of a minority of the council inducing the secretary to call an irregular council meeting," he said, "for the purpose of publicly announcing, in 'Light' this week, that the Alliance disassociated itself from certain opinions on theology expressed in a lecture I delivered to members of the L.S.A. on November 29."

In this lecture, he attacked the myths and creeds that have grown up around Christianity—and said that Spiritualism would become the world religion.



Arthur Findlay

"As the members of the council, who met in the irregular way they did, knew at their meeting that I had telephoned to say I had posted my resignation," added Findlay, "this announcement, if published, will doubtless have been toned down, if it appears at all." [9]

Findlay told me that this council meeting was called at less than eight hours' notice. He actually received his notice on the morning of the meeting itself !

This was contrary both to the articles of association of the Alliance and the Companies Act.

These articles of association, he said, do not specify that its president must be an orthodox Christian. Neither do they say that if he is asked by the council to give an address on Spiritualism as a religion, he must not criticise the creeds of the Christian Church.

"As the Alliance is a limited company, and can have no religious opinions of its own," said Findlay, "it is absurd to call a council meeting to draw up a resolution disassociating the Alliance from the opinions expressed by its president.

"The Alliance is a body of people with all shades of religious opinion. They sign no creed on joining. For a small clique to convene a council meeting to be held within eight hours of the members receiving notice, without having consulted the president of their intentions, is not only grossly irregular, but savours of the worst possible form of intrigue."

The address which Findlay gave is similar to one he has given at the Queen's Hall and up and down the country ! It is called, "Why Spiritualism Must Become the only World-Religion." *It was published in "Light" last week, starting on the front page—and commented on favourably in a leading article in the same issue !* The action of the council is an attack on the right of free speech by its own president.

The editor of "Light" was present at the meeting. No word of criticism was heard until this council met.

I am told that Findlay's speech incited the wrath of the more "respectable" members of the council, who wish the Alliance to be run as an orthodox Christian body, and do not desire to see "Light" expressing views contrary to the creeds and dogmas of Christianity.

"This intolerance must react most unfavourably on the Alliance, the Quest Club and 'Light,'" said Findlay, "as it is quite contrary to everything that Spiritualism stands for."

L.S.A. now means, apparently, "Leave Spiritualism Alone."

Findlay's resignation will be especially unfortunate for the L.S.A. just now. Under his guidance, both the Alliance and "Light" were regaining their old position in the Spiritualist movement, which they lost owing to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's resignation.

After Doyle resigned, their membership fell from about a thousand to approximately five hundred!

Since Findlay became president, last spring, the steady decrease has been stopped. Members have been joining the Alliance and the Quest Club, an activity which Findlay conceived and brought into being, at the rate of forty to fifty a month. At this rate, the old membership would have been re-established some time next year.

When he became chairman of "Light," which had been appealing for money for years, Findlay said it was losing £1,000 a year. He stopped the wastage that was going on, and

[9] J. Arthur Findlay's resignation was briefly mentioned in *Light*.

the over-staffing, and obtained new quotations from printers, with the result that, for the first time in fifty years, "Light" made a profit—last week !

Only a few days ago, Findlay said to the secretary of the L.S.A., "Now we have managed to put 'Light' on its feet, I hope, within a year, to have the Alliance showing a surplus, instead of its present loss of £700 a year."

What was it in Findlay's speech to which these very "respectable" members took exception ? Here is a summary of some of the things he said in his address:

"It is just because of the evidence Spiritualism gives that we are at the beginning of our career, that the knowledge of survival is of vital importance to religion.

"This being so, we begin to realise that, what today stands for religion in the minds of most people, is not religion at all—that creeds, dogmas and ceremonials are only crutches to help the mentally undeveloped along the road of life, and that as the mind develops these are discarded.

"I consider it is our duty as Spiritualists to teach humanity that it is not creeds and dogmas that matter, but the life we lead. Humanity is still wedded to the drapings, and thus ignores the central truth which these have hidden.

"The vast majority think that the truth is contained in creeds and dogmas, whereas these symbols hide the truth.

"The light, however, is now breaking through, and Protestant countries are leading the world into the New Knowledge. In time—how long, no one can say—religion will not consist of drapings, myths and legends which are behind the creeds and dogmas; but instead, it will stand for something real and true—for something that really matters, and not for something that does not matter.

"So I foresee that, some day, mankind will worship in one cathedral, whose dome is the firmament, and whose true and only priests are the interpreters of Nature."

"MANIFEST ADVANTAGE"

When, in May, "Light" announced Findlay's acceptance of the presidency of the L.S.A., it said, "*Readers are so well acquainted with Mr. Findlay's work and position in the Movement, that nothing further need be said as to the manifest advantage of his generous acceptance of their responsibilities*."

Yet, already Findlay had delivered his lecture over a score of times !

It is strange, considering the origin of the L.S.A., that its council should take exception to a speech which prophesied that Spiritualism would become the only world religion. The Alliance was started by the Rev. Stainton Moses, who, in his book, "Spirit Teachings," put on record how, through his own automatic writing, he was forced, step by step, to abandon his orthodox Christianity and accept the religious implications of Spiritualism.

This book is the copyright of the L.S.A. ! They still sell it ! If they had published it at a cheaper price, instead of 6s., they could have sold thousands of copies, for the book is really Spiritualism's Bible.

Stainton Moses was forced to accept Spiritualism as a religion. The organisation which he founded is now too timid to follow his lead !

The article then continued in a different direction, which does not concern us on our subject. Moving forward three months to March 1935, Findlay published his third book, "The Unfolding Universe", on August 11th at the Grotrian Hall; once again Stobart launches a fierce attack on Findlay and his new publication. Mrs Stobart,

> "… declared Findlay to be a "bigot" and "intolerant," and likened him to Saul, "persecutor of Christian churches."

Pioneer will not publish this renewed attack owing to space and repetition; later, in the Two Worlds, October 4th, 1940, its editor, Ernest Oaten (1919-1945), announced:

Mrs. St. Clair Stobart Retires !

> I VERY much regret to hear that after a long and honourable period with the Spiritualist Community, Mrs. St. Clair Stobart is resigning her leadership of the Community, which she was largely successful in founding. Circumstances have arisen which compel her to dispense with her house and leave London, though she still hopes to retain her connection with the Community.
>
> As we announced last week, the services at Wigmore Hall, owing to transport and air-raid difficulties, have been closed, but the work is still being carried on at their headquarters in Gloucester Place. At a meeting held on September 23rd it was resolved that every effort should be made to carry on the work of the Community, and Mr. Ernest Hunt, the Rev. Dr. A. F. Kauffmann, and Dr. E. Leith-Clark have been added to the Council. Though I have frequently been at variance with Mrs. Stobart's views, there has always existed between us a very cordial and fraternal bond, and I hope in her retirement she may be cheered by the knowledge of good work dutifully done.

Today all of Findlay's books are still in publication:

List of Arthur Findlay's books about Spiritualism and Religion

First Edition Dates:

On the Edge of the Etheric: September 1931.

The Rock of Truth: August 1933.

The Unfolding Universe: March 1935.

The Torch of Knowledge: August 1936.[10]

The Psychic Stream: June 1939.

The Curse of Ignorance: Two volumes, 1947.[11]

Where Two Worlds Meet: 1951.

The Way of Life: 1953.

Looking Back: 1955.[12]



[10] The story is based on Findlay's psychic experiences; he noted: "One thing I would like to emphasise, which is that all the characters in this story are fictitious and are not portrayed to resemble anyone. Having said this I wish also to emphasise the fact that all the psychic phenomena, which run through this story, have actually happened. What I have done has been to change their setting and the details." (JAF, August 1936).

[11] These two volumes in some references are entitled "A History of Mankind".

[12] Arthur Findlay's autobiography.

The Burden of Proof

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



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

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

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

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



John Galloway Findlay

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

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

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

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

164 CORRECT ITEMS IN TWO SEANCES

How Arthur Findlay Proved His Mother's Survival After Death

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

REPORTS OF THESE TWO SEANCES HAVE NEVER BEFORE BEEN PUBLISHED.

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

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

Notes were taken at the time of the sittings.

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

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

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

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

"SOMEONE HAS DIED WITHIN PAST WEEK"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

PROPHECY

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

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

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

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

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

RED ROSE IN COFFIN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NELLIE'S HANKIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MOVED HIS SEAT

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

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

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

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

—~—☼—~—

BERTHA AMELIA HARRIS



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

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

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

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

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

"KNEW" HIS FATE

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

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

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

ENDED BY BOMBS

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

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

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

HER FAME ABROAD

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

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

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

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

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

GUIDE PROVED RIGHT

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

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

SHE NEVER COMPLAINS

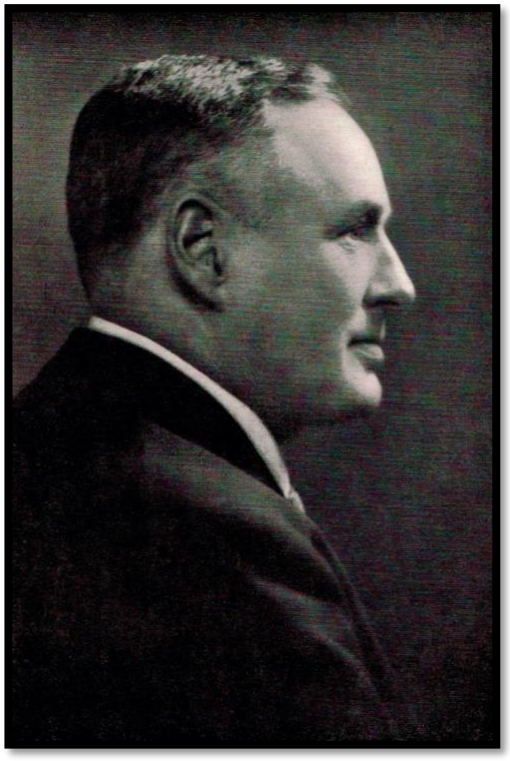
Two years passed before she was able to walk again, but at last she regained her feet. It is a state of health in which she was to wear a steel spinal jacket and consider every movement with care. But there is never any complaint and rarely as much as a hint that she is in any way physically out of the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

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

—~—☼—~—

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

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



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

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

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

By Arthur Findlay

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GAELIC NAME

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POWDERED DRINK

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

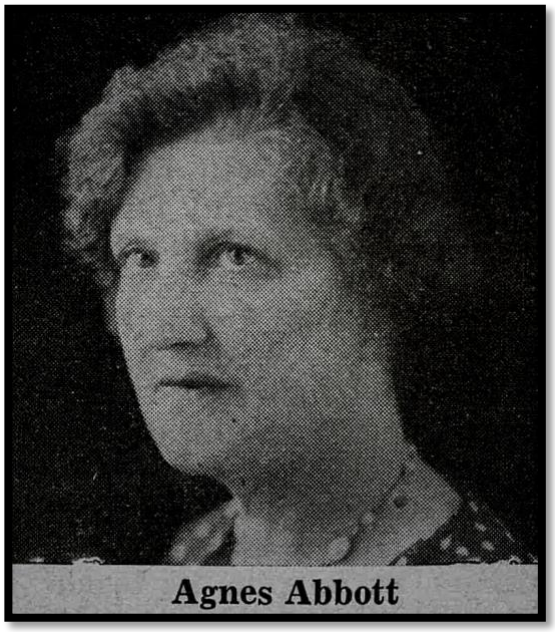
> **She then referred to the pretty nurse who looked after her. She said she liked her very much indeed. She also liked drinking the powdered stuff just before passing, as it made her mouth feel clean and relieved discomfort. (3)**

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

AUTOCRATIC

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

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


Agnes Abbott

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

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

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

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

DIRECT VOICE PROMISE

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

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

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

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

UNLEARN IDEAS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Not one remark made was incorrect or even doubtful.

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

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

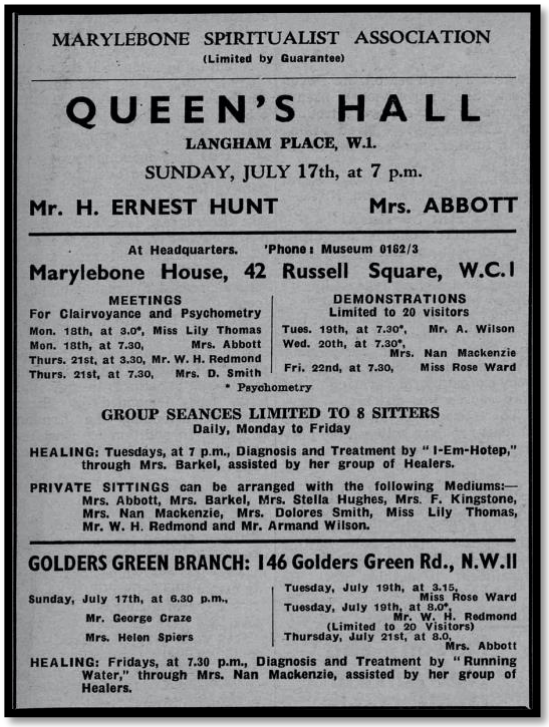
It would be fair to say that, of the two mediums cited above, Bertha Harris would be the more recognisable name; however, Agnes Abbott was well-known, especially in London. Six years after her sitting with Findlay she died, as published by Psychic News on November 14th, 1942:

TRANSITION OF AGNES ABBOTT

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

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

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



MARYLEBONE SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION
(Limited by Guarantee)

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

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

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

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

GROUP SEANCES LIMITED TO 8 SITTERS
Daily, Monday to Friday

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

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

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

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

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

DAUGHTER OF A PIONEER

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

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

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

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

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

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

Promoted—Mrs. Agnes Abbott

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Editor's Note:

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Further, Oaten in the Two Worlds notes:

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

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

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

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

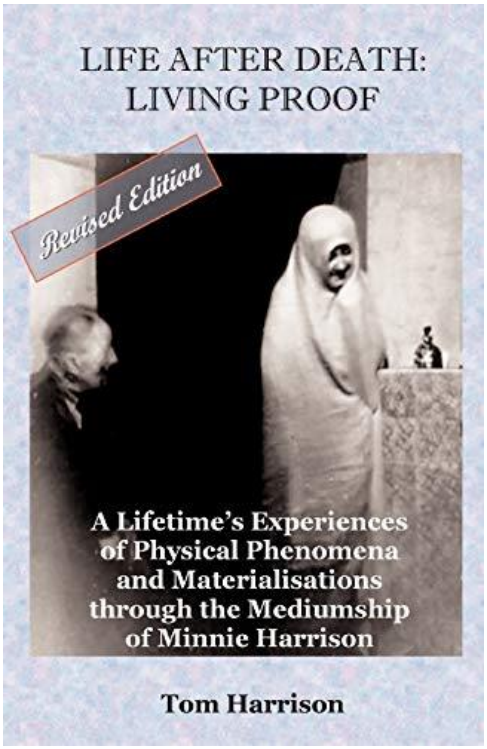
> “On the 7th December 1946, to our great delight and not a little wonderment, they achieved their aim and my Aunt Agg materialised!”

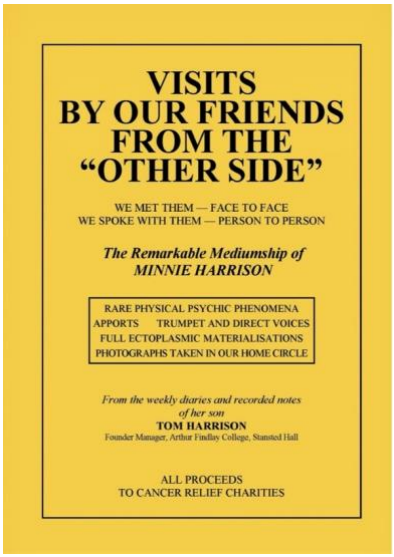
[20] The Marylebone Spiritualist Association, founded in 1872, today known as the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain (SAGB), now situated at 341 Queenstown Road, Battersea, London. The photograph is taken while lecturing on “The Effect of Religion on History” to the Marylebone Spiritualist Association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



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

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





Annie Gertrude *née* Walker Findlay

In the 1940s James Arthur Findlay made the decision to bequeath his home, Stansted Hall, to the Spiritualists' National Union for the purpose of a college following his death and for the college to be named after him. [1] However, on July 19th, 1963, Findlay's wife, Annie Gertrude (known as Gertrude), died, so it was decided that the College be opened early and that Findlay should remain in residence. Therefore, on 6th and 7th June, 1964, a meeting of members of a Management Committee was held and Findlay accepted the position of Honorary Member. Almost a year after Annie's death on July 24th, 1964, amidst the implementation of agreements and requests, James Arthur Findlay died. [2]

Findlay's wife, Gertrude, receives little public mention for the support she gave her husband. Published below is a short tribute to her from Psychic News, August 3rd, 1963:

Findlay's wife passes

She was responsible for his psychic quest

Arthur Findlay with his wife in the grounds of their Essex home



ARTHUR FINDLAY has been bereaved by the passing at their Essex home last week of his wife, Gertrude, at the age of 82. A few days ago they celebrated the golden jubilee of their wedding — they were married on July 15, 1913 by the Bishop of Peterborough.

It is a great tribute to Mrs. Findlay that though her husband was regarded by many people as a rebel because of his books exposing the falsity of creedalism by revealing its pagan origin, she always stood by him.

Anglican upbringing

Even his espousal of Spiritualism must have been difficult for her in the early days, for hers was an orthodox upbringing. Originally she was a member of the Anglican Church, and she had a county background. Because of her temperament she naturally gravitated to such charitable work as being county president of the Distressed Gentlefolk's Aid Association and chairman of the local branch of the Victoria League.

She dispensed hospitality with typical grace when mediums and Spiritualists from all over the world were guests in their Stansted Hall mansion.

One of her last public functions, so far as Spiritualism is concerned, was to attend with her husband the *Psychic News* dinner held just four months ago.

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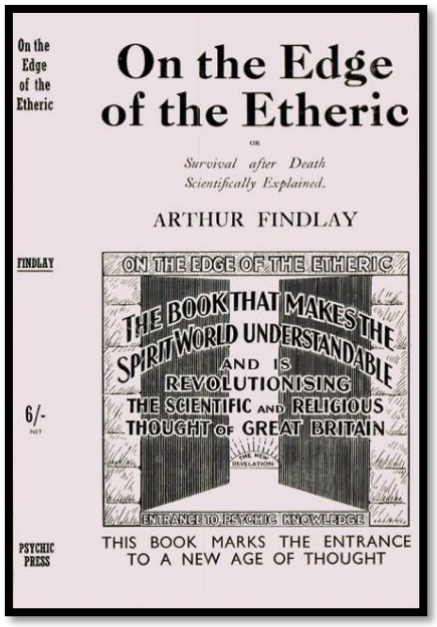
[1] January 1966: SNU General Secretary Richard Ellidge: "It was early in 1945 that Mr J. Arthur Findlay first approached the Union regarding Stansted Hall when it was occupied by the Red Cross as a Convalescent Home and when he resided at Rockingham Castle, Market Harborough. This was followed in 1950 by personal contact with W. Lorraine Haig, then President of the Union, who appointed a President's Committee to investigate and report on a College for Spiritualism. But it was not until January, 1954, that Mr Findlay wrote to Mr H. Dawson, who had been elected President six months previously, followed by meeting at Stansted, that a direct and close liaison between the Hall and the Union was established."

[2] For further information please see Pioneer, Vol. 1, No. 2: "The J. Arthur Findlay College, for the Advancement of Psychic Science –The early years".

Indirectly it was because of his wife that Findlay became acquainted with Spiritualism. In 1918 she was seriously ill and was taken to a Glasgow nursing home. To be near her Findlay stayed at an hotel.

Challenge to speaker

One Sunday evening he went for a stroll, merely to get some fresh air. He came across a Spiritualist church for the first time, for he did not know that such places even existed. Out of curiosity he attended the service. Later he challenged the speaker, saying that surely he could not expect any rational thinker to accept the statements he had made concerning spirit communication and Survival.



The result was that the speaker suggested Findlay should make his own inquiry and sit with a medium. Though his wife thought it was not a wise thing to do, but did not object, Findlay accompanied the speaker the next night to a Glasgow house. There he attended a seance with John Sloan, the voice medium he later made famous.

Outstanding evidence

At that seance Findlay's father and a business partner both communicated with such outstanding evidence of identity that Findlay realised his previous thinking was wrong. No one in the room even knew his name, let alone had knowledge of his business affairs.

There followed a series of seances with Sloan, all recorded in Findlay's "On The Edge Of The Etheric," which speedily became Spiritualism's best-selling book. [3]



[3] "On the Edge of the Etheric" was first published in September 1931; within the first six months there were twenty-three editions and a total of 20,000 copies were sold at 3/6. It was initially published by Rider & Co, London, and later published by Psychic Press.

J. ARTHUR FINDLAY



Arthur Findlay is well-known by Spiritualists primarily today for his remarkable gift to the Spiritualists' National Union of his home, Stansted Hall, today known internationally as the Arthur Findlay College. Prior to this he was firstly known in the Spiritualist movement as the author for his best-selling books, which began with "On the Edge of the Etheric", first published in September 1931; it sold twenty-three editions in the first six months, a total of 20,000 copies, priced then at 3/6, initially published by Rider & Co, London, later published by the Psychic Press Ltd, as were his later books. Findlay was the Chairman of Psychic Press Ltd; briefly, this is how it came about.

The first issue of "Psychic News" (PN) appeared on May 28th, 1932. Findlay's own account is published in his 1955 autobiography, "Looking Back". He recalls that soon after the publication of his book, "On the Edge of the Etheric", he received a letter from Maurice Barbanell asking him to write an article for PN.

Findlay notes in Chapter Seven, "Stansted Hall (1930-1936)":

> "Shortly after the publication of this book in 1931 I received a letter from Maurice Barbanell, asking me to write an article for *Psychic News*, to tell how it was I came to write such a book. This newspaper had just been born, and it was only a week old, but his letter had effects much greater than the article I wrote. I met him a few days later and found that he, and the other founder of *Psychic News*, J. M. Rubens, required financial help to continue publication. This I contributed and we formed a company called Psychic Press Ltd. to finance and manage this new Spiritualist journal. Barbanell and Rubens received shares for the part they played in founding this new venture, and, in exchange for shares, I put up the necessary money and so controlled the company.
>
> "I became chairman, without salary, and Barbanell the editor, but years were to pass before the time came for the new journal to be self-supporting. Until then I had to pay out thousands to keep it going, but I never lost faith in the venture, especially as I had in Barbanell an able, hard-working, and enthusiastic editor. Besides that we received much good advice in the early days from the well-known journalist Hannen Swaffer, and he also contributed many able articles which were much appreciated. ..." [1]

However, the purpose of this short article is to look at *how* Findlay wrote his books. One may well assume, looking at images of him sitting at his desk in his remarkable library of some 3,000 books for reference at Stansted Hall, that he simply sat at his desk and wrote his books! If he was asked this question, his reply is given in his autobiography previously referred to:

> "… I am often asked, "How do you write your books?" Briefly, this is how I do so. I have a wooden writing-board two feet long and one and a quarter feet broad, on which I first write everything in pencil on foolscap paper. I sit in an armchair with my feet on a stool, my knees drawn up to support the board resting on the arms of the chair, and make

[1] Elsewhere in this issue we can note: "Arthur Findlay asked Wilson to become the Managing Director and Chairman of Psychic Press Ltd., which then published Psychic News, which he accepted."

myself completely comfortable. Thus my back never tires, and in this attitude I can go on writing for hours at a time.

"On my right is a little table with odds and ends on it, and on my left is a book-rest on a brass rod which can be moved about as desired. In this way a reference book, when necessary, is before me and can be referred to by moving only my left hand. Thus I am self-sufficient and need not move from the comfortable position established in my chair. Peace is highly desirable, but too often not achieved, as I am so often wanted for something or other. One thing I have to forgo, and that is my pipe, because the close concentration on my subject makes smoking just a waste of tobacco, as I have no sensation, when writing, that I am smoking.

"The sheets, as they are finished, are given to my secretary to type, and her typed pages I read over carefully and check the facts, grammar and punctuation. Many have to be retyped, some several times, before I am satisfied that they can be passed on to the printer. Here the work of most authors finishes, as the author then passes his manuscript on to his publisher. The publisher arranges for his book to be printed, the proofs checked and read over, the necessary paper to be supplied, the nature of the cover and the paper jacket which protects it. This I have always done myself and in this way I get the best possible book produced. A publisher has to make his profit and I have not. A publisher saves paper where possible, and uses often too small a type so as to get more words on a page. This I never do. Consequently, I get a book produced to best fulfil my high standard of what a first-class publication should be, and I sell the book at a price to cover my expenditure and the bookseller's selling charge, no profit being taken into consideration.

"Being my own publisher, and having Psychic Press as my distributor only, means much additional work, as the printer's proofs have to be read over and they are also read by at least three readers. The kind of type to be used must be settled, also the quantity and quality of the paper required, and the cardboard for the cover. So it comes about that after the writing of a book is completed some five months may elapse before it is ready for publication, …"





SNU acquires ‘Psychic News’ archives



In August 2025 the Spiritualists’ National Union acquired the comprehensive archives of ‘Psychic News’, which was founded jointly by Jack Rubens and Maurice Barbanell, with its first weekly issue appearing on Saturday, May 28th 1932, priced at twopence. It is a large archive, so its new home is the spacious loft room over the Annex at Stansted Hall.

The archive consists of the bound weekly issues, photo and cuttings archive and Maurice Barbanell’s desk. This is all shown in some detail on the SNU video presented by Minister Jackie Wright, President of the Spiritualists’ National Union, and Paul J. Gaunt, Curator of the Britten Museum and Library and editor of this journal.

This video is available on the SNU website Pioneer page: https://snu.org.uk/the-pioneer-journal/

Part of the archive is a beautiful drawing of Barbanell in the editorial office, drawn in the last week of December 1943 by a well-known British artist, Russell Sidney Reeve (1896-1970).

Barbanell published the image in Psychic News on January 8th 1944. This is displayed in the Arthur Findlay College.



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The founding of the Psychic News newspaper and Psychic Press:

The First 25 Years

Previously the Psypioneer, and today the SNU Pioneer, have addressed numerous accounts of inaccurate information, for example the foundation of Hydesville, the formation of our Seven Principles and the aerial flight of Daniel D. Home, which nobody *actually* witnessed, to name a few.

The founding of the Psychic News newspaper is another prime example explored in the last twenty years by Psypioneer and Pioneer.[1] Today, however, we still find in the various publications, websites, social media, etc., statements that Psychic News was founded by:

Maurice Barbanell, Hannen Swaffer, Jack Rubens and Arthur Findlay

Only fifty per cent of these often-told claims are correct; the story of Psychic News is told below by those who were involved, taken from various documented materials:

Hannen Swaffer declined at the last minute to invest in Psychic News; however, he wholeheartedly supported the new publication, like so many other well-known Spiritualists, by the contributing articles.

In the December 5th issue of Psychic News, 1936, Barbanell noted:

> *Psychic News* was started against Swaffer's advice. He refused to have any financial interest in it, arguing that, if he put money into it, he would have to accept a dividend, and then he would be accused of making money out of Spiritualism. He has never received one penny from *Psychic News*. His only financial connection with the paper is that, once, he lent it £500, refusing to take interest. This amount, of course, was repaid.

As the reader will also note below, J. Arthur Findlay was also not one of the founders of Psychic News but he saved the publication from its early financial struggles. In the last issue of Pioneer it published: J. Arthur Findlay – "How do you write your books?" This sets the story in motion with Findlay's own account as he published in his 1955 autobiography, "Looking Back".

[1] See Pioneer: Vol. 8, No. 3: June 2021: "Psychic News was founded by Maurice Barbanell and Jack Rubens: Psychic News in Perspective – Leslie Price" & "Three "Dead" Men Began Psychic News – Maurice Barbanell".

He recalls that soon after the publication of his book, "On the Edge of the Etheric", he received a letter from Maurice Barbanell asking him to write an article for PN; this appeared in the first issue as "The Book That Sold 23 Editions in 6 Months – Why It Was Written".

Findlay notes in Chapter Seven, "Stansted Hall (1930-1936)":



"Shortly after the publication of this book in 1931 I received a letter from Maurice Barbanell, asking me to write an article for *Psychic News*, to tell how it was I came to write such a book. This newspaper had just been born, and it was only a week old, but his letter had effects much greater than the article I wrote. I met him a few days later and found that he, and the other founder of *Psychic News*, J. M. Rubens, required financial help to continue publication. This I contributed and we formed a company called Psychic Press Ltd. to finance and manage this new Spiritualist journal. Barbanell and Rubens received shares for the part they played in founding this new venture, and, in exchange for shares, I put up the necessary money and so controlled the company.

"I became chairman, without salary, and Barbanell the editor, but years were to pass before the time came for the new journal to be self-supporting…."

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It is not often realised that the founder editor after fourteen years had a disagreement with Findlay, resulting in Barbanell resigning as its editor and managing director in February 1946.

On July 14th 1956 Psychic News headlined:

Psychic News

CHANGE IN CONTROLLING OWNERSHIP

> ARTHUR Findlay, controlling shareholder in Psychic Press Ltd., the proprietors of *Psychic News*, has handed over as a gift the greater part of his interest in the company on trust to the Spiritualists' National Union, as the only corporation in the Spiritualist movement.

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This article can be read and/or downloaded online at the Psychic News archives hosted by the University of Manitoba. Maurice Barbanell responded to the article which he published in the Two Worlds the following week on July 21st; it is published in full below: [2]

[2] Circa 1956 until his death in 1981, Barbanell became the editor of the Two Worlds, moving it from its Manchester base to London.

Do you know a more amazing case of spirit guidance ?

BY THE EDITOR



AS one of the leading figures involved, and the only one who knows all the facts, I must tell you a remarkable and dramatic story of spirit guidance. I tell it because of the announcement made last week that Arthur Findlay has presented to the Spiritualists' National Union his shares which gives them control of "Psychic News."

In making the announcement, "Psychic News" referred to its own beginning. As these contained some inaccuracies, I sent a letter of correction.

It was stated that when "Psychic News" was only a week old, I asked Findlay "to contribute financial support to enable its publication to continue. This he did, and, in exchange for shares, Findlay put up the necessary capital."

Had he not done so, said the announcement, "the paper would probably have died at birth." It added that "he paid out a considerable sum of money before the newspaper became finally stable."

"I was staggered"

Now for the facts. In 1932, much to my surprise, J. M. Rubens, who was, and is, Hannen Swaffer's accountant, suggested that he and I should start a psychic newspaper. I was staggered, because Rubens was not a Spiritualist.

He made the suggestion, he said, because he had heard Swaff and me discuss Spiritualism. We had just completed a propaganda tour of Britain, addressing 250,000 people in three years.[3] As, till then, the whole of my adult life had been spent in commerce, and I had no practical knowledge of journalism, the suggestion did not appeal.

That night I was sitting with Estelle Roberts. Red Cloud, completely out of the blue, said, "It has today been suggested to you what you should do." I did not realise what he meant, and said so. His immediate reply was to refer to Rubens' suggestion of starting a psychic paper. This was remarkable evidence, seeing that I had not mentioned the matter to the medium.

Red Cloud then made what I thought was an extraordinary statement. In a past life, he said, I had promised to return and devote my career to psychic activities. He added that I must redeem my promise.

Forgotten pledge

Naturally I had no recollection of making the promise—I still do not remember it—but Red Cloud said that spirit plans were already made and I had my part to play.

My reply was to tell him that to abandon a commercial career when I was hardly 30 was an important decision that required time for reflection.

Thinking over the matter I realised that if such a promise and the spirit plans it involved were known to Red Cloud, they should be known to other guides. I decided,

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

without telling Estelle, or Red Cloud, to sit with another medium and see if confirmation came.

I had to find one who was a complete stranger. Kathleen Barkel fitted all my requirements. We had never met. She had not done any public work. Her seances were held at her home, which I had never visited. My photograph had not appeared and she could not know me. Through a mutual friend, who did not divulge my identity and who was unaware of the reason for the seance, it was arranged for me to go anonymously.



Kathleen went into trance, and her lovable guide, White Hawk, took charge. Almost his first words were that he knew I had come for confirmation of what "my brother Red Cloud has told you."

Then White Hawk also referred to the promise which Red Cloud said I had made in a past existence. As Red Cloud had done, he mentioned spirit plans for my future.

Northcliffe's sign

At an early part of the seance White Hawk asked to handle some object belonging to me, doubtless to obtain closer contact with my conditions. I handed him my fountain pen.

A few moments later I noticed it was leaking—the first time it had ever happened—and that the ink was staining the medium's hands. When I drew the guide's attention to this happening, he laughingly replied: "I know. Northcliffe is here and he is responsible. He says he always upsets pens"—an ingenious reference to his newspaper career. Northcliffe, he added, was interested in the new paper. [4]

At the end of this memorable seance White Hawk struck an impressive note. In a farewell salutation he said: "I make for you the Sioux sign. With my mind, with my lips and with my heart, I serve."

As he spoke, with outstretched right arm he touch in turn his medium's forehead, lips and heart. I was moved by this little ceremony which I had not witnessed before.



Naturally I refrained from mentioning to Estelle that I had visited Kathleen Barkel. Imagine my surprise when at my next seance with Red Cloud [5] almost his first words were, "Are you satisfied now that you have been to my brother White Hawk ?" This, of course, was said to show that he knew.

Feeling somewhat guilty I asked him, "Do you mind ?" He answered, "No I am glad that you sought and obtained confirmation." Having done so, I said I was now ready to fall in with the spirit plans which Red Cloud had declared were essential to redeem my ancient promise.

"Money will come"

I must break in to tell you that the climax of this seance was that Red Cloud made the same Sioux salutation, using the identical words spoken by White Hawk ! He must have known how they impressed me. Even though I later sat with Estelle scores of times, that salutation was never repeated.

[4] See Pioneer: Vol. 12, No. 1: "Hannen Swaffer, Lord Northcliffe & Big Jump –"Lord Northcliffe's Return" "

[5] This is a well-known image of Estelle Roberts's guide "Red Cloud" however, it is not generally known that it was produced by Madge Donohoe as a 'Skotograph'.

When I told Red Cloud that I was prepared to go ahead with the paper, I said that frankly there was a problem because we would not have enough money. His answer was that if I supplied the faith the money would be forthcoming.

Rubens and I started the company with £666 16s. 8d. It was to be £1,000, but our third subscriber dropped out. [6] For the first issue of "Psychic News" I invited Findlay to contribute an article telling why he wrote "On the Edge of the Etheric." After six months it was already a best-seller.

"That is your man"



Findlay called to see me to discuss the article. That night I was sitting with Estelle when Red Cloud recalled our previous conversation about faith and money. Though I had not mentioned—there was no reason to do so— Findlay's call, Red Cloud named him, mentioned his visit to me and said that he would put up the capital.

I wrote Findlay telling him what Red Cloud had said. His reply was that he was interested. He suggested that we meet to discuss the matter. A few days later I saw him at his home and he agreed to supply the necessary capital. By then, of course, the paper had made its appearance and created tremendous interest.

Findlay took up £1,500 worth of shares. A few months later, because more capital was needed, he put up a further £1,150, making a total of £2,650. The following year his investment totalled £3,175.

It took three years for "Psychic News" to become a paying proposition. Arrears on its preference dividends were then paid, as were regular annual dividends for the 14 years that I acted as Editor and managing director.

Thus "Psychic News" errs in stating that I approached Findlay, when the paper was a week old, "to enable its publication to continue," and that had he not subscribed for shares it "would probably have died at birth." And the "considerable sum of money" was £3,175.

None of this is written to belittle the great contribution made by Findlay, but merely to have the facts rightly recorded.

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[6] This was Hannen Swaffer and is explained elsewhere in this article.

Barbanell's last sentence was "… but merely to have the facts rightly recorded." However, this is not in full agreement with Findlay. In the Britten Museum archives is a carbon copy of a letter written by Findlay to the SNU General Secretary, Richard Ellidge, dated October 25th 1956:

25th October, 1956.

Mr. Richard Ellidge,
The Spiritualists' National Union,
Britten House,
12, Tib Lane,
MANCHESTER, 2.

Dear Mr. Ellidge,

"The Two Worlds" of 2lst July last contained a very interesting article by Mr. Barbanell entitled "Do you know of a more amusing case of spirt guidance ?" about the origin of "Psychic News". I think that this should be filed away for future reference along with this letter I am now writing to you.

I cannot remember whether it was a week or a fortnight after the paper was started that I put up the necessary money to keep it going, but I am certainly correct in saying that if it had not been for my money "Psychic News" would have died at birth.

As to the money that I have paid out, Mr. Barbanell is correct up to a point, but he forgets that I subscribed £1000 over and above the figures he gives as a loan to the company to tide it over the time when it was short of money. This was eventually repaid to me. It will therefore be seen that altogether I subscribed a sum of £4,175. I look upon this as a considerable sum of money, especially in those days when it was more valuable than it is now.

I just mention this to you in view of what was said in the article. It is not something which I myself would have mentioned, but seeing that Mr. Barbanell has made such a point of it, I think this letter should be filed away along with the article from "The Two Worlds" as a matter for reference, should it ever come up.

Finally, he is wrong in saying that the annual dividends were paid, for the 14 years that he was editor and managing director. Ordinary dividends only commenced (so far as I can trace in my books) from 1947 onwards, after he had resigned.

Yours sincerely.

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The story here continues with the introduction of Percy Wilson, whose name is well known within the pages of Pioneer, for example in the last issue we published: "The Tragedies of Mediumship – Percy Wilson".

Below is taken from a hand-typed undated document by Percy Wilson held in the Britten Museum on his introduction by J. Arthur Findlay to join him as a director of Psychic Press, Ltd: [7]

[7] I note that this was later published in Psychic News on June 1st 1957, albeit edited and slightly changed.

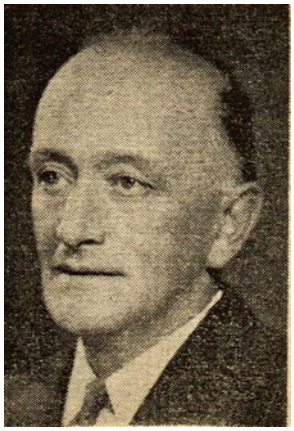


THE POLICY OF PSYCHIC NEWS

By Percy Wilson, M.A.

When I was told in my Home Circle way back in 1941 that within a few years I should be in association with Psychic News and with Arthur Findlay, though not with Maurice Barbanell, I just didn't believe it. At that time I had never met Mr. Findlay and, to be frank, I was not particularly enamoured of Psychic News. I had met Mr. Barbanell in his capacity of Editor of Psychic News and the various little tussles we had had with each other had led to a mutual respect, perhaps not untinged with a certain wariness, But my sentimental attraction was to Ernest Oaten and the Two Worlds whom I had known, and with whom my forbears had been intimately associated, for many, many years. And now Maurice Barbanell is Editor and Managing Director of the Two Worlds, and I am Chairman and Managing Director of Psychic News.

How little we know what lies in store for us ! When, in May 1945, Mr. Findlay rang me up, arranged a meeting, and then suggested that I might join him as a director of Psychic Press Ltd, I was completely taken by surprise. Had it not been for the positiveness of the earlier message, I think I should have made my excuses. As it was, I was persuaded that here was a job of work that I had to do and the following day I was duly appointed director along with Mr. B. Abdy Collins. [8]



Within a year Mr. Barbanell had left us and we had to find both a new Editor and a new Managing Director. For the latter, we were fortunate in having the services of Mr. Collins himself, who had just retired from his war-time post of Assistant Secretary to the Ministry of Home Security (after an earlier retirement from the Government of India). For the former, we decided on Mr, Kenneth Ulyett, who had been Editor of a National Weekly before the war and was then a Squadron Leader in the Air Force. I had met him journalistically before the war, but I also knew him as the son-in-law of Mr. & Mrs. Frank Brown with whom I had worked at the Brixton Spiritualist Church. Unfortunately, he was unable to secure demobilisation in time to succeed Mr. Barbanell in February 1946, and he introduced us to Mr. Stuart Martin.



Stuart Martin

So in March 1956, we began a new regime with Mr. Collins as Managing Director and Mr. Martin as Editor; and Psychic News put on a New Look and went from strength to greater strength. Circulation increased and the financial stability was greatly improved.

At that time, and for two more years, enthusiasm for Spiritualism was at its peak, and Mr. Martin knew how to ride on the crest of the wave. I myself was then President of the London District Council of the S.N.U. and can well recall the fervour that characterised our public meetings – a fervour that no doubt was tremendously stimulated by the rapprochement

[8] Image shown: Abdy Collins was a staunch supporter of the physical medium Helen Duncan. He was one of the defence witnesses at her trial held before the Recorder of London, Sir Gerald Dodson, at the Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey, E.C.4., commencing on Thursday 23rd March 1944

that Mr. Bendall, then President of the "Greater World", and I had fostered between our respective organisations. [9]

It was perhaps this that suggested to Mr. Collins that the Board of Directors of Psychic Press should draw up a Policy statement for the guidance of the staff of Psychic News. Whether that be so or not, a statement was in fact drafted by him, approved by the Board and accepted with alacrity by the Editor and his colleagues. It has remained in force as a directive to this day and was welcomed by Mr. Austen, who succeeded Mr. Martin as Editor on the latter's death,[10] and by our present Editor, Mr. Fred Archer, when he succeeded Mr. Austen on his emigration to Australia.[11] So far as I am aware, it has never been published but I think it might well be brought to the notice of readers as an indication of the essentially practical way in which the present policy of Psychic News which is embodied in the Charter has been built up. Here it is:

A POLICY FOR PSYCHIC NEWS

(1) To work for Unity in the Movement

(a) Not to allow anyone to attack anyone else in the paper. Properly phrased and sensible criticism is different but it must be moderate in tone and based on reasonable premises.

(b) To encourage all forces making for Unity.

(2) Religion should be handled so as not to wound feelings and genuine beliefs.

Criticism of dogmas may be drastic but should be worded so as not to insult and provoke. Emphasis should be on the proofs of survival and the messages from beyond, on the ignorance of opponents, &c., and motives should not be impugned.

(3) Care should be taken not to exaggerate the value of evidence given at public meetings and elsewhere. Claims of celebrated persons to return should be handled with reserve. We should avoid the reasonable imputation of credulity and sensationalism.

(4) Too much publicity and space should not be given to London mediums and constant repetition of the doings of a small group should be avoided. Correspondents should be appointed in the big towns, especially in the North and reporters sent out to cover events of importance outside London, Northern Ireland should not be neglected nor the Dominions, News should be sought from abroad especially the continent and North and South America.

(5) We should do all we can to put down charlatans and discourage commercialisation of Spiritualism.

We should support the S.N.U. in its Diploma system for mediums; also in its campaign for new legislation.

(6) Unity Meetings should be sponsored

But we must avoid seeming to try to run the Movement and setting up as a rival executive organisation.

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[9] See Pioneer: Vol. 7, No. 5: October 2020: "Why I Resigned—by Greater World president" (H. F. Bendall).

[10] Stuart Martin died on January 10th 1947.

[11] Arthur William (Billy) Austen previously was assistant editor to Maurice Barbanell and Stewart Martin. Austen had been with the paper since its inception in May 1932; he would continue as the paper's editor to 1953. He and his wife moved to West Perth, Australia and became involved with *Psychic Science News Magazine.* Austen was the first official stenographer for the teachings of Big Jump, publicly known as Silver Birch.

During the ten years that these objectives have been before us, we may not have entirely succeeded in achieving our purpose. Thus we have had difficulty in securing suitable correspondents in various parts of the country and even more difficulty in obtaining reports of local events in a form which represents news value.

We should be happy to hear from readers, in the provinces and abroad, who have a flair for news. People do want to know what is happening in other parts of the country; but a bare statement that "Mrs. Bluebottle gave an acceptable address last Sunday evening" is of no value to anyone.

The Policy continues. Each Editor has followed it and I too inherited it when I became Managing Director in October 1951 on the death of Mr. Abdy Collins. [12] At that time I was President of the S.N.U., but there was clearly no sort of clash between the two functions. Psychic News has always supported the Seven Principles which are the basis of the Union's constitution; and through the years, the S.N.U. has declared again and again that individual freedom of thought and liberty of interpretation [13] are fundamental to Spiritualist philosophy; and, of course, they are vital to the conduct of a newspaper such as Psychic News, which traces through the philosophy as it permeates all realms of human thought.

With the presentation of Mr. Findlay's shares to the Union (which is, of course, the only Trust Corporation in the Movement) the association becomes closer. But I hope that as the years go on, and those of us who know how the association has come about and what its purpose is, no longer remain at hand to direct the day-to-day business, the principles of freedom of thought and expression will still remain a guiding light both for Psychic News and for the S.N.U. As Emma Hardinge Britten so eloquently demonstrated in her Autobiography (which, by the way, I hope everyone of our readers will study), that was the torch that lit the way for our pioneers from the narrow dogmas of the past; and it is important that it should be kept brightly burning for the benefit of those who will come after us, lest we too should be tempted to allow our thoughts and opinions to grow into dogmas which might enslave them.

Spiritualists, of all people, should remember that the source of inspiration never dries up. It is in the Unseen World and the flow from it is not confined to a church or an organisation, or a holy book or a library of books. It can never be dammed up into reservoirs by the creation of dogma, but must be expected to find multiple channels for itself.

During the twelve years that I have been a director of Psychic Press Ltd, there has never been anything approaching a disagreement on this or any other matter that has come before the Board; complete harmony has prevailed and there has never been occasion at any time to take a vote. This was so when Mr. Collins was with us and it has remained so since I succeeded him and Mr. David Dutton joined us. I hope it will continue to be the case for the future, now that Mr. Findlay has resigned and Mr, Dawson and Mr. Fowler, the present President and Treasurer of the S.N.U., have joined the Board of Directors.

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[12] In 1951 J. Arthur Findlay wrote Bernard Abdy Collins' obituary notice, published in Psychic News, November 3rd: This is published in Pioneer, Vol. 8, No.3: "Judge Converted Him to Spiritualism: Discussions on Golf Course – J. Arthur Findlay".

[13] 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."

Mr. Findlay told us in March 1956 that he thought the time had come for him to lay down the responsibility of chairmanship and he suggested that I should assume that position as well as continue to act as Managing Director. We were aware, of course, at the time that he was proposing to transfer his shares in trust to the S.N.U. But we saw then, and see now, no reason at all why that should change our policy, though it should enlarge our field of service.

When I was a young student, my uncle, Hanson Hey, then General Secretary of the S.N.U., gave me a book on Spiritualism as a Christmas present. It was Sir William Earnshaw Cooper's "Spiritual Science". I have treasured it ever since, more particularly for the motto which Hanson inscribed on the flyleaf. This was:

"GOD NEVER LETS A TRUTH DIE"

As Chairman and Managing Director of Psychic Press Ltd., I commend that motto to you all.

PERCY WILSON.

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Wilson here has clearly outlined the development of the Psychic News policy. J. Arthur Findlay drew up the Psychic News Charter at Stansted Hall on May 16th 1956, which would come into force on the date his shares were passed on to the Spiritualists' National Union. It was:

"Signed, sealed and delivered by the said James Arthur Findlay in the presence of *John Deans Blair, Accountant, Halfway, Millfield, Stansted, Essex. Constance M. Eden, Secretary, Durrells Wood Cottage, Stansted, Essex*. The Common Seal of the Spiritualists' National Union Ltd. was hereunto affixed in the presence of *Harry Dawson, and W. S. Fowler*."

The Charter was hung in the editorial room of Psychic News at 144, High Holborn, London W.C.1. Quoted below is the main body of the Psychic News Charter signed by J. Arthur Findlay, dated etc., as above noted. This was published in a commemorative issue of Psychic News on June 1st 1957:

MAURICE Barbanell is the founder of "Psychic News." Nevertheless, "Psychic News" would probably have died at birth had I not financed its publication after the first issue and some years thereafter, when I supplied the necessary money to carry it over its early years of financial difficulties until it was on a profit earning basis.

Consequently, we both, in our respective spheres, were responsible for the foundation and subsequent development of "Psychic News."

This being so, I am as much concerned about its future as anybody, and, for that reason, as the holder of the majority of the shares, which give me control over its management and policy, I have given careful thought about its successful maintenance after my death. I have consequently passed over my shares in Psychic Press Limited (the proprietors of "Psychic News") to the Spiritualists' National Union, and this I have done in the expectation that the following provisions will always be respected:

(1) "Psychic News" is always to remain an independent newspaper, and is not to be transformed into one only for the expression of Spiritualists' National Union policy.

(2) To ensure this the Board of Directors should be constituted accordingly, and the Editor should not be a Spiritualists' National Union official, he to be always free to express opinions which have the approval of the Board of Directors.

(3) The qualification of future editors must be their journalistic ability, besides their full acceptance of all that Spiritualism stands for, and their complete detachment from orthodox supernatural credal religion.

(4) As orthodox supernatural religion has always been, and always will be, an enemy of Spiritualism, the duty of "Psychic News" is to expose its false claims and lead the people into the knowledge derived from natural religion as expounded by Spiritualism. This has always been the policy pursued by Psychic News during my lifetime, and I hope that it will always been maintained.

(5) If the Spiritualists' National Union does so, it will amply fulfil the trust and confidence I have placed in its leaders who, if they continue steadfastly to the end, will some day win the people over to the knowledge of the truth of natural religion as revealed through mediumship.



At Psychic News Office
Martin Lindley and Fred Archer,
the Editor, in his room when the
Psychic News Charter was hung.
1957

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Editor's Note:

Here I would like to fill in some gaps in the information, or at least extend the information already given to make it as comprehensive as possible in the space given.

Some of us older Spiritualists who attended the early days of Stansted Hall back in the 1970s may remember the Arthur Findlay Weekends. These, if memory serves me correctly, were at the end of the year, as the College closed at this time for a few months. These weekends consisted of the "Arthur Findlay Memorial Dinner", together with the "Arthur Findlay Memorial Lecture".

In November 1973 Maurice Barbanell gave the first "Findlay Memorial Lecture"; on a personal note I was present at this lecture, not as a guest but to serve drinks to the guests. Barbanell was a fine, often humorous public speaker who would fully engross his audience. I will here quote some of the points he touched on; I will only quote in connection with Psychic News that he gave a fine tribute to Findlay's life. [14]

He addressed the following points which expand on some of the information mentioned in this article: [15]

"When the invitation came I hesitated before accepting, as my close relationship with Findlay for 14 years ended when we disagreed on PN's future. Finally I decided to accept because I could pay him a deserved tribute for his unique contribution to Spiritualism."



"We [Barbanell & Swaffer] had just completed a three-year tour of Britain addressing propaganda meetings with audiences totalling 250,000.

"During this tour I acquired my theoretical knowledge of journalism. Swaff talked about practically nothing else in cars, trains and hotels. Jack was then Swaff's accountant and acted in a similar capacity for several Fleet Street personalities.

"A few months earlier a financier named Merrifield, who was a Spiritualist, had suggested the time was ripe to enliven psychic journalism. He was prepared to help financially.

"Ernest Oaten, then editing "Two Worlds" in Manchester was asked if he would bring it to London where Swaff and I, free of charge, would help to enlarge its sphere. Ernest refused to leave Lancashire."

[14] This can be read online as noted elsewhere in this article: see Psychic News, November 10th 1973.

[15] Maurice Barbanell in the original dinning room at Stansted Hall, where he gave the first "Findlay Memorial Lecture".

It has been noted that Barbanell's meeting with Kathleen Barkel and White Hawk was *arranged* by a mutual friend:

> "Her sittings were arranged through Frank Hawken, secretary of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, as it was then called. [16] Alas, she was engaged for many months to come. I said I would take the first cancellation. Soon one came.
>
> "Frank assured me that, following normal practice, sitters' names or identities were not revealed to the medium. I called at her Crystal Palace SE London, home where we met for the first time."

Another prediction was also given via Vyvyan Deacon: [17]

> "Later I learned that at a Vyvyan Deacon voice seance, Stead had communicated and foretold accurately that within six months there would be a Spiritualist newspaper called "Psychic News."

Here at this Findlay Memorial Lecture for the first time, Barbanell gives the reason for his falling out with Findlay resulting in his resignation:

> "My break with Findlay came at the end of the war. I told the story for the first time, I said, because I was speaking in Stansted Hall.
>
> "I happened to ask him what he proposed to do with his controlling shares in PN. I thought I ought to know because its success was largely due to my work.
>
> "He shocked me by saying he proposed to leave these shares to the SNU. His idea was also to bequeath Stansted Hall to the same body, so that it could be used as the Arthur Findlay College, with training mediums as one of its main functions.
>
> "When I asked where the money would come from, he shook me, because of his acute financial brain, by saying the dividends on the shares, plus the amount paid by potential mediums for training, would be the answer. My insistence that this scheme would never work had no effect on him.
>
> "I pointed out that official newspapers had no chance of being viable. They had to follow the party line, were usually dull and thus ceased to be bought except by a few.
>
> "I offered to buy his shares. His reply was to place a highly exaggerated figure as their value, and to say this must be provided within seven days. This, of course, he knew was impossible. We parted company after I ended the year's notice I had given."

Barbanell continues beyond this article's time frame of the 'First 25 Years' but gives the foundation of the next phase of PN:

> **"Name is given**
>
> "The spirit plan, however, was still to be fulfilled. Just over a dozen years ago, I had a private sitting. Red Cloud gave the full name of a friend of mine to whom he wanted to talk.
>
> "This man's name was unknown to the medium, nor at that time to anyone connected with Spiritualism. I told my friend, who arranged to sit with Red Cloud.

[16] Berkshire born English exponent Vivian (later Vyvyan) Deacon (1895-1938).

[17] Red Cloud also gave reference to William T. Stead but not referenced in this article.

"The guide told him it was his task to arrange for "Two Worlds" and PN to be brought together as part of the spirit plan and to function as one enterprise.

"I was then editing "Two Worlds," having been asked by veteran Spiritualist J. B. McIndoe to come to its rescue when it seemed on the point of foundering in Manchester. To do so, I had moved it to London.

"Future assured

"My friend, when he conveyed Red Cloud's words, first met with rejection after he approached those directing PN, even though it had reached a low stage in a chequered career.

"Finally, faced with the possibility of insolvency, my friend's offer to buy the SNU shares was accepted. I must say that Findlay was wholeheartedly in agreement that I should return to the PN editorial chair as part of this arrangement. [18]

"My friend transferred the PN shares to "Two Worlds." In turn there was formed the Spiritual Truth Foundation, a registered charity, to which these shares were transferred.

"This ensured that no individual could ever obtain control of this newspaper. It also assured PN's future and incidentally, that of ''Two Worlds'' where a similar arrangement was outlined.

"I ended my address by saying that all this was part of the plan. It means, I told my hearers, that all of us engaged in promoting Spiritualism had our part to play in teaching mankind how to save itself."

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The development of the Spiritual Truth Foundation brings us forward to 1965. The Chairman of Psychic Press Ltd., Percy Wilson, published on May 29th 1965 an article in Psychic News:

Will this deed make psychic history?

IN front of me is a document that I am firmly convinced is historic, one that will make a tremendous contribution to the future of Spiritualism.

Three main objects

I announced that the control of the company had passed to a body of London Spiritualists whose intention was to form a charitable trust. This transfer had the full support of J. Arthur Findlay, M.B.E., who was for many years chairman of the company. Only a few weeks before his passing he wrote to me approving both the terms of the trust and the proposed trustees.

That trust has now been established, under the title "The Spiritual Truth Foundation". It is being registered with the Charity Commissioners. Its objects are stated in the trust deed to be:

1. The promotion and advancement of the religion and religious philosophy of Spiritualism.

2. The promotion and advancement of spiritual healing.

3. The relief of poverty.

[18] Sixteen years after resigning on June 20th1962 Barbanell returned to his previous role and continued as editor of Psychic News and The Two Worlds jointly until his death in 1981.

The trustees are: Gordon H. Adams, Maurice Barbanell, Sylvia Barbanell, R. David L. Dutton, Maurice H. Tester, Laurence Wilson and myself.

For the full article and further information please see Pioneer, Vol. 11, No. 1: “Spiritual Truth Foundation”.

To conclude:

Published in Psychic News, December 17th 1966:

HE HELPED TO FOUND PSYCHIC NEWS

JACK RUBENS, who played a vital part in founding *Psychic News*, left £139,018 (gross £140,478, duty £72,067), his published will revealed last week.

Rubens, described as “a well-known figure in Fleet Street”, was an accountant who acted as financial and tax adviser to leading journalists and authors. These included Hannen Swaffer. Rubens, who died last March, aged 65, was a former president of the Magicians’ Club.

Despite his religion

Because of his friendship with Swaffer he became associated with founding *Psychic News* in 1932, though he was then an orthodox Jew and not a Spiritualist.

Psychic News was launched from some rooms in his London office in Bishopsgate. He became its business manager. He and Maurice Barbanell provided the initial capital, £688 16s. 8d., which speedily proved inadequate.

Rubens attended many seances, some of which he described in *Psychic News* as “really astonishing”. He volunteered that conjuring could not explain them.