the PIONEER

Volume 12, No. 3: 2025

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

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

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

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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.

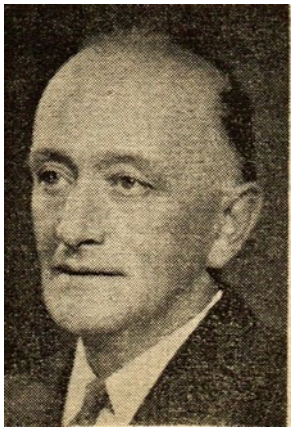


THE POLICY OF PSYCHIC NEWS

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.

TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP

—~—☼—~—

Many whom I speak to in the Museum at the Arthur Findlay College often naturally talk of our Spiritualism of the past, many considering how much better it was in the past years sometimes referred to as the "Golden Years", although the years are not directly specified. All mediumship has gone through various phases of development, some falling away totally or at least becoming extremely rare, undergoing changes and modifications in its presentation, etc. Indeed, of course, there are mediums who have stood out beyond others in the various expressions of mediumship both in physical and mental mediumship. This could *possibly* be attributed at times to demands in wartime, for example where public demonstrations excelled in mental and physical mediumship.

Readers of Pioneer will know that the standard of platform presentation has been brought into question by National Spiritualism on occasions. The focus of this article is trance mediumship, where former SNU President John Brown McIndoe remarks in an article in 1931:

> "We should cease to class as mediums those who do not give definite evidence of spirit control."
>
> "They may be psychics or sensitives" he added "but we should cease to class them as mediums."

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The article by James Leigh notes:

> *"... but to-day the fact cannot be denied that on many Spiritualist platforms addresses and demonstrations are constantly being given which do not, by any means, substantiate all the claims of our propagandists."*

Published in the Two Worlds, August 28th 1931, and continued in subsequent issues:

WHAT IS TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP ?

VIEWS OF FAMOUS MEDIUMS AND CONTROLS

BY JAMES LEIGH.

IN THESE DAYS, when platform mediumship has probably reached one of its lowest ebbs, when clairvoyant descriptions have largely degenerated into stereotyped repetitions and trance addresses are no longer always evidential or, indeed grammatical, the earnest student of Spiritualism naturally looks for some enlightening declaration or explanation which may serve to console him on his path of further investigation.

A few weeks ago the mists were, however, parted, and in a paper before the London District Council at its May Convention, no less an authority than Mr. J. B. McIndoe made the significant statement: "We should cease to class as mediums those who do not give definite evidence of spirit control."

"They may be psychics or sensitives" he added "but we should cease to class them as mediums."

Such a statement, coming from the President of the Spiritualists' National Union, will naturally attract attention. It was a timely utterance, although the evidence for and against its wisdom may be said to somewhat balance itself; but to-day the fact cannot be denied that on many Spiritualist platforms addresses and demonstrations are constantly being given which do not, by any means, substantiate all the claims of our propagandists.

Mr. McIndoe's declaration raises the question "What is spirit control ?" and, akin with it, there is the problem of trance mediumship. What is it ? How shall we recognise it ? When does it imply ? When we know the answers to these questions we shall have come a step nearer to considering the problem of spirit control, for the records of the Spiritualist Movement teach us that one of the surest and certainly one of the most evidential forms of mediumship has been that which is known as the trance.

Though it may exist in an individual state, it often accompanies other forms of mediumship to a greater or lesser extent. It is particularly manifest in many phases of physical mediumship: and even in the so-called normal forms of clairvoyance, psychometry, etc., the sensitive will admit that while giving demonstrations he is "influenced" from the Other Side. Such influence may be a mild form of trance control.

Trance mediumship of itself has played a great part in the development of Spiritualism. Andrew Jackson Davis the forerunner of the Spiritualist Movement, under hypnotic influence developed trance mediumship to an exceptional degree, and the lofty and inspired teachings which he was able to impart while in the trance state paved the way considerably for the subsequent advent of Spiritualism. In the early days the trance was frequently employed by discarnate spirits to drive home their messages and to transmit important and historical evidences.

There was a time, however, about fifty years ago, when trance mediumship was probably at its height, for the chronicles of the Movement reveal the interesting fact that practically all the great trance mediums were contemporaries. Emma Hardinge Britten, Mrs. Richmond (who was also known as Miss Scott and Mrs. Tappan). Mrs. Craven, and Mrs. M. H. Wallis, all of whom were superb trance mediums, demonstrated its heights on the platform at the same period. So did J. J. Morse, E. W. Wallis, J. B. Tetlow, W. J. Colville and "W. T.," a phenomenal medium who had scores of controls, many of them notable personalities while on this side, and who was able, although an uneducated working-man, to deliver astounding and evidential communications and addresses while in the trance state.

EXTEMPORANEOUS ADDRESSES.

It is astounding to record, yet it was the case that many of the old trance mediums frequently adopted the course of speaking on subjects chosen by committees selected by the audiences, and their impromptu orations were of such a nature that, once and for all, they might have dismissed the theories of memory, race-memory, preparation, telepathy, etc.—"explanations" which could never have adequately accounted for their remarkable displays.

The ability to give impromptu addresses was particularly demonstrated by the guides of Mrs. Britten and Mrs. Richmond. Special controls, of course, dealt with special subjects, and in this way the medium's learning must have appeared quite infallible to the uninitiated observer. The subjects they were asked to deal with were not homely ones, such as "Love," "Truth," etc., but the subject, "Which Great Teacher has Produced the Most Profound Effect upon Humanity, and Why ?", one that was given Mrs. Richmond, and upon which she immediately proceeded to discourse in detail, may be taken as a fair example of the type of test which used to be common.

In the case of W. J. Colville, the controls were able to deliver impromptu poems of considerable quality and length on subjects chosen by his audiences, after delivering orations which held congregations spellbound over a limitless period of time.

But this has disappeared from our midst to-day, and such trance mediumship as we still possess, while remarkable in a few cases, pales before that which at one period was regarded as commonplace.

THE SCIENTIFIC VIEW

Trance mediumship had, then, its day and—as it would appear to the investigator of to-day—was developed to the full, though it subsequently began to degenerate. Now, however, recent messages from the Other Side tell us that this form of mediumship is about to return, and Mr. J. B. McIndoe's assertions are therefore very much to the point.

Approaching the subject from the purely scientific point of view, we find that science, officially, does not, of course, accept the Spiritualistic interpretation of the mediumistic trance. The scientist may reason along the line that, as we know so little of how an incarnate mind controls the physical organism, it is the height of folly to speculate on discarnate controls.

Against this, however, there is the misleading, though popular, conception that the entrancement of a medium by a discarnate entity implies complete possession. This view is becoming so common that recently an organ of Christian Spiritualism lent its support to the belief that, although there are varying stages of trance,

> "in this form of mediumship the spirit control enters the body of the medium, whose own spirit is taken right away and looked after by his guides while, for a time, the control uses his medium's physical body as though it were his own."

How could we arrive at such a conclusion ? We should have, in the first place, to question the sensations of the medium and analyse his work and moods carefully. We should have to consider how great, if any, was the contrast in personality between the medium and the alleged spirit control, and how far that contrast was consistently maintained. We could employ various means of testing the depth of the trance, etc., but, once satisfied that there was established a concrete case for the overshadowing of one personality upon the personality of another, we should question and examine the views and statements of the entrancing intelligence. And it is just here that a great deal of work can be done.

Having ascertained that we were speaking to a personality foreign to that of the medium, we might ask such pertinent questions as, for example, to what extent does the audience affect trance communications, how far could the trance utterances be regarded as his—the control's—own, did he actually supply the words or merely impress the ideas, could he with certainty express facts and theories outside the knowledge of the medium, how far was the control of the medium actually "complete," etc.

Just such questions were many years ago submitted and answered by the spirit controls of several of the greatest trance mediums, and in future articles we shall attempt to convey the information which was, in consequence, revealed.

To be continued …

September 4th:

II.—ASPECTS OF CONTROL.

WHAT are the sensations of the average trance medium when he is under the control of a discarnate entity ?

In introducing the subject last week we indicated the lines upon which it was intended to travel, and intimated what considerable attention would be devoted to the views of the various matters.

Strangely enough this is the one side of the investigation which has been inadequately dealt with. Hitherto, in the consideration of trance mediumship, investigation has been largely divided between the sensations and experiences of the medium, on the one hand, and the reaction and conclusions of the observer on the other. Comparatively little attention has been allotted to the position and views of the entrancing intelligence.

Before we proceed to consider trance mediumship from this latter standpoint it may, nevertheless, be advisable to briefly recall some of the material which exists in regard to the medium's point of view. In this respect, as in all others, we shall content ourselves in dealing with only the outstanding mediums, believing that most information can be gathered from those in whom the trance has been exhibited in its most developed form.

Mention was made last week of the name of Andrew Jackson Davis, a pioneer of Spiritualism, in whose case trance mediumship of an unusually high order was developed. His mediumship and that of Swedenborg and Hudson Tuttle have much in common.

Under the influence of a hypnotist Davis, as a lad of 17, passed quickly into a state closely approximating to the mediumistic trance, and was soon able to give clear and convincing evidences of the possession of astonishing clairvoyant faculties. Later, an intelligence other than that of either subject or operator began to manifest, and it was shortly announced by this unexpected visitor that a series of lectures would be given which would form the text of a forthcoming book. Arrangements were made for the presence of independent witnesses, and the subsequent discourses which proved to be far beyond the abilities of any of those assembled, appeared afterwards under the title of "Nature's Divine Revelations." It was one of the most remarkable books in the series which Davis subsequently dictated, betraying, in addition to a deep insight of spiritual existence, a literary tone and scholarship such as was only to be regarded as a miracle in one of so tender years. Davis's whole schooling lasted about five months in all.

Davis passed through the trance state to what he called the "Superior Condition." He claimed that, far from losing consciousness therein, he was often able to perceive a great intensification of the senses, and even to hold conversations with disembodied souls.

In the case of Hudson Tuttle, the controls, while the medium was still in his teens, were able to write "The Arcana of Nature," one of their most successful works. Hudson Tuttle bluntly declared that the trance condition which he was familiar with "was not one of lethargy approaching sleep, but an indescribable intensification of mental power, a broadening of the horizon, a flow of thoughts reaching far out from the subject under consideration. . . It was as though I had listened to an exhaustive lecture, and taken a few notes."

Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond represents a number of the outstanding trance speakers, once so common on the Spiritualist platform. From her very first control she lost all consciousness of physical existence, although spiritual perception seemed to awaken simultaneously. Her consciousness immediately it ceased to function in one state, came

into play another. Thus she, too, saw and spoke to discarnate beings, visited scenes in the spirit world, and was all the while conscious of a separate existence, while her physical organism was being controlled to give trance addresses.

"I could not through my own knowledge state or testify in court that I had ever spoken in public," she once declared. "I could not testify that I had ever delivered an address or poem in my life,"

DEPTH OF TRANCE.

The trances of W. J. Colville varied considerably in their intensity. Sometimes he was fully conscious of all that was being said and that his lips and hands were guided by "unseen prompters." On other occasions he was in a semi-conscious state, and there were times when, in the words of his control, he was entirely oblivious to all that was being said through his lips. J. J. Morse recorded that the entrancement in his case was accompanied by the closing of the eyes and the suspension of consciousness to a varying degree.

This raises an interesting point. Does a state of unconsciousness on the part of the medium, during the giving of a trance address, guarantee absolute ''control" ? Does it follow that his mind will not influence the message ? A great number of developing trance mediums abstain from speaking because they are conscious of what is said through their lips. If they could reach the unconscious state they assure us that they would be only too ready to give themselves fully to the work, but at their present stage fear that their own minds may have a great deal to do with their messages. But is the suppression of consciousness a true guide in this matter ?

J. J. Morse's case teaches us that it is not. "We find the ideas, and such words as we can suitably express through his mind,'' said "Tien Sien Tie,'' Morse's famous control, speaking of his medium. "Frequently we inspire the ideas, exalt the faculties by which the ideas are reduced to language, and supervise their ultimate utterance by our own will power. In such cases we utilise the mental furnishings of the medium."

"We do not entrance our medium," said the controls of John C. Macdonald, another great trance medium. "However, we do take full control of the organism and express our own thought in our own way."

These are significant confessions, and should serve to encourage those who fear to speak under control, because they are conscious of what is said. Consciousness is no guide in this matter. The evidence lies in the change of personality and the value of the communication, not in the suppression of the consciousness of the medium. As Mr. James Burns admitted, "The conscious medium may be made the most translucent vehicle for spirit communication." [19]

VIEWS OF CONTROLS.

The question, "How far are the trance utterances of the medium to be regarded as yours ?" was put to several famous spirit controls. W. J. Colville's guides answered that, in the case of the instrument they employed, the utterances were theirs unqualifiedly, and not only were the thoughts theirs, but the words were theirs also. From infancy, they said, they had operated upon the brain of the medium, rendering it so susceptible to their control that they could almost at any time express themselves in their way through his lips. It was the usual custom of the controlling spirit to take full control not only of the brain of the medium, but of his body—but Colville, we are given to understand, was a

[19] "The Medium and Daybreak." Edited by James Burns. Vol. XV., 1884.

willing instrument in their hands, and did not offer any conscious opposition to such influence.

The case of E. W. Wallis seems similar to that of Mr. Morse. A guide, "Lightfoot," invariably established the control, after which IDEAS were projected into the mind of the medium, and clothed in language by "the ordinary methods." Consequently, the guides were not directly responsible for the terms used, but rather for the ideas and sentiments embodied, yet Wallis was at times so deeply entranced as to have no consciousness of what happened while under control.

In the case of Mrs. M. H. Wallis, the control interrogated stated that the ideas were supplied, and these were fashioned into shape by the channel through which they came, though frequently other controls were able to give both the ideas and the words. Mr. J. B. Tetlow's guides declared that they simply impressed the thoughts on the medium's brain.

What conclusion may we draw from this evidence ? Simply that in trance mediumship, as in many other things, the message is largely influenced by the channel through which it flows. Of course, however much this admission may be played upon by anti-Spiritualist forces, the fact remains that the trance medium has been employed to give information which was certainly not in either his mind or that of the observer, and there are well-attested cases where the medium has been able to impart facts unknown at the time to anyone, but which afterwards proved to be correct.

In our next article we will survey, from the point of view of the controlling intelligences, some of the limitations of trance mediumship, and suggest how, by the co-operation of the audiences, modern demonstrations might be improved.

To be concluded …

September 11th:

III.—LIMITATIONS OF THE TRANCE.

THAT vague word "conditions," so often called in by the unsuccessful medium to account for meagre results, and now so hackneyed a term amongst Spiritualists generally has, of course, a relative bearing upon the question of trance mediumship. It is not our purpose in this article to discuss the term in its application to mediumship generally, but to show how, in its mysterious way, it affects the work of the trance medium who, by virtue of his extremely sensitive state, is often much more susceptible to outward conditions than any other type of psychic.

In judging the value of a trance address it is invariably the method of the superficial observer to base his estimate upon no other factors than the intelligence of the spirit control and the intelligence of the medium. But investigation has shown that a third party must, however, also be reckoned with.

How far does the audience affect a trance discourse ?

Mr. W. H. Harrison, the gifted Editor of "The Spiritualist," one Sunday night attended a meeting which Mr. J. J. Morse's guide was to address. "I had not been there long before he, in the trance, gave out clearly the ideas which had been in my mind much of the previous week, and for about ten minutes uttered them in nearly the words I should have used, yet they had nothing to do with Spiritualism or the subject of his lecture, but were brought in by a violent twist." Mr. Harrison declared. Mr. Morse did not contest this statement, but he afterwards confessed:—

> "I have frequently noticed this fact in listening to the admirable lectures by Mrs. Britten, Mrs. Richmond, Mr. Colville, Mr. Wallis and others, who have had the character of their utterances noticeably influenced by the mentalities before them."

Somewhat similar cases are fully reported in the journal of the Society for Psychical Research, and I believe that many keen investigators must have had personal experiences. How is it, then, that speakers, presumably under spirit control, sometimes give utterance to the thoughts of persons in the audience, even using the words and form of expression peculiar to the latter ?

The mediums cannot greatly help us in this matter, but the question was asked of several distinguished spirit controls, whose answers were more illuminating, though hardly unanimous.

"Sometimes mediums are brought into sympathetic relation with such persons, and the medium being in a negative condition, readily absorbs any dominant thought that floats about him," said "Tien Sien Tie," Morse's famous control. "He is a species of sponge, and we are obliged often to use the thought as the best means of expelling it, and clearing the medium's mind for our work."

The guides of Colville, while replying in a somewhat similar fashion, were unusually restrained, and added that a good purpose would be served if, after such incidents as that related by Mr, Harrison, the spirit control was immediately questioned on his conduct.

The answer of the control of Mrs. M. H. Wallis hardly applied to the experience of Mr. Harrison. It began by a reference to the fact that the thought-planes were open to all. "If there be persons present in sympathy upon those thought-planes with the inspirers of the utterances, it is quite easy for those utterances to express the thoughts of such persons," we are told. It did not follow, the control added, that the spirit consciously acquired those thoughts to use them for his own purpose.

But in the case related by Mr. Harrison and in many others, matter in the minds of members of the audience has been quite foreign to the subject and sequence of the address, and yet has been introduced by, as Mr. Harrison put it "a deliberate twist."

Mr. J. B. Tetlow's control answered, when approached on the question, "Such action is in harmony with the law of spiritual affinity," but the guide of Mrs. W. B. Barr, another notable and wholly unconscious trance medium, declared, ''I cannot explain. I have had no such experience. If conditions were good I do not think such a thing could occur."

The control of Mr. E. W. Wallis did not deny the reality of these intrusions, but added that they were most likely to occur when the trance medium was nervous or unsettled or over-conscious of the presence of such a positive person in the audience, or where an individual had obtained some psychological influence over the sensitive prior to the time of the meeting.

SPIRIT CONTROLS ?

Having regard for these various factors, what proof, then, have we that spirits are the originators, authors and instigators of the orations delivered by trance mediums, and what is the value of trance mediumship as an evidence of spirit identity ?

Through one medium it frequently happens that in the course of a few months speeches differing so widely from each other and displaying such strong marks of distinctive identity are delivered, that, according to the control of W. J. Colville, no unprejudiced person can fail to discern the fact of different minds being at work. They

give conclusive intellectual proof of distinctive identity. “But it requires,” he added, ‘‘impartial and careful listeners to detect all these changes.”

The view of ‘‘Tien,” the control of J. J. Morse, was expressed in the terms: “We would say that the evidence of direct spirit action to those who know nothing of the subject is very slight.”

Here, then, do we stand. It has not been our object to dismiss the subject of platform trance mediumship, but rather to merely introduce it, and to convey some idea of the value which the cross-examination of the spirit controls can be in the investigation. We have seen that, even in the case of some of the great trance mediums, the controls have declared that they merely impressed the thoughts and ideas upon the medium’s mind—that these were afterwards put forth in the terms of language by “the ordinary methods.” It may, however, be questioned as to whether in every case the thought is correctly received in the mind of the medium or, when truly received, correctly interpreted. It is just here that the audience also may exert its influence over the trend of the discourse.

Having reached the medium’s mind, the thoughts and ideas are sometimes reproduced in language by the control by “exalting” the normal faculties. The “mental furnishings” of the medium are occasionally utilised. In other cases the control of the medium is claimed to be complete, both in body and mind, and yet even here the message may, we have seen, be influenced by the vessel through which it flows.

The subject is a difficult one, possibly because every medium is different, and the wise control eschews general rules, and makes an intensive study of his own particular instrument. The physical health and condition of the medium and the more positive members of the audience must be considered. The general view with which the control or his sensitive is held must also affect the conditions.

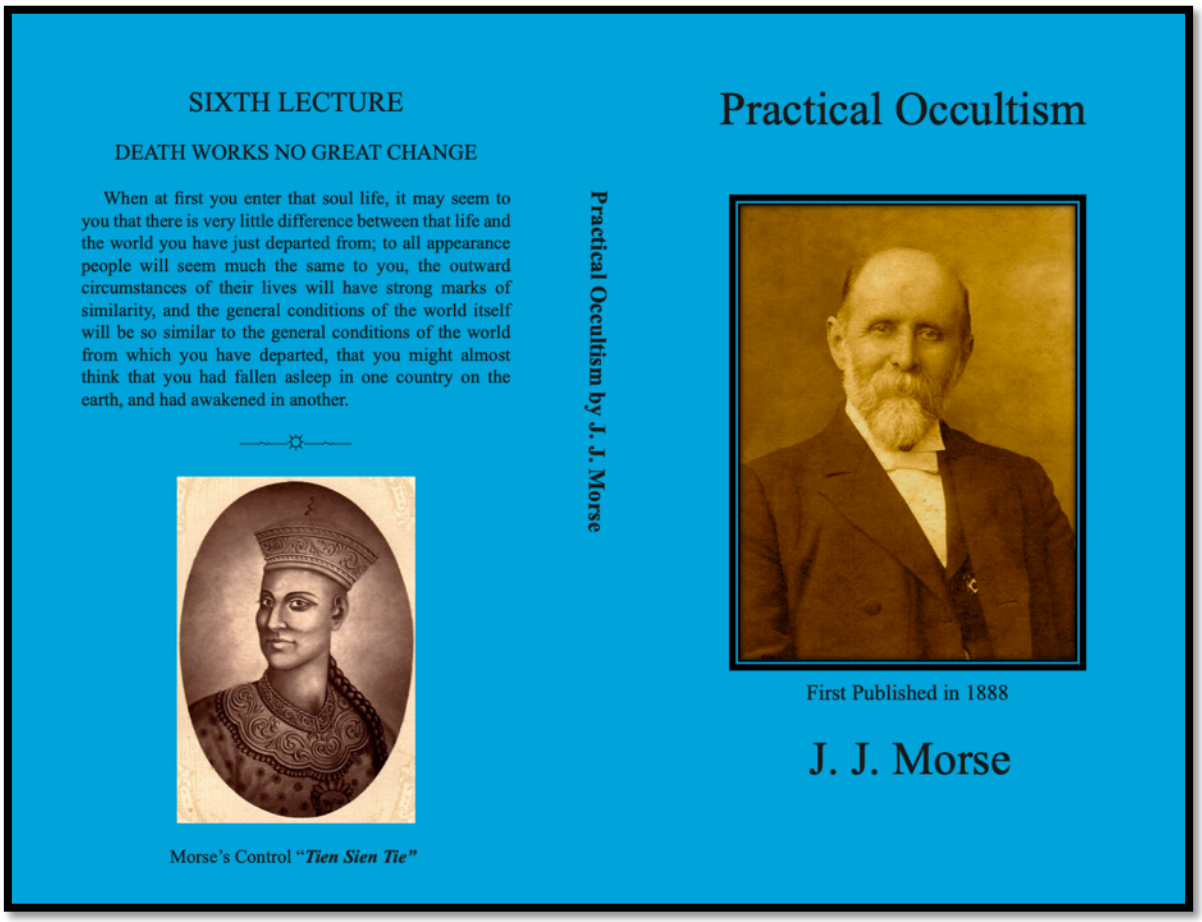
Very quickly we realise that we are penetrating into the unchartered region of the unknown. Some day it will have been mapped fully, no doubt, but meanwhile there is much work for the patient and scientific investigator. He must, of course, be more than a mere scientist, for in the investigation of trance mediumship we are dealing not with the dense and physical components of matter, but with the more subtle and refined phases of mind.

There will always be controversy—as long as we know so little of the subject. It is, however, useless to bemoan to-day the comparative scarcity of platform trance mediums of the old order. A great deal lies in our own hands. The standard of platform trance mediumship could, for example, be considerably raised were Spiritualist Churches generally to adopt the course of inviting the controls to reply to questions submitted by the audience immediately following, and exclusively bearing upon their trance addresses. Thiswas a prominent feature of the old order of trance mediumship, but it is rarely met with to-day. It is, nevertheless, one of the best means of testing the control’s knowledge of his subject, as distinct from that of the medium.

In all things, the control’s point of view should be solicited and considered. It is the control who claims the authorship of the message, and yet in many cases his opinions are never considered, nor is any attempt made to appreciate his standpoint when embarrassing difficulties arise.

The questions which were propounded in the first of these articles are as potent to-day as they were when first introduced nearly fifty years ago. Modern mediums should consider them, and Spiritualists generally who study the subject in the light of the answers which have been received will soon come to the conclusion that trance mediumship is hardly all that, to the superficial mind, it appears.

But that there are certain and well-established cases of spirit control cannot be denied, even though the average platform trance medium of to-day may come through a rigid examination none too successfully.



TRANCE LECTURES

This is available at the Arthur Findlay College bookshop and on the Spiritualists' National Union website.

To be continued in the next issue . . .

WILLIAM THOMAS STEAD

"Julia's Bureau"

William T. Stead was publicly well-known for his work as a journalist, within the Spiritualist movement primarily as an author and editor on this side of life, and equally so posthumously in spiritualistic publications. The name "Julia," or "Letters from Julia," are still today fairly well known to Spiritualists generally but *perhaps* not so well-known is that Stead was her medium, founder of "Julia's Bureau," and who was "Julia A. Ames"?

Published below is an article by Edith K. Harper: [20]

CHIEF OF THE OLD BRIGADE

"The True Mission of Spiritualism is to make men spiritual."—W. T. Stead.



Spiritualism's long Roll of Honour contains no name more admirable than that of W. T. Stead—a pioneer, if ever there were one. At the height of his public career, his international fame as the Prince of journalists, he boldly announced his conviction of the essential truth of Spiritualism. I use the plain term "Spiritualism" because he used it. He was never ashamed to do so, never beat about the bush. But he did *not* substitute Spiritualism for Christianity, for he held it as part and parcel of Christianity. His religion, his Universal Church, was an ideal "Great as the Love of God, wide as the needs of Man," and included that inborn longing of the human soul to realise that physical death cannot divide those who love. Or, as Penn the Quaker said, "Those who love beyond the grave cannot be separated by it."

So Mr. Stead's first public confession of faith took the form of an address given at the invitation of the London Spiritualist Alliance, at their old rooms, Duke Street, Adelphi. It was on the 14th of March, 1893, and the occasion was specially memorable, because he not only made his first speech on Spiritualism—including an account of his own personal experiments in automatic-writing, so-called, but because he then made known his intention of founding, some day, "Julia's Bureau" of Inter-communication. A full report of Mr. Stead's speech, and of other speeches of various members of that crowded and enthusiastic audience are, I believe, still preserved in the archives of "Light."

When I wrote "Stead, the Man," in 1913, [21] Mr. E. W. Wallis, then editor of "Light," with his usual courtesy and kindness, allowed me to make full use of that material, so, as I there quoted Mr. Stead's speech almost in full, I need not repeat more here, excepting to emphasise his then declared intention of founding "Julia's Bureau." His words were these:—

> "I ask you to consider it. Can anything be done ?" Can some centre be established, whether it be a College of mediums, or a Bureau of Communication, or

[20] Quarterly Transactions BCPS: *Psychic Science*, Vol. VI.—No. 1. April 1927, pages 30-34.

[21] *Stead the Man, Personal Reminiscences* is available as a free download.

whatever you like to call it, by which any person who has lost a friend, and who wishes to receive communications from that friend, may be able to send and receive a message as to the well-being or ill-being as the case may be, and as to the whereabouts of that friend on the other side ? Julia says that it can be done, and ought to be done, and she wants me to try and get it done . . . .”

“I speak as a tyro, but I intend to put this thing through. I do not intend to dawdle round it.”

That was nearly thirty-four years ago. Certainly “dawdling” was the last thing of which Mr. Stead could be accused, but “we are in the lap of the gods,” and it was some sixteen years later before Julia’s desire was realised.

On the evening of April 24th, 1909, a small group of enthusiasts dined together at the First Avenue Hotel, High Holborn, by the invitation of W. T. Stead, foremost among pioneers in any field where courage and self-sacrifice were and are their own (and often their only) reward.

That evening was a gala event, the “Coronat Opus” of his many long years of psychical investigation. It was the inauguration of that gallant and quixotic enterprise, known to fame as “Julia’s Bureau.”

We were thirteen at table. The guests included several well-known sensitives, and there were also representatives of interrelated fields of thought, including the veteran Theosophist, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, and our Hon. Treasurer, Mr. E. R. Serocold Skeels. My mother and I were also among the number. Nearly eighteen years ago !—but the memory of that happy group of kindred souls is ever vivid in my mind, as also is the séance which followed it at Mowbray House, formerly the office of the “Review of Reviews,” to which we all repaired later in the evening, for the benediction of the Invisible.

Sixteen years earlier Mr. Stead had thrown a bombshell, as it were, into the journalistic world by the publication of “Borderland,” a quarterly review dedicated to every form of psychical investigation, and, as he phrased it, to “seeking the scientific verification of the life and immortality which were brought to light nineteen hundred years ago.”



One of the chief features of that unique Quarterly was the first appearance of “Letters from Julia,” those much-discussed communications in “Automatic Writing” given to Mr. Stead through his own hand, and of which the reception had turned him from a sceptic (in such matters) into a firm believer. Julia’s first acquaintance with Mr. Stead is well known, but for the benefit of the imperfectly informed, let me first recall that Miss Julia A. Ames, of Boston, was an American woman journalist, who wrote much on Temperance and Social Reform, and was a close friend of Lady Henry Somerset and Miss Frances Willard. Miss Lilian Whiting has testified elsewhere to Julia Ames’ noble, enlightened personality and character. She had some correspondence with W. T. Stead, but otherwise their acquaintance was of the slightest; she only saw him twice; she was not a Spiritualist, and they had never discussed the subject. But, it was she who was destined to alter his whole outlook by giving him *proofs of human survival*, that led ultimately to his throwing down

the gauntlet in the face of a materialistic world, and risking all that might come of it.

He said once, when asked to state what was the most important moment in his life: "The most important moment in my life was when Julia first wrote with my hand !" and in reply to a kindly warning by an eminent Statesman, hinting at probable loss of prestige, and the like, Mr. Stead retorted: "That is nothing ! I have my son Willie's messages telling me he is alive and well in the Beyond."

But even "Borderland" was not the *first* milestone in Mr. Stead's Psychic Quest. Two years earlier, in 1891, he had compiled and issued as a special Christmas number of the "Review of Reviews," a collection of *Real Ghost Stories*, as a practical attempt to "rationalize the consideration of the science of ghosts." It was in this connection that he uttered an imperative warning that such studies were not for everyone, certainly not for the very nervous or easily excitable, and that "as the latent possibilities of our complex personality are so imperfectly understood, all experimenting in Hypnotism, Spiritualism, etc., excepting in the most careful and reverent spirit by the most level-headed persons, had much better be avoided." And in deference to his Roman Catholic friends, he included a special caution to "those who expose themselves to the *horrible consequences of Possession*."

Mr. Stead sometimes said he was born without the "bump of veneration," but this was only half true, for his Puritan ancestry and deeply religious training and outlook were with him in even his most adventurous voyages.

In 1897 he published the "Letters from Julia" in volume form, entitled "After Death," remarking in his Preface: "No one who knows anything of the prejudice that exists on the subject will deny that I have no personal interest to serve in taking up the exceedingly unpopular and much ridiculed position of a believer in the reality of such communications."

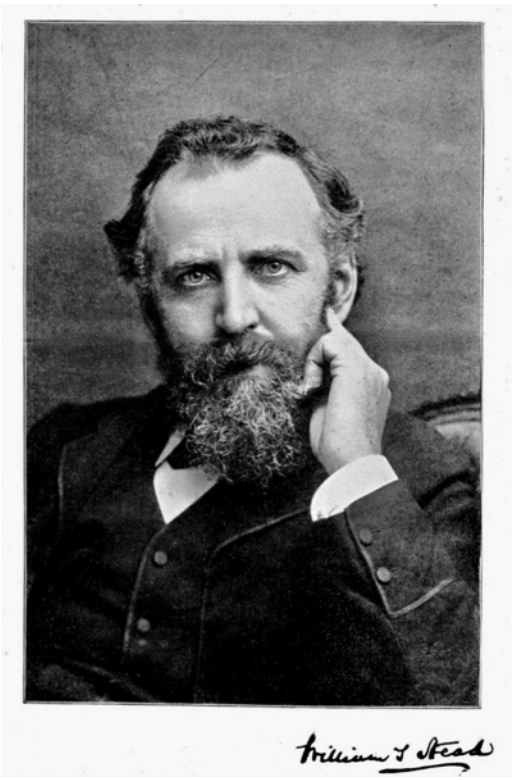
After that, the Editorial Offices of the "Review of Reviews," both in Norfolk Street and later in Kingsway, was, not unnaturally, besieged by a constant stream of *soi-disant* mediums, real or imaginary, good, bad, or indifferent. Anyone claiming the gift was sure of a hearing, and equally sure of financial assistance if needed. The "Knight Errant of Womanhood" became the Medium's Friend.

I think it was the late Lord Milner who once affectionately characterised W. T. Stead, his former Editorial Chief, as a fine combination of "Don Quixote, Phineas T. Barnum, and the Apostle Paul." Never was this threefold aspect seen in more attractive effect than when psychic matters were in question. Between the appearance of "Real Ghost Stories," in 1891 (and "More Ghost Stories" the following year), and the establishment of "Julia's Bureau" in 1909, much water flowed under the Thames bridges. "Borderland" had run a meteoric course for three or four years,[22] then ceased to exist. In December, 1907, Mr. Stead received a definite "signpost," which meant for him that he was to give everything else second place to the work of reiterating his own personal testimony that *There is no Death*. This signpost came through the death of his eldest son, and it has all been told and retold. His own words, spoken by him at a public meeting, were these:—

> "I had always said I would never make my *final* pronouncement upon Spiritualism until someone near and dear in my own family passed into the great beyond, then I should know whether Spiritualism stood the test of a great bereavement, bringing life and immortality to light. And I am here to-night to tell you that the reality of my son's continued existence, and of his tender care for me, have annulled the bitterness of death."

[22] First issue July 1893, cost of 1/6d, final issue October 1897 (IV. No.4), this was intended as a temporary suspension, but the publication never returned.

So the Bureau was launched. Its whole cost was borne by Mr. Stead. It was he who paid the mediums, and the clerical staff, and the rent, as well as the thousand-and-one incidental expenses incurred in such an undertaking. As the correspondence was world-wide, postal expenses alone were enormous. A library of Psychical literature called "The Borderland Library," was run in connection with the Bureau, but it was not an integral part. The annual subscription to the library was one guinea. This, however, did not involve the use of "Julia's Bureau." The latter was entirely gratis, and it did not include the Library. How Julia dowered Mr. Stead with a thousand pounds for her Bureau is another story, also well known.



For three years, from 1909 until 1912, the work went on unceasingly. At the end of the first twelve months, when we surveyed results, Mr. Stead felt his faith had been amply justified, and when I placed before him some of the sheaves of letters in which grateful hearts had allowed themselves to overflow, he exclaimed: "Whatever happens, nothing can take this golden year from our lives ! But we must go ahead !"

"Whatever happens !" . . . That was soon to happen which would stop the earthly expression of all his self-sacrificing zeal, and leave his loyal helpers leaderless. In March, 1912, he received an invitation to speak at New York on Men and Religion's Forward Movements, and he half reluctantly accepted, because, as he said: "It will give me an opportunity to speak of Julia's Bureau in her own land."

It seemed to him another call, and he meant to extend his visit in the States, in order to give a series of lectures on this, the subject nearest his heart. A few months before,—at a sitting of Julia's Circle—old "Grey Feather" called out in a voice of thunder: "Chief Steady, you crossee Big Pond o*ne time more* before you shuttee eye."

"One time more !" A curious prophecy, yet fulfilled to the letter, alas ! All the world knows that ! The "Titanic" struck an iceberg late on the night of April 14th, and sank in mid-ocean in the early hours of Monday, April 15th, 1912. Upwards of 1,600 persons sank with her, among them being W. T. Stead.

May the Lord bless and keep him.

—~—☼—~—



THE SANCTUM: "JULIA'S BUREAU," MOWBRAY HOUSE.
Reproduced by kind permission of the Record Press.
The armchair in the foreground was always left vacant for Julia.

Stead's daughter Estelle took a very active part in her father's work and continued his work after his death in April 1912. Below I quote from a lecture given by Estelle Stead on December 16th 1926 to the Sheffield and District Society for Psychical Research; this was published in the Two Worlds on January 7th 1927:

Experiences and Confirmations.

MISS ESTELLE W. STEAD IN SHEFFIELD.



"THERE was a large and very appreciative audience present at the Theosophical Hall, St. Paul's-parade, Sheffield, on December 16th, when the Sheffield and District Society for Psychical Research was addressed by Miss Estelle W. Stead (of London), daughter of the world-famed W. T. Stead on "Experiences and Confirmations'' in a public lecture.

"The President (Dr. Frank Ballard, D.D.), who occupied the chair, introduced the lecturer.

"Miss Stead told how her father and Cecil Rhodes discussed the question as to the actuality of God—whether there was a God or not, because, said Cecil Rhodes, if there was a fifty-per-cent. chance that there was a God, he wanted to find out what He wanted him to do. There were numberless books on this subject and no one could say there was not a one-per-cent. chance. This was a most important subject to investigate, as we were all going

to leave this life. A doctor once said he was convinced there was not a one-per-cent chance. Communication in different ways, as more and more have passed over, and more and more here study it, make for better ways of communication.

"Her father, soon after his tragic passing out in the Titanic disaster, announced his presence by knockings. She set about going through his mass of papers to find material for her book on his "Life," and, as she searched one pile of papers, she noticed a knock and asked for it to be repeated, which was done, and in this pile she found nothing she wanted, but commencing on another pile she heard three sharp knocks and found the pile contained important papers, and in this way she was guided in her search and her father proved his presence and interest. Her father had promised the group, of which he was a member, to demonstrate to them his survival and he did so through the direct voice medium, Mrs. Wreidt. [23] A pot of marguerites had been put at his old place on a dining-room table, and as they were talking about him in the light it was noticed that the marguerites were moving. They ceased to do so when the conversation dropped, but resumed their movement as the talking recommenced. His heavy chair also moved at right angles to table.



"The light being turned down, someone was heard tramping round the room till it shook, and also the chair was put back. What he could not do himself he got other spirits to do for him.

"After he passed over the question as to the continuance of "Julia's Bureau" became urgent, as he had kept it going at a personal outlay of £2,000 a year. Miss Stead had wished to continue, but want of funds stopped it and they had to close down. Her father told her, however, that someone would come forward to help, and a lady found the money for a secretary for two years. They called the revived bureau the "W. T. Stead Library." "Julia" and W. T. Stead became their joint presidents in the spirit world, and they certainly helped in keeping them from making mistakes.

"It was our own attitude that could block the way in getting into touch with the spirit world, of which knockings, lights, materialisations, direct voice, trance and other spiritual phenomena formed the methods. As to mental phenomena her father said it is a much easier method to them than the production of physical effects. She spoke of the great friendship which had existed between Lord Fisher and her father. When Lord Fisher passed on there was to be a great funeral at Westminster Abbey. Her father told her to go, but she could not enter owing to the great crowd, but he gave her a message to "take out a visiting card, and you'll get in," and, after a remarkable series of incidents, she was admitted. After service she went straight to Baker-street and sat with Mrs. Wreidt, and her brother came through and informed her that her father was pleased she was in the Abbey.

"Her father once told her they were only preaching to the converted, and she was to go into the highway. She, however, carried on the usual meetings in spite of his advice. However, the money which had been coming in mysteriously as long as she obeyed him now stopped, until with over £200 to pay there was only ten shillings to meet it, so she closed the meetings. The following week £80 was sent her, showing it paid best to obey. Her father desired to move the library to No. 5, Smith-square, and she wondered how she was to dispose of the Baker-street premises ? The house-agent anticipated weeks would

[23] Spelt "Wriedt". For further information please see Pioneer, Vol. 10, No. 4: "Mrs Rose Champion de Crespigny: This World and Beyond– Foreword by Sir Oliver Lodge, I met Mrs. Etta Wriedt".

elapse—but not so ! She was now obeying her father, and in two days the premises were let on advantageous terms to a lady. She was quite sure that the spirit friends help when they can, but it must be for a spiritual and not a worldly purpose.

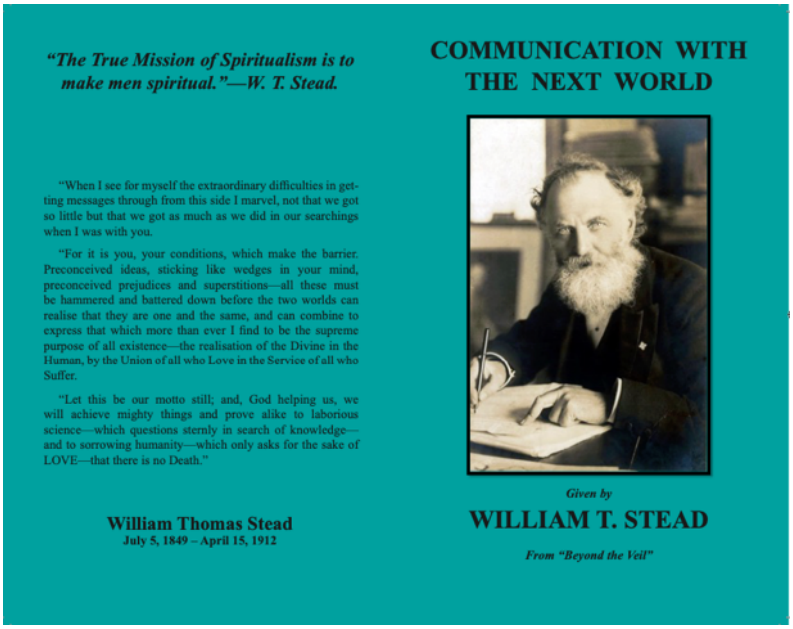
"In 1913, not long after the Titanic went down, she went to America, and described how she was bombarded with messages said to be from her father. ''What am I to do about this ?'' she asked him; they say "I was the first to get the message." He explained that he had a lot of work to do on the spirit side, and that the many messages stated to be from him were not necessarily untrue, as the messages might emanate from the spirit centre, where he was, and guides might come from mediums to get news of or from him in the manner of reporters who come to the office on earth for information, and, not being able to get at the chief, interview the office boy; she so was urged to be kind to them, though his only personal messages were given by direct voice, per Mrs. Wreidt. Subsequently, he told her he had chosen a lady medium for his purposes from a group in France. She was easy to work through and knew nothing of him in 1913. Mr. Gow told her there was a gentleman come to see her with a message given through a French medium which he had translated into English. Her father said the message was from him. He told her how much he had to do, how vibrations came to him and he sent them back like answering a telephone message."

—~—☼—~—

In the above text the reader can note that Estelle was gathering information from her father's papers to write a book about his life. This was published by Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., London, Edinburgh, and New York, in 1913 as "My Father". [24]

Further note:

… Subsequently, he told her he had chosen a lady medium for his purposes from a group in France. She was easy to work through and knew nothing of him in 1913. Mr. Gow [25] told her there was a gentleman come to see her with a message given through a French medium which he had translated into English. Her father said the message was from him. He told her how much he had to do, how vibrations came to him and he sent them back like answering a telephone message."



The medium chosen by Stead was Madame Hyver and first published in 1921 under the title:

Communication with the Next World

The Right and the Wrong Methods

A Text Book

This is available at the Arthur Findlay College bookshop and on the Spiritualists' National Union website.

[24] This is available as a free download.

[25] David Gow commenced as a contributor to Light under its founder, Mr. Dawson Rogers, soon becoming its lead writer in 1914 and its editor until 1931.

Editor's Note:

As noted, the Bureau was originally conceived through Stead's automatic scripts from the spirit of Julia A. Ames. Miss Ames was around thirty years old, an American journalist who worked for the *Union Signal*, Boston, and a highly religious Methodist. Stead first met Julia at his office of the *Review of Reviews,* at Mowbray House in 1890. A subsequent visit saw her meeting Stead again, this time at his home, Cambridge House, where she met some of his family. They had tea in the garden under an old oak tree [26] that was situated at the end of the lawn. These two occasions were the only times the pair had met, for shortly after her return to America Julia died of pneumonia in Boston.

During the autumn of 1908 Julia wrote, through Stead's hand, stating that the necessary finances would be forthcoming. Stead had written an article in early December of this year entitled "*How I Know the Dead Return,*" in which he gave an account of his own experiences, and reasons for his belief. This was published in the *Fortnightly Review*, *New York American*, and *La Revue*, in Australia and in India.

The publication of this article resulted in Stead being offered the position of "Special Correspondent". He accepted the post on condition that he would receive £1,000 a year. On January 19th 1909 the position was confirmed by *New York American*.

Estelle states: [27]

> "So he founded Julia's Bureau—and founded it for one purpose, and one purpose only—*to enable those who had lost their dead, who were sorrowing over friends and relatives, to get into touch with them again; to minister to the aching heart*, not to satisfy the inquisitive brain."

The Bureau was formally opened on April 24th 1909, with Mowbray House [28] as its London office, and Cambridge House, Wimbledon as its "Inner Sanctuary." [29] The cost of maintaining the Bureau fell entirely on Stead. The £1,000 he was earning as Special Correspondent to the *New York American* went towards the running of the Bureau, but this did not cover Stead's expenditure. Each person sitting with a medium worked out at two guineas (£2. 2s. 0d) over and above the outlay of the offices, etc; it was nearer £2,000 during the first year.

Julia absolutely forbade any charge being made to the sitter and stated: [30]

> "We must not charge applicants any fee for the services of the Bureau, but that after their application had been dealt with those who had benefited by the Bureau were allowed, if they so please, of their own free will, to contribute either two guineas to defray the cost of another case or any multiple of two guineas as a thank-offering to her Bureau."

How then, was the Bureau to be financed? A minimum of three sittings a day would, as stated, involve an outlay heading towards £2,000 a year, and there were often more.

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[26] This final meeting-place at Stead's home was to later become the inner sanctuary of Julia's Bureau, and the old oak tree would become known as "Julia's Oak".

[27] *My Father*, page 320.

[28] Mowbray House, Norfolk Street, London, situated on the Thames Embankment, was Stead's office that he took for his work in 1890 – *The Review of Reviews*.

[29] Cambridge House, Wimbledon Park, London SW, was the Stead family home.

[30] *My Father*, pages 342-343.

Four months after the opening, during this time 150 sittings were given by the Bureau of the Bureau. Estelle Stead wrote: [31]

> "I confess that this reliance for the financing of the Bureau upon gratitude for services rendered seems to most persons on the earth plane somewhat unbusinesslike. So far the results have hardly justified the splendid confidence of Julia. But I am going on relying upon her assurance that the necessary funds will not fail to be provided when they are needed."

Estelle Stead commented: [32]

> "However, extra funds were not forthcoming, and after the first year Mowbray House had to be given up, and the whole of the work was carried on from Cambridge House. [33] Later on it was found impossible to give more than one sitting to each applicant, though, if this one sitting failed of results, a second was arranged with another medium."

I should explain here what a sitting consisted of. The sitter was required to fill in a number of forms for various reasons that we do not have the space to go into. If the sitter was accepted, [34] they would receive three separate sittings with different mediums, [35] the first being at the Bureau with a staff medium. The two subsequent sittings would take place away from the Bureau, possibly at the medium's premises. At each of the three sittings a stenographer who recorded everything said accompanied the sitter. The reports were then sent to the sitters. The recipients were requested to give detailed feedback to the Bureau; for example, could the information given be explained by telepathy? Could the information have been received by other means? Did the sitter think that they were brought into communication with a loved one, etc? The Bureau would then compare these reports with the three sittings received. Each was carefully filed in the archives and some of the results were published.

Each morning the staff would attend a morning circle, a chair always placed at the head of the table for Julia; after all, it was her Bureau [note the photograph on page 105]. Each staff member in turn took the service, with Julia generally selecting the hymn. When Mowbray House closed, Julia's Circle, as it was always called, continued, but only once a week on a Wednesday evening at Cambridge House. It was conducted in the same manner as the morning circles at Mowbray House. These continued until William Stead's death. He was referred to as the "Chief", and after his death the circles continued intermittently during the summer, with two places being reserved for Julia and the Chief.

Stead attended his last Julia's Circle on April 3rd 1912, at which he presided, choosing for the Bible reading: [36]

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[31] *My Father*, page 343.

[32] *My Father*, page 343.

[33] March 1910: Mr. Stead's lease of Mowbray House expired, the Bureau ceased to work from there, and the archives were moved to Cambridge House, from which the correspondence was then carried on.

[34] To minimise any risks, e.g., mischievous spirits or sitters with dubious motives, Julia undertook the personal direction of the Bureau, making the rules and conditions for all.

[35] Those who were unable to attend the London office were asked to send in three articles to be psychometrised by each medium. Those using the postal system would, so far as possible, receive the same treatment and process as an attending sitter.

[36] *My Father*, pages 371-372.

"… the seventeenth chapter of St. John, in which Christ, feeling the hour draw nigh when He must leave the World, prays God to glorify Him, to preserve His apostles, and to glorify them, and all other believers with Him in Heaven."

"The hymn, too, told of parting and farewell, for Julia expressed the wish it should be Harriet Auber's "Our Blest Redeemer," and wrote the following message:

"April 3rd, 1912. [37] It is a solemn thought that after to-night my beloved Circle may not meet in its entirety for some time. But hold the meeting weekly, in all faith and confidence, and in good time the joy of re-union will more than atone for the pain of separation. Much that is of great importance will take place before then. I particularly wish dear William to preside at the service to-night. Sing 'Our Blest Redeemer.' God's blessing on you all, and a good journey to my beloved comrade."

"JULIA A. AMES."

Over 600 people [38] received help and consolation during the three years of the Bureau's activity. The Bureau employed well-known mediums, e.g., Alfred Vout Peters, J. J. Vango and Robert King. Etta Wreidt, on her visit to London, at the invitation of Stead, held séances at Julia's Bureau in 1911. After Stead's fateful last voyage on the Titanic in April 1912, he had intended to bring Wreidt back to England on his return trip. At this time she was waiting for Stead in New York, the Titanic's destination.

At some time after Stead's death in 1912, Julia's Bureau closed. In 1914 Stead's daughter Estelle, founded the 'W. T. Stead' Borderland Library and Bureau. The opening of the Bureau in 1914 was to give much support to the bereaved during the First World War. In 1936 it closed its doors forever. The library was transferred to The Friendship Centre at 85 Lancaster Gate, London; it was founded by Stephen Foster in 1929 and it also became the home of the Conan Doyle Memorial Psychic Library and Museum. [39] In early 1937 the Friendship Centre became known as "The Friendship Centre and the 'W. T. Stead' Memorial Library."

Estelle Stead's final words on this were published in Light, March 12th 1936, which I quote from below:

"Ever since my mother's passing in 1932 I have known that time was drawing near. It filled me with sadness. I tried to persuade myself that I was wrong, for I know how many love this place and have been helped through coming here, but there was really no doubt in my mind, I knew it had to come and now I dare hesitate no longer.

"I have carried on the work for 22 years. All the time I have been conscious of the guidance of my father and Julia, our Presidents in the spirit world. It has been a real joy to me to carry on in conjunction with them the work they started. As I look back over the years my heart is full of thankfulness for the many who through coming to the Bureau have been brought into touch with their loved ones in spirit; have gained a better understanding of God's Kingdom; a wider outlook and a more definite purpose in life, secure in the knowledge that there is no death. I am also happy in knowing that so many

[37] Given through Miss Harper's hand.

[38] *Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology* (Gale Research Inc), puts the number of sittings at around 1,300 during the three years, with Stead's running costs around £1,500 a year. Both were different from Stead's daughter's information in 1913; Estelle Stead noted on page 340: (sittings) "In the first four months there were 150 cases undertaken by the Bureau…" I suspect that the figure given (600) is yearly, rather than during the three years.

[39] See Pioneer, Vol. 12, No.1: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Psychic Bookshop, Library & Museum– Garth Willey.

of our Mediums love this place and have found sympathy, understanding and encouragement at the Bureau before branching out on their own.

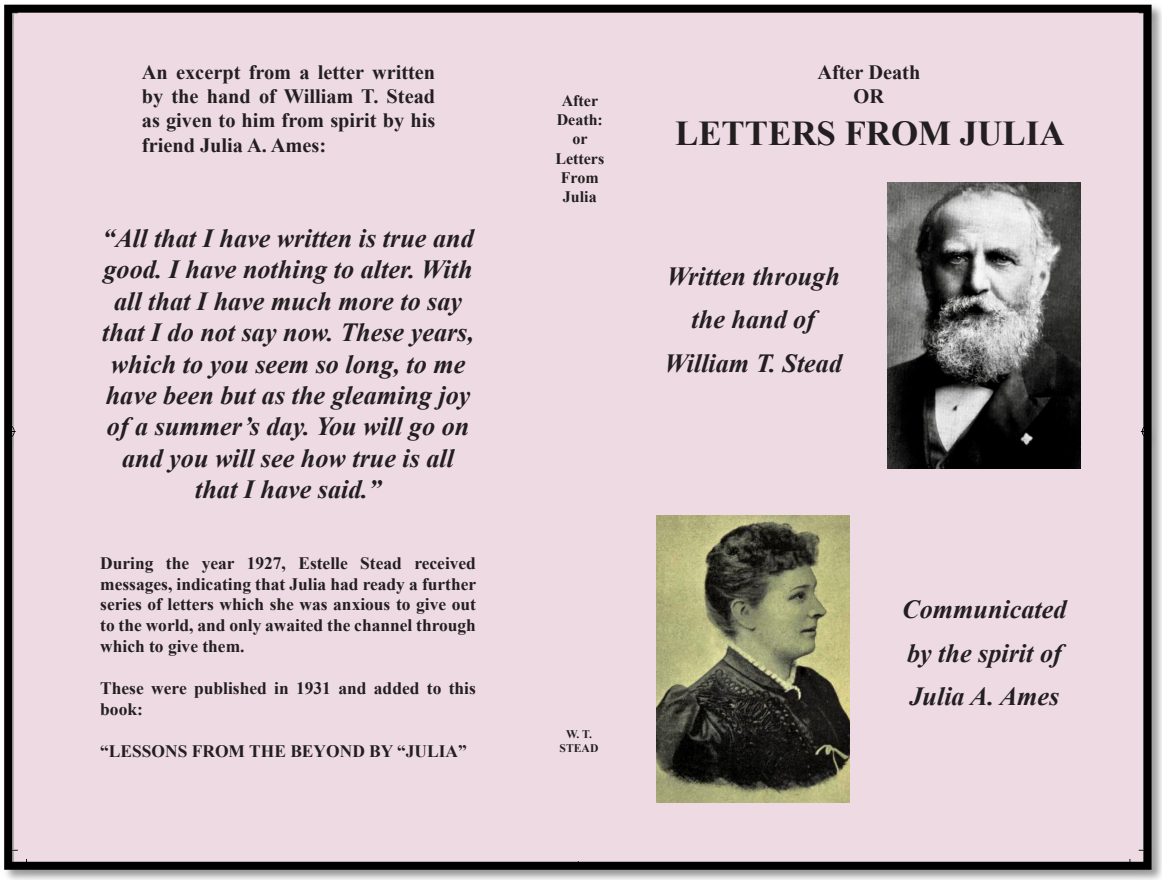
"When the Bureau was opened in 1914 there were very few centres; now doors are open and opening all over London and the provinces for the seekers after knowledge and the sad who need comfort.

"To the members and workers who have so loyally supported me I give sincere thanks, and I gratefully acknowledge all I owe to Mrs. Bayley Worthington, our President, who made it possible for the Bureau to open in 1914, [40] and has stood by me so faithfully all these years.

"When I close down this side of the work in April, I feel it will be au-revoir and not good-bye to many of you, for after a time of quiet and attention to personal affairs, I hope the work I am to do will bring me into touch with many of you again".

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As noted, the Bureau was originally conceived through Stead's automatic scripts from the spirit of Julia A. Ames. In 1897 Stead published in his Borderland some of the automatic scripts, "Letters from Julia", in volume form, entitled "After Death".



Available at the Arthur Findlay College bookshop, and on the Spiritualists' National Union website.

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[40] Mrs. Bayley Worthington provided rent for rooms for two years.

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February 28th - March 6th 2026

June 6th - June 12th 2026

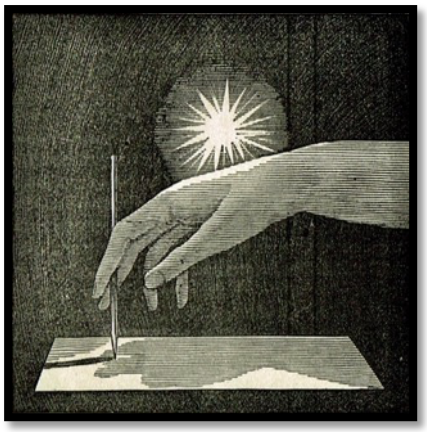
August 29th - September 4th 2026

All those intending to book should contact me first to make sure any specialised subject material is available:

curator@snu.org.uk

“Direct Phenomena”

Going back to the early history of “Direct Phenomena”, the article shown here below gives the reader the atmosphere of the times in which our pioneers worked; in these early days Spiritualism was mainly practised in a religious aura. The article notes the pioneering work and influence of the mediums and investigators recorded in it, which are still visible today, and their legacy lives on, although their names are now mostly forgotten.

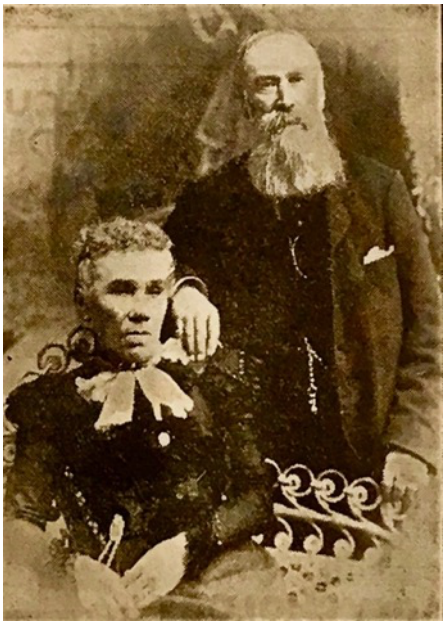


The phase of “Direct Phenomena” highlighted in this article is direct writing and the examples covered are during the early period of the 1870s. William Stainton Moses in 1876 [41] coined a name for direct–independent writing, so as to distinguish it from automatic or passive writing, which he categorised as “psychography”. [42]

The referenced séances in the article emphasise the value today of the Britten Museum and Library, for today’s researchers as to the original volumes referenced to in these reports; “Light” and “The Spiritualist” can be read and studied in full in our Research and Study Weeks, as shown elsewhere in this issue.

The Everitts were first acquainted with Spiritualism in 1857. In November 1867 an audible spirit voice was first obtained through the mediumship of Mrs Everitt, who was thrown into a trance sleep for the first time, and the spirit of John Watt first made himself known. Mrs Everitt was probably the first direct-voice medium in this country.

The article is taken from Edward T. Bennett’s book, “The Direct Phenomena of Spiritualism”, published in 1908, chapter IV, “Direct” Phenomena in the Presence of Mrs. Everitt, pages 36-42:



Mr. and Mrs. Everitt never gave public séances. What are ordinarily called test-conditions were not imposed. The phenomena were allowed to arise and proceed in their own way. Those present were as visitors to a host and hostess. As time went on, and as Mr. Everitt gradually retired from the active business life in which he had been engaged, Mr. and Mrs. Everitt used to take long tours principally in the North of England, a sort of missionary tours, visiting many of the local Societies and Congregations of Spiritualists, which are numerous in the towns of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Durham, many of them consisting mainly of persons connected with mining. Mr. Everitt was always much liked and appreciated, at Sunday and other meetings, on these tours. It was on a journey of this kind that his earthly life terminated with

[41] William Stainton Moses founded the College of Psychic Studies, originally called the London Spiritualist Alliance, on October 25th 1883, seven years prior to the SNU, which was then called the Spiritualists’ National Federation; Moses himself was a strong advocate of National Spiritualism.

[42] “Psychography: A Treatise on one of the Objective Forms of Psychic or Spiritual Phenomena,” published under the pseudonym “M.A. (OXON.)” in 1878 by W. H. Harrison (founder editor of “The Spiritualist”), London.

tragic suddenness, from heart failure, at the house of a friend, on the 5th of August, 1905, at the age of eighty-one.

But little is known of this phase of "Spiritualism" in the South of England. In some places its quiet influence is great. It is distinctly a religious movement. In the entire absence of any ecclesiastical organisation, in there being no separate class of ministers, in there being no recognised form of creed, to which adherence is asked, and in the equal position occupied by men and women, there is much that is in common with the Quakerism of the latter half of the 17th century. Indeed, it might be claimed that in some respects it is more nearly representative of original Quakerism than is the present Society of Friends. Few phenomena, however, appear to develop, except trance-speaking, but in connection with this there is a large unexplored field, which would certainly repay the study of an enquirer who would enter upon it with an open mind.

To return to Mrs. Everitt. As it was with Mr. Duguid, [43] so I believe it is with Mrs. Everitt, that no allusion to her work occurs in any of the publications of the Society for Psychical Research, nor in "Human Personality." Mr. Myers had, I believe, a few sittings with Mrs. Everitt, but her séances were not of a character to afford opportunity for his method of investigation.

The only purpose of these biographical paragraphs is to give the reader a general idea of Mr. and Mrs. Everitt, and what sort of persons they were.

On the 11th of April, 1870, a séance was held at Mr. Everitt's house, one feature of which he thus describes:—"We all heard the pencil moving rapidly. On lighting a candle we found a sheet of paper covered with writing. At the foot was written 'Do not touch the paper more than is necessary to read it. I will give you more if the influence is not disturbed.' We again put out the light, and soon we heard the pencil making the same noise. On re-lighting the candle we found the other side of the same paper also filled with writing." I do not mean to say that the evidence of such a case as this—standing alone—would be of value. It must be taken in conjunction with a large number of others. But presuming Mr. Everitt to be a man who observed ordinary common-sense conditions, and spoke the truth, the second side of the sheet of paper must have been covered with writing, written in the dark, and executed in a very short space of time. There was no necessity here for uninterrupted attention, lest some sleight-of-hand trick should have been performed. [44]

At a séance held at the house of the Everitt's, on December 7th, 1870, two instances of "direct" writing occurred. Mrs. Hardinge Britten was one of the sitters. The following is from Mr. Everitt's contemporary record of the séance, by kind permission of Mr. A. J. Sutton, his son-in-law.

"We had not been sitting long [in the dark] when Mrs. Britten exclaimed:—'Well, that is strange. A portion of the ceiling seems to have dissolved, and a spirit has passed through into the room above.' Almost before she had finished the sentence, a large book came flap, flap, flapping down from the ceiling, like the extended wings of a large bird, on to the table. This book had been locked in a drawer in my room over where we were sitting for some months previous. There it was, upon the table, when we lighted up. Again the light was put out. Instantly the book was taken up, and we could hear the leaves being rapidly turned. We could hear the tick of the pencil. Suddenly the book fell on the table. We lighted up instantly, and found writing on four pages.

[43] See Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 4: "Trance & Direct Spirit Art – David Duguid".

[44] See the *Spiritualist* newspaper for 15th March, 1872.

The book was one which had been sent by Mr. F. Hockley as a present to Mrs. Everitt, and was entitled 'The Church of the Firstborn as uncovered by the Sun of Righteousness. The Seven Seals to St. John in the island of Patmos. Illustrated and Explained.' The writings were on the margins of the pages, immediately opposite the illustrations, and gave a description of the symbols. This had been wished for by Mr. F. Hockley."

The following three cases belong to a group of which the number seems to be small, where the "direct" writing is more or less identical with matter that had previously appeared in print, though given as if it were original. These cases may prove to be analogous to some we have considered of "direct" drawing, where what is drawn is found to be more or less of a facsimile of some existing drawing. [45] I am indebted for this case to Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, whose name will be familiar to many readers of these pages, and whose experiences of spiritualistic phenomena probably exceed in number and variety those of any one else now living. In sending me the particulars of this case in a recent letter, Mr. Dawson Rogers says:—"The most completely proven cases of direct writing of which I know are those of Mrs. Everitt. As to many of them I can personally testify to their genuineness beyond dispute. . . . My first séance with Mrs. Everitt was on May 3rd, 1870, at her home, 26, Penton Street [London]. The other sitters were Mr. Everitt, Mr. F. Hockley, Dr. Thompson, Mr. Keningale Cook, and Mr. Taylor, Editor of the *Journal of Photography*.

Before the séance I had a long talk with Mrs. Everitt, in which I endeavoured to form an estimate of her mental acquirements and capabilities. Accordingly when we began the séance, I thought I would ask a question, which Mrs. Everitt herself could not possibly answer. 'John Watt' [46] spoke, and promised to give us some direct writing, and I thereupon said: 'Please give us a definition of the distinction between the Will and the Understanding.' Paper and pencil had been placed on the table, and in eight seconds, or perhaps ten, on lighting up, we found a direct and intelligent answer to the question, containing over 150 words. Its phrasing was peculiar. I afterwards found it was an extract from one of Swedenborg's writings, with a few slight alterations, and an extract such as it would be extremely difficult for anyone to carry in his memory. Certainly Mrs. Everitt could never do it. One of Mrs. E.'s spirit attendants is said to be a gentleman who had been a distinguished Swedenborgian Minister."

The message in "direct" writing referred to above runs thus:—

"You all possess understanding and will. Your understanding is the receiver of truth, and is formed from that truth; and your will is the receiver of good, and is formed from that good. Hence, whatever a man understands and thinks, he calls true, and what you will and think, you call good. You are capable of thinking from your understanding, and perceiving what is true and good, but you do not think from your will unless you will and do what your understanding approves. When you thus will and do, truth is both in the understanding and the will, and therefore in the man, because the understanding does not constitute the man, nor the will alone, but both together. If it is in the understanding only, it is with you, but not in you, for that would be only a thing of the memory, or science in the memory. The power is going. Gd. Nt."

The last two words evidently mean "good night."

The passage in Swedenborg's writings, with which Mr. Dawson Rogers afterwards found the above was almost identical, runs thus:—

[45] A remarkable case is to be found with the mediumship of David Duguid; this will be recounted in the next issue of Pioneer.

[46] See Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 2: "Spirits Speak on the Telephone".

"Something shall now be said concerning the conjunction of the understanding and the will. . . . Man possesses understanding and will; the understanding is the recipient of truths, and is formed from them, and the will is the recipient of goods, and is formed from them. Hence, therefore, whatever a man understands and thence thinks, he calls true; and whatever he wills and thence thinks, he calls good. Man is capable of thinking from the understanding, and thence of perceiving what is true and good; but he does not think from the will, unless he wills and does what the understanding approves. When he thus wills and acts, truth is both in the understanding and the will, and is consequently in the man; for the understanding alone does not constitute the man, nor the will alone, but the understanding and the will together; and therefore that which is in both the will and the understanding is in the man, and is appropriated to him. What is in the understanding only is indeed *with* man, but is not *in* him; for it is only a thing of memory, and of science in the memory, of which he can think when he is not *in* himself, but *out* of himself with others." [47]

Excepting for a want of uniformity of composition in the "direct" writing in regard to the use of the second and third person the two paragraphs are practically identical. The "direct" writing leaves off in the middle of a sentence, without however destroying all meaning, and the intelligence writing could only add, "The power is going, good night."

Several other messages given by "direct" writing besides the one already given, from Swedenborg, proved on investigation to be quotations from books, well or little known, some very ancient. In most cases they were such as the sitters said they had never seen or heard of. But this is a matter on which it is, of course, very difficult to be certain.

One of the most obscure quotations given in this manner was written at a séance held at Mr. Everitt's house, 26, Penton Street, London, on the 15th of November, 1870. There were present on this occasion Mr. (now Sir William) Crookes, F.R.S., Mr. S. Carter Hall, Serjeant Cox, [48] Rev. Dr. Burns, and others. Two messages were given by "direct" writing. The first had reference to Simonides and Dionysius. Mr. Alfred J. Sutton, son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Everitt, has kindly sent me the following quotations from Mr. Everitt's contemporary records. Mr. Everitt gives the second message thus:—"Another time we will give you what we have been taught in the Spirit World upon this great subject. 'Religentum esse oportet Religiosum nefas.' You will find the meaning in Incerti Autoris Aprice Aut. Gell." Mr. Everitt goes on to say:—"No one present could give me direct translation. Mr. Crookes, through a friend in the London University, found the passage in Aulus Gellius, Book 4th, Canto 9." Gellius was a poet who lived in the reign of Adrian in the second century.

On another occasion a piece of writing signed "R.B." was given purporting to come from Richard Baxter, the author of "The Saints Rest." A friend, on hearing of this, sent Mr. Everitt a copy of the book in which he found the identical passage.

The following is a description of a séance at which I was present on November 7th, 1871. A report was written immediately afterwards and appeared in the *Spiritualist* of Dec. 15th, 1871. That report is, substantially, reproduced here.

The circle met at the house of the Everitt's at 8 p.m., and consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Everitt, Mr. Frank Everitt, Miss Nisbet, Mr. Hockley, Mr. Cogman, [49] Mr. Haase, Mr.

[47] This passage will be found in a volume entitled:—"Concerning Heaven and its wonders, and concerning Hell." Translated from the Latin of Emanuel Swedenborg. (W. Newbery: London Edition of 1850, p. 224, par. 423).

[48] Editor's note: Serjeant Cox coined the name "Psychic Force", firstly used by William Crookes in his investigations with D. D. Home, Florence Cook, etc.

[49] Editor's note: Early in December 1870, "The College of Mediums" was founded at the James Burns Spiritual Institution (Pioneer, Vol. 7, No. 3), with Mr Cogman as its first President. During January 1871 a term/course of

Mawson, and myself. After a hymn had been sung, and after part of a Psalm, chosen by means of raps, had been read, we were instructed how to sit. Strong perfumed breezes were then felt. Prayer was offered by Mr. Everitt, and two more hymns were sung. The light was then extinguished in obedience to raps. A number of the so-called "spirit-lights" were then seen. Just before 9 o'clock I was conscious of a strange feeling as of the presence of some one standing over me, and turned my head round in the dark, almost expecting to see something. Suddenly, there was a sound as of paper rustling in the air a foot or two above the table, and a noise as of a pencil making detached strokes on it. This continued while Mr. Everitt counted six seconds, when there was a sound as of the pencil and paper falling on to the table. A light was now struck. Before me lay a sheet of paper which I had initialled, and which I had seen was blank just previous to the commencement of the séance.

The greater part of one side was covered with small fine writing, legible only in parts with some difficulty. The paragraph consisted of 210 words and was signed—"Fox, Penington, 1647." It should be remarked that none of the company except myself were in any way connected with the Quakers; nor, so far as I could learn, did anyone but myself know the name of Penington, who was a contemporary and intimate friend of Fox. Mr. Cogman said that while the writing was going on he saw a tall female figure in a flowing golden robe, as if standing on the table. But he was unable to give a more definite description. The light was then again extinguished. Almost immediately the voice known in the circle as that of "John Watt" was heard:—"Good evening, friends." Then as if addressing me:—"Well, Edward, have you got what you want?"

E.T.B.:—"Yes. We have a paragraph signed Fox and Penington."
J.W.—"Yes. George Fox and Isaac Penington."
This was said slowly and deliberately.
E.T.B.:—"Can you tell us, John, who actually did the writing ?"

In reply, the name of a well-known Quaker lady who had left this world some years previously, was given. I do not publish it, as it might not be agreeable to some of her friends.

Conversation then took place between "John Watt" and others of the circle, concluding with his peremptorily requesting Miss Nisbet to get some coffee, and the séance concluded by 10 o'clock. My report, published in the *Spiritualist* 36 years ago, concludes thus:—"Now, I am not prepared to assert my belief that the individual spirits of George Fox and Isaac Penington were engaged in transmitting this message. But strong evidence is here presented of the occurrence of extraordinary phenomena of a very interesting character."

Mr. E. Dawson Rogers is responsible for the following:—"We were holding our customary family sitting (with the Everitt's) in the dark, when our attention was caught by a sound like that of a succession of very rapid ticks with the point of a pencil on a piece of paper held in the air. When paper and pencil fell upon the table, a match was struck, and the following message found written in a small neat hand." The message is then given. It purports to be from "Annie Blower," who was once Mrs. Everitt's Sunday

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six Wednesday evenings at the Spiritual Institution would cost 5s. Although this College was fairly short-lived, it is an interesting part of history; it was post-1876, following the publication of *Art Magic* (edited by Emma Hardinge Britten), that the concept of any college/school was popularised. Robert Cogman (1810-1876) was the first in London to establish a successful training school for mediumship. His *East End Spiritual Institution* was responsible for helping many mediums develop, such as James J. Morse, Frank Herne, Miss Eagar (later Mrs Wallis) and E.W. Wallis. Edward Walter Wallis (Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 5) would later credit Cogman and his "School of the Prophets", as he called it. Some of Cogman's students became key figures in the foundations of the National Federation/SNU. See Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 2018: – First Public Developing Circles – Robert Cogman & Mrs. Mary Main.

School Teacher. The subject was "Life in the Spirit World." Mr. Rogers adds—"This communication, consisting of 280 words, was written, as nearly as we could estimate, in the brief space of ten or twelve seconds, on a piece of my own headed note-paper."—See *Light* for Nov. 11th, 1882.

In *Light* for Jan. 13th, 1883, a statement is made that at one of Mr. and Mrs. Everitt's ordinary circles, at which six friends were present, a message of over 550 words was written, as nearly as could be estimated in about five seconds. The message commences with what professes to be a Latin quotation from Cicero. The subject of the message itself is "Worthy Thoughts."

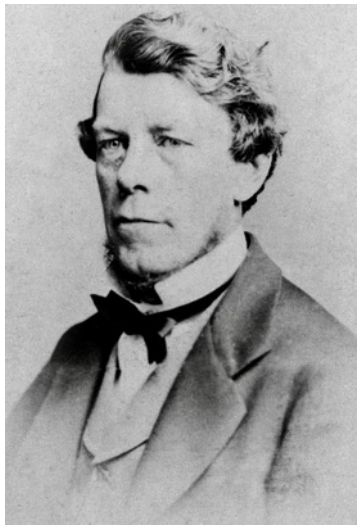
Mr. J. Braund, of Chartreuse, Vineyard Road, Richmond, Surrey, who describes the following incident, is personally known to me as a serious investigator, He says:—

"An interesting experience of direct spirit-writing was obtained through the mediumship of Mrs. Everitt. I, and a friend, the Rev. J. C. G., sought permission from Mrs. Everitt, who kindly offered us every facility. I initialled and dated a sheet of clean notepaper, and placed it without a pencil in one of the compartments of an ordinary writing desk. We locked the desk and retained the key. We also tightly bound the desk with tape, the important knots being sealed and stamped with our signets. One of the seals covered the opening of the desk, rendering it impossible to be opened without fracturing the seal. After an interval of a few days intimation was received that a message had been written. It was arranged to open the desk in the presence of several friends. The seals were intact. The desk was in the same condition in which we left it. On opening it, we found, on my initialed paper, the following communication, written in a small and regular hand, apparently with a blacklead pencil, and without producing the slightest indentation in the paper:—"We cannot comply with any more writing in this way; it is only proof to those who witness it, none whatever, you will find to those minds who want proof for themselves." "J. Watt." On the envelope were these words:—"There is no power for any more." [50]—KATIE ROGERS.

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These early 1870s reports on direct writing take us back to the very early foundation of the direct, independent days of physical mediumship. This, with other early forms of direct mediumship, e.g., slate writing, direct art as mentioned by David Duguid, would develop from the dark séances to what is generally called mental mediumship, e.g., trance, passive, automatic writing, etc.

Edward Trusted Bennett
July 1st 1831-November 16th 1908



"Light" is one of the oldest spiritualistic journals and is still in existence today. It was founded by Edmund Dawson Rogers, with the first issue appearing on January 8th 1881 and published by the Eclectic Publishing Company, Limited. Edward Bennett was the Secretary.

Bennett was also Secretary of the 'British National Association of Spiritualists' B.N.A.S., Council, Experimental Research Committee, Séance Committee, and General Purposes Committee, working closely with Stainton Moses, Edmund Dawson Rogers, etc. Later he became the first Secretary of the Society for Psychical Research.

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[50] For a rather fuller account of this experiment see "Light", March 24th 1894.

Pioneer ends its twelfth volume

Pioneer was launched at the Torquay AGM 2013, replacing the SNU hardback magazine of the same title; a special edited edition of the first issue was published for the delegates.

The front page noted:

> *The foundations of the Spiritualists' National Union were laid over a long period of time, and its growth ensured by dedicated pioneers, many of whom have been forgotten. Most readers will be unacquainted with their names and the roles they so valiantly played in the building of the SNU, an organisation that today stands firm due to their bold efforts.*

This journal is dedicated to those Pioneers.

To date it has published 2,300 pages of researched materials; it is read in various societies, such as the Society for Psychical Research. It is recommended reading for the SNU education courses; it is also used by universities and has attracted numerous students and on occasion their professors to attend the Britten Museum and Library Research – Study Weeks, as noted elsewhere in this issue.

In the last year individual subscribers have substantially increased, rising to 4,200; in addition, it is sent out to SNUi members and is available on the SNU website.

Extended thanks are due to the late David Hopkins and Leslie Price, who sub-edited the early issues of the journal.

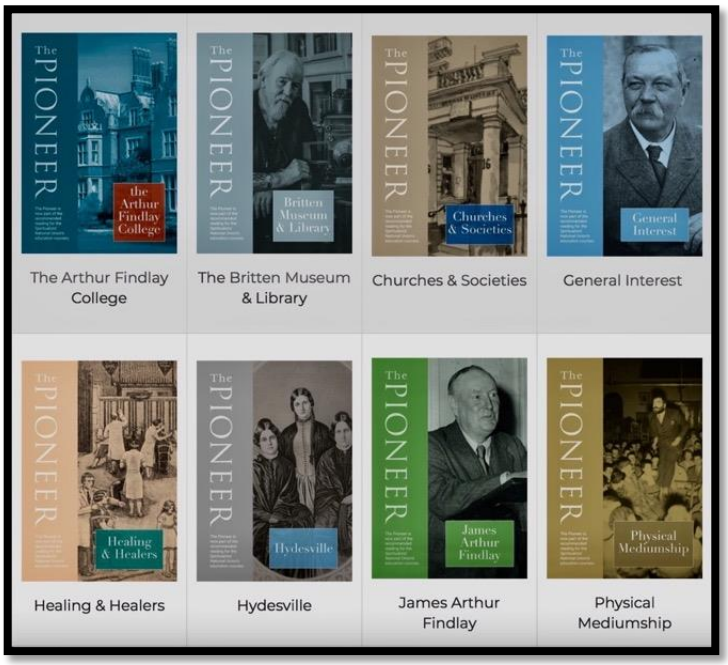


All the very best wishes for the New Year 2026

Editor Paul J. Gaunt and sub-editor, former SNU General Secretary, Charles Coulston

NEW SNU PIONEER PAGE

Looking for a specific subject?



All the articles published in Pioneer over the last twelve years have been grouped together within their category as much as possible

A selection of important subjects from the history of the Spiritualists' National Union.

Designed to cover key topics for anyone studying one of our courses or for anyone looking to further their knowledge on the history of our movement.

https://snu.org.uk/the-pioneer-journal/

The Pioneer journal is a unique insight into the history of the Spiritualists' National Union and its pioneers.



