PSYPIONEER

Founded by Leslie Price **Editor Paul J. Gaunt**

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MAURICE BARBANELL

May 3rd 1902 – July 17th 1981

And

PSYCHIC NEWS

In the August Newsletter 'The SNU and History'[1] Leslie Price looked at the redesigned SNU web site under, "Important Dates" web page *"1932 Psychic News founded by Arthur Findlay under the editorship of Maurice Barbanell.*[2] *"*. Findlay did not found Psychic News. Psychic News was founded by Maurice Barbanell.

In Psypioneer January 2005[3], we discussed the origin of "Psychic News in Perspective". Below is printed an article written by Barbanell and published on the front and second page of P.N., May 20th 1939 Although it repeats some of the January 05 article, it does clearly show how *Psychic News* came into being and survived its first 7 years.

[1] http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.8August07..pdf
[2] http://www.snu.org.uk/snu/dates.htm
[3] http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP9.pdf

Three "Dead" Men Began Psychic News

By The Editor

POLICY OF *PSYCHIC NEWS* WAS LAID DOWN IN THE SPIRIT WORLD

BECAUSE of three "dead" men you are reading these words. Two of them belong to that much misunderstood race, the North American Indians. The other is Lord Northcliffe, the creator of the `Daily Mail" and the founder of modern, popular journalism.

These three men were responsible for the advent of *Psychic News* seven years ago. Behind the founding of this paper there is a remarkable story of spirit planning and guidance. It came into existence as part of a campaign which originated in the spirit world.

Even the name *Psychic News* was chosen by the Other Side[4]. After I decided to use it I was told of a seance at which W. T. Stead spoke in the direct voice, informing the sitters that a new paper called *Psychic News* was shortly to be launched. That was months before the first issue.

I had been chosen to be the Editor, though when *Psychic News* began I had no practical knowledge of journalism. Theoretically I knew from Hannen Swaffer[5] something about how newspapers are produced. Our friendship began shortly after his inquiry into Spiritualism when he set out to prove Northcliffe's survival.

For three years Swaffer and I conducted a propaganda tour and addressed a quarter of a million people - a record that has never been equalled. We spoke in nearly every large town in this country.

Once we addressed three meetings on one Sunday. We spoke at Maesteg in the morning, Merthyr Tydfil in the afternoon and Cardiff in the evening. Then we motored back to London, arriving home after four in the morning. And I had motored down to South Wales on the Saturday afternoon and spoke at a meeting at Caerau that night.

In those three years, sitting up half the night talking, in conversations on trains, in cars and hotels, I learned a great deal about journalism from Swaffer.

My days, however, were spent in the world of commerce. I held some directorships, had my own business and owned some properties. I was fairly prosperous for

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[4] Barbanell wrote Swaffer's obituary in 'Two Worlds' March 1962 page 579, (Barbanell was its editor at this time) Barbanell states: - *its name* (Psychic News) *was finally decided in Swaff's flat.*

[5] Hannen Swaffer 1st November 1879 – 16th January 1962.

many years. Then came a series of misfortunes, culminating in the slump of 1931, when things were very black. I was compelled to sell nearly everything I possessed.

I had to wind up my own business and my income came from one directorship, but as that meant attendance at a board meeting for a few hours once a month I was virtually unemployed.

Just about that time Swaffer and I were approached to give editorial assistance to a proposed psychic weekly. Nothing, however, came of it. The scheme petered out.

One day, to my surprise, Swaffer's business manager, J. M. Rubens, a non-Spiritualist who was winding up one of my companies, suggested I should start a psychic paper.

He is well-known in Fleet Street and he thought there was a need for a Spiritualist paper on modern journalistic lines. He even offered to put up some capital though he was not convinced of our truths.

When he made this startling suggestion I recalled a seance with Alfred Vout Peters at which his guide said - and I am quoting from my notes made at the time-*"W. T. Stead is interested in you. You have a journalistic urge in your fingers. Cultivate your writing powers. Later on you are going to do writing work. I see association with Hannen Swaffer. You will contribute to the newspapers. Try to make your writing short and crisp."*

TWO SEANCES PROPHECIES

That was more than eight years ago, at a time when I could see no possibility of the prediction being fulfilled.

I remembered, too, that Red Cloud, speaking through Estelle Roberts a month before Rubens threw out the suggestion, had said to me when discussing my troubles, *"We have plenty for you to do. Our plans are already made. They only have to materialise in your world. You are going forward to do a bigger work."*

On the day that I saw Rubens I had later on a private sitting with Red Cloud. He surprised me by referring to Rubens's proposal. This was the work I had been chosen to do, he said, and if I would start the new paper, he and others in the spirit world would give it their whole-hearted support. I argued with Red Cloud, but it was all in vain.

I pointed out that I was a business man, not a journalist. Surely I was not the person for the job. In any case it was a vital decision to make - to abandon my idea of a commercial career for psychic journalism at the age of 30. I wanted time to consider it.

My commercial and financial troubles, this guide insisted, were all part of the plan. I was to sever my business ties and learn to be dependent on spirit guidance.

I knew I was being asked to make the biggest decision of my life. Though I had confidence in Red Cloud, a guide who had proved his ability and had earned my respect, I decided that on so important a matter I required confirmation.

THE RIGHT MEDIUM

I searched for a medium to whom I was unknown. I had been a public speaker for Spiritualism for twelve years and knew most of them. At last I found the medium I wanted - Kathleen Barkel. We had never met and at that time she had done hardly any public work, confining her mediumship to giving private seances.

Usually you had to wait months to get a sitting with her, but when I inquired, someone had just cancelled an appointment, and she was able to see me within a few days. I went anonymously and it was obvious she did not know me.

I waited eagerly for her guide, White Hawk, to control, wondering; if I would obtain the confirmation I desired. The ground was already prepared for my work, he said, which was connected with Spiritualism. I would start these activities in two months. His prophecy was accurate, for *Psychic News* made its appearance two months later.

CO-OPERATION IN THE BEYOND

Then came a remark which proved how closely associated are these spirit guides. *"You know Red Cloud," he said. Then he added that the proposal in which I was interested had already been outlined to me by Red Cloud. "Everything is prepared." he said. "All is arranged as far as we are concerned. It has only to work out in the material world. You must accept that proposal."*

Now this was almost word for word what Red Cloud had said. To obtain closer contact the guide then asked me to hand him any article that belonged to me. I gave him my fountain-pen. As I placed it in the medium's hands it began to leak, something it had never done before.

"That is Northcliffe's fault," declared the spirit. "He is here and says he always upsets pens" - an ingenious reference to the famous newspaper proprietor's vigorous journalistic activities. "He comes in connection with the newspaper," added the guide, "and he says, 'Go ahead with it."'

Then he told me that Northcliffe was dissatisfied with psychic journalism as then presented. Northcliffe's words, as relayed by Mrs. Barkel's guide, were. "It's about time something was done with common sense - too much sickly sentiment - there is opportunity for great growth and much spread of knowledge - he is amazed at the lack of guts. Get it on a strong basis and it will be of world-wide consequence."

Well, I had obtained the confirmation I wanted. The medium could not have known what I was after. I made the fateful decision to become the editor of a Spiritualist newspaper. The sequel was extraordinary.

A few days later I went down to Estelle Roberts's home to talk to Red Cloud. I said nothing about my visit to Kathleen Barkel. The first words spoken by Red Cloud, when he entranced his medium, were, *"Are you satisfied now that you have been to my brother White Hawk?"* Red Cloud knew.

I asked him whether he objected to my going, but he said he understood how I felt. There and then Red Cloud, speaking on behalf of others whom he said were present - and he referred to Northcliffe and Stead among others - outlined the policy of *Psychic News.*

It had to be bright. I was told. It had to be fearless. It had to "Stand for the truth and fear no man." The one thing impressed upon me was to print the evidence for Survival. And Red Cloud promised to provide these proofs.

I would like to place on record that for seven years he has kept his promise and has been responsible for enabling us to print accounts of the spirit return of famous men and women that have aroused world-wide interest.

GUIDE KEEPS HIS PROMISE

Well, *Psychic News* was launched. Actually, its first number was issued a week earlier than originally planned because of the Meurig Morris - "Daily Mail" lawsuit, which was the subject of comment in newspapers all over the land. It gave us an opportunity for an outstanding front page.

"I CHALLENGE THE `DAILY MAIL," it was headed, and it was written by Hannen Swaffer. Yes, the very first[6] issue of Psychic News began with a challenging note on its front page!

I must tell you how *Psychic News* was financed. Actually the paper was started on the ridiculously small capital of just over £600 - half subscribed by Rubens and the other half by myself, which I borrowed from a friend. And Rubens, the non-Spiritualist, guaranteed the bank and other accounts and gave personal references where necessary!

OTHER-SIDE GUIDANCE

When I pointed out to Red Cloud, "It is all very well to talk about a new paper, but where is the money coming from'?" he replied, "Do not worry; we will attend to that." And they did!

When planning the first issue I had an idea for an article. It was to get Arthur Findlay, author of "On The Edge Of The Etheric," Spiritualism's best-seller, to say in *Psychic News* why he wrote the book. Findlay called in to see me and we discussed the article, which he agreed to write.

[6] Saturday May 28th 1932.

That night I had another seance with Red Cloud. To my surprise the spirit guide volunteered, "The man who is to finance `Psychic News' has called to see you today. His name is Findlay. Approach him on the subject."

I discussed this question with Arthur Findlay and he readily agreed. Again I should like to put on record that in seven years of close co-operation there has never been an angry word between us; neither has there been any disagreement on policy.

We agreed from the start that *Psychic News* had to be run on commercial lines, and its success, or failure, judged by commercial standards.

For three years the paper lost money; but Findlay never complained. Indeed, he found whatever sum was necessary. The corner was turned with the fourth year[7], and ever since *Psychic News* has paid its way.

The two libel actions we had to defend this year may break our record, but they are only chapters in the history of a newspaper.

I shall not tell of my troubles in producing the first number. I did not leave the printers on press night until three in the morning. It was a nightmare.

The first issue was received with fixed feelings. A few weeks before the paper appeared it was the subject of violent comment, some declaring, "Another Spiritualist weekly is not necessary," others being eager to see what we would produce.

ONE EDITOR'S COMMENT

One Spiritualist editor, whom I shall not name, wrote me a most discouraging letter. He had heard of my proposed journalistic ventures, he said, and added, "Frankly I am sorry that you find it necessary to change from business to journalism."

The reception given to *Psychic News,* on the whole, was very enthusiastic. There were, of course, those who exclaimed "It is too sensational," "It cannot last a week." But they were in the minority.

From the first number we had the largest circulation of any Spiritualist newspaper in the world, a position we have since proudly maintained. Today, our net paid circulation, which is approaching 25,000, exceeds the combined circulation of all English Spiritualist journals.

Psychic News broke new ground. Though it was not subsidised it was, and still is, the only English Spiritualist weekly to pay its way - and to make a profit.

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[7] In the December 5th issue of P.N., 1936 Barbanell dropped a libel suit against the Rev. J.W. Potter. Which does not directly concern this article, but an interesting remark by Barbanell was made: -

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.

NEW PUBLIC FOUND

It reached the man-in-the-street. Here was a modern newspaper, with news on the front page, boldly proclaiming the facts of Spiritualism. It was independent, for it belonged to no section, group or Spiritualist society.

Soon, our familiar green and white posters were to be seen in many of London's main thoroughfares.

Our Spiritualist contemporaries paid us the compliment of imitation. They changed their make-up and modelled themselves, more or less, on the format of *Psychic News.*

From the first number *Psychic News* adopted a bold policy. Because it was independent, it could criticise Spiritualists and the weaknesses of the movement.

It helped to change the Press attitude towards our truths and forced newspapers to realise that the evidences for Survival were as newsworthy as any other events recorded in their pages.

We are proud of the part we have played in giving comfort, hope and knowledge to thousands.

Looking back on our seven years of history, there is nothing that we regret.

Still, trusting to that spirit guidance which conceived this newspaper, we face the future unafraid, knowing that *Psychic News* can help to give the vital blow to the materialism which is the cancer of our modern civilisation.

[**Note by Psypioneer**: - In next months issue we will continue with: - *Maurice Barbanell's own account of how his psychic quest began. 'Editor's six-month psychic probe lasted for six decades'*.]

[**Note by Psypioneer: -** Psypioneer has now changed its postal address although all e-mail addresses remain the same. Thank you to those who have purchased Psypioneer's first publication '*Six Lectures on Theology and Nature*' by Emma Hardinge. The book was priced higher than I would have liked, this being due to the original fragile pages having to be very carefully scanned by hand at the printers.

This move has unfortunately set me back *again* with the start of the Emma Hardinge Britten website. I must firstly get my library into good stead to continue our work on this monthly publication. Much interest has been shown in this intended site, but with work commitments and sorting out the library etc, realistically this will probably not now be starting until the New Year.

The new *postal address* for Psypioneer is: 6, South View, Prixford, Devon. EX31 4DY U.K. The published address in the Hardinge book is now <u>not</u> used. PJG]

EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN
IN 1870

Below is printed a couple of newspaper reports on the activity of Emma Hardinge, not from the Spiritualist press but from the daily newspapers of the day. Although not always favourable, they are a little humorous, and give us some idea as to the visual presence and presentation of the platform work of Emma Hardinge Britten.

Emma became Mrs. Britten in this year, but continued to use the name Mrs. Hardinge for some time; this is evident at the Cleveland Hall address, London April 30th 1871[8].

Also this year Emma, as Hardinge, published *Modern American Spiritualism* which was written in England, commenced in 1867 and finally completed in 1868. But publication was delayed until 1870. In November of this year she and her husband returned briefly to England.

Below is taken from the: - 'New York Herald' Monday March 7th 1870 page 4

THE SPIRITUALISTS CONCLAVE

An Attitudinizing Oratress – Mrs. Hardinge Demolishing Christianity

A heterogenous mass of humanity assembles yesterday morning at the Everett Rooms to listen to the wonderful words of wisdom that were expected to fall from the inspired lips of that noted expounder of the mysteries of "Spiritualism," Mrs. Emma Hardinge. The fair lady entered leaning on the arm of a gentleman. She was attired in a magnificent black velvet dress, white opera cloak and white boa, hair curled *a la mode,* point lace cuffs and collar, an elegant watch and chain, and many brilliant rings adorned her fair hands. When one saw her approach the thought suggested itself, "What a length of train behind." This train, by the way, seemed to occasion her much anxiety, for she was constantly adjusting it while speaking, reminding one of Ione Burke in the play of "The Duke's Motto."

While the "choir" executed some really fine music the lady sat, "her eyes in fine frenzy rolling," and at the close of their song, when she offered an invocation, she looked like "Pythoness possessed." She ought to be told the story of the little boy who decided that "the preacher prayed too much." Undoubtedly the fair lady knows that she has a fine physique and omits no opportunity to show it off. In truth one feels as if she was all the time attitudinizing. It was all like the Fourth of July oration of a country orator. Full of "glittering generalities," a sort of spread-eagleism, and the speaker never for one moment lost sight of that wonderful letter "I." Some of her hearers seemed to be very much composed. They slept very sweetly. One, named "Lazarus," seemed to feel as comfortable as if he were already reposing on "Abraham's bosom." She said some find things, but their beauty was destroyed by the extreme "staginess" of the manner. There seemed to be no heart in them.

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[8] http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/2.5%20PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf See: - page 95 this lecture will be re-printed in full once the E.H.B website is up and running.

She spoke as though she deemed it her mission was to demolish all the forms of religion that had ever been established on earth. Catholicism was declared to be an enormous assumption of power, and poor St. Peter – whom we all supposed to have had at least a little goodness and favour with his "Divine Master" – was declared to have been one of the meanest and most, despicable of all the saints. Protestants were declared to be time-servers, worshiping with lip and eye service, having no spirit of godliness. Unitarianism was a mere religion of negation. Spiritualism is the religion, *par excellence,* that will stand.

Below is taken from 'The New York Herald', Monday October 31st 1870 page 2

SPIRITUALISM

Address Last Evening at Apollo Hall by Mrs. Emma Hardinge.

Mrs. Emma Hardinge delivered her farewell address last evening at Apollo Hall previous to her departure for her native country – England. The audience, owing doubtless to the unpleasant state of the weather, was rather small. The usual quartette choir was in attendance, and sung some spiritualistic hymns in very pretty style. At eight o'clock Mrs. Hardinge entered the hall and ascended the platform. A lady of very fine presence she seemed, of about sixteen and twenty summers, with brown hair falling in wavy folds over a forehead of decidedly intellectual mould, with classic features and a complexion rosy and blooming. She was attired in a blue silk dress, with a black crape flounce and wore a white lace collar around her neck. After reciting a prayer with much fervor of tone and earnestness of manner she proceeded to deliver a discourse upon

THE FUTURE OF SPIRITUALISM

She is a very fluent and interesting speaker. She had a wondrous command of language and a fancy that delights to soar away beyond the shining stars to the distant realms of space – a fancy that revels in the things that are infinite and mysterious and poetically beautiful. For one who was not a spiritualist it was not easy to follow her in her lofty flights into the empyrean. As to what the future of spiritualism will be she did not give any very exact view. She said that this remarkable religious phenomenon was only in its infancy. It mattered not what deceptions might be practiced in its name, spiritualism proper possess certain generic facts, certain immutable principles upon which the most enlightened system of religion every yet vouchsafed to mankind would eventually be built up. Spiritualism was, like science, progressive. Already it had been the means of affording us a purer and clearer acquaintance with the infinite God and our wonderful destiny. The theological seers had long enough misguided the world, filling the minds of their followers with false and fearful notions of life, of the Great Spirit and of the future after death. We had not yet mastered the science of spiritualism but gradually it would unfold and reveal itself in all its sublimity and beauty to our view. Mrs. Hardinge concluded by reciting a beautiful poem entitled, "Over There." After which the audience dispersed.

And finally taken from The Ohio Democrat Friday Oct. 28, 1870

Marriage of Emma Hardinge

Married, at Grace Church Rectory, Jersey City, Tuesday October 11th, by Rev. L. Rice. EMMA HARDINGE to Wm. G. P. Britten, both of London, England.

Mrs. Hardinge is no more! – but "she still lives," – proving Spiritualism to be true. She is now the happy Mrs. Emma Britten; has married one of her own countrymen, Mr. Wm. G.P Britten, a gentleman of culture and a devoted Spiritualist. We wish them joy such as angels love to record. Having been born in England, she may now be regarded as really and truly a "Briton." – Cleveland *Spiritualist.*

Mrs Miller's Gift

A Celebration of 75 Years
Of the
Edinburgh College of Parapsychology
Formerly
Edinburgh Psychic College & Library

[**Note by Psypioneer: -** Psypioneer has been asked to review the above book authored by Gerald O'Hara & Ann Harrison,. Readers may recall that Leslie Price reviewed Gerald's first book '*Dead Men's Embers*' see: - Psypioneer 3.1[9].]

Below is printed the introduction of '*Mrs Miller's Gift*'[10], Psypioneer will be reviewing this latest contribution to early spiritualistic – psychical research history shortly.]

[9] http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.1January07..pdf
[10] This book is now available at: - 'Psychic News' bookshop on line at £7.50 + PP (Dead Men's Embers, is also available on this site @ £15. 99 + PP): - http://www.psychicnewsbookshop.co.uk/search.php

INTRODUCTION

"And there's another country,
I've heard of long ago,
Most dear to them who love her,
Most great to them who know"

These lines from the famous hymn, 'I Vow to Thee my Country' nicely express the comfort to be found in a belief and emphasise the importance of knowledge. In one sense the hymn expresses the old conundrum: how do I know what I know? The Edinburgh Psychic College and Library sought to provide a faculty to establish, via study a new basis in experience for that knowing. "I experience, therefore I know", was the brief that underwrote and still underwrites the work of the College.

For to know something is to have learned about it, to have endeavoured to understand, to have explored the facets of that which we try to comprehend. In founding a Psychic College, the brief was fundamentally to provide facilities for individuals to explore, learn about and comprehend the psychic aspects of humanity. It sought also to provide comfort for the bereaved and assumed that the student was approaching the study and experience of the soul of man. It was, and still is, customary to speak of the 'after life'. Yet this 'after life' was experienced not as something altogether removed from this life, as if it was an abstraction 'a country of which we know little; on the contrary this 'other country' was one that was experienced as impinging itself on the consciousness as a daily reality.

Ethel Maud Miller, in founding the Psychic College and Library (now the Edinburgh College of Parapsychology) in September 1932, would have known that to many the pursuit of knowledge of that 'other country' was a religious quest for greater consciousness, leading to union with the divine. To a few, it was a form of worship, whereas to others Psychism or Spiritualism was the scientific study of anomalous phenomena. While some in a materialisation seance, where spirit became matter, found in materialisation that matter had become spiritualised and that they had encountered the living forces as emanations of God. For others it was a scientific anomaly. Many came to find succour for their heartache and consolation for their loss, while some came to satisfy their curiosity and to explore the unusual. Others came seeking an amusement. Ethel Miller took the brief that in providing facilities that were not tied to a religion, the enquirer could pursue as they wished the phenomena they sought.

The College was and still is, fundamentally, about providing a service. The purpose was to provide a relevant service that would be free of dogma or creed and would provide the seeker with the resources they needed. The objective was not to tie the seeker to a religious commitment. That brief was very

relevant in 1932 and with foresight, generosity and wisdom, Mrs Miller's decision, laid down when founding the College, is still relevant today.

Once during World War II the College Principal, Mrs Catherine Allan, referred to the one-off service that the public sought. The College came to realise, that the point of entry the individual took in College facilities was sometimes where they stayed. The 'markets' were different for differing interests. The private sitter might not be a séance goer, or attend a lecture, large public demonstration, or development circle. Some did take up other activities and occasionally would go on to become the backbone of the College. The duty of the College was to provide an as-and when service. If people wanted only one kind of service, e.g. a private sitting, then that is what the College was there to provide. The foregoing was as true in 1932, in 1943 and is true to this day.

The College's foundation came at a time when there was a "market" for such an establishment. The Spiritualist movement in the United Kingdom was at its zenith of' popularity and influence. The period of the 1930's has been commented upon as being a "Golden Age" of Spiritualism. This period was a golden flowering of support and public interest.

However, this was not the only "Golden Age" that is claimed. The eight decades, from 1870's to 1951, each had their "signs and wonders" and produced some notable mediums. The first so called "Golden Age" of the 1870s, ending with the Dr Henry Slade trial in 1879, is thought by some to have brought about the decline of development and exhibition of physical mediumship but this did not happen. The Spiritualist Movement and the Edinburgh College were heirs to a strong tradition and process of development and I would propose a more comprehensive view of the "Golden Age" that would encompass the whole period from 1870 to 1951. With regard to the 1930s as a Golden era, essentially you cannot (as some try to) understand an era out of context. I would suggest that because a voice of the past is not heard does not mean that it did not speak beautifully and was influential in making the present what it has become.

I hope as an 'onlooker' to have been able to write an objective history of the College. I have not approached this work as a linear chronicle of events, as a journal of the years. I have linked each chapter to a theme and present the material according to its place in the scheme. The Edinburgh College is one of the few survivors from at least 20 Psychic Research societies of the 1930s. These narratives can be seen as an example for what may have occurred in other Colleges. The College's 75 years-rich experience can be seen as a snapshot of its age. In that way, I hope to present a story that becomes a contribution to Psychic and Spiritualist history.

However, the scheme in question does flow down through the years. The first chapter deals with the Millers and the influences that were an inspiration to Mrs Miller in founding the new College. In chapter two we examine the contribution of the 'names' within the Spiritualist movement whose involvement enhanced the rapid growth and expansion of the College and its activities. In chapter three physical mediumship is featured and I include material that has

been rediscovered in the college's own library correcting the impression that Helen Duncan did not often serve the College. This chapter also reports of the work of other mediums, including physical mediums, and speakers who served the College. The fourth chapter deals with transition and renewal of the College that occurred in the early 1970s and how the College found a new *raison d'etre.*

My research for this book led to long hidden treasures in the recesses of the College building so I am delighed to be able to present a chapter, 'from the archives', as it were. The records, artefacts, memos, accounts, minute bookings, jottings, magazine clippings and ephemera that posterity has saved are the chance flotsam of a by-gone age that form the researcher's materials. The voices that have come down to us of those who were influential in shaping this story are those that fate has preserved. One would wish for other voices. How informative the journals of Mrs Miller or Miss Mowat would have been but these were never written.

Some attempt to put the archives into a coherent form was undertaken. However, the cataloguing long ago went awry and chaos now reigns. The voice that is most prominent in the records is that of the Principal and Treasurer, Robert Findlay whose notes and memos tell us of the transitional period of the 1970's. There are many other hand written notes and jottings, by an unknown author, written later in the 1970's and it is from these details that the main body of the book has been derived. One could wish for a more structured set of material but that which has been left to us is sufficient for the labour in hand and I pay my respects to the unknown author for the obvious work that went into saving something for the future. These narratives are further embellished by other voices. Mrs Allan has left us the speeches that she gave during the World War II. Laura Culme-Seymour has left memorable accounts of her sittings in seances with Helen Duncan and others. Laura's book has given us a new understanding of the great medium's relationship with the College. Reports were gathered from newspapers both psychic and local, especially `The Scotsman'. From such ephemera the story of the College emerges and is shaped.

This is the history of the College on its own terms. The phenomena that people say occurred is what they report and what they value. Many may take the view that the very idea of a Psychic college is ridiculous and therefore the 75 years of endeavour were wasted. We would reply - to the players of this book they were not a waste.

In a real sense the College itself is the hero of this book. For we are celebrating the 75th Anniversary with a biography of an institution. In the manner of biography, we have tried to present the people in terms that they themselves would have recognised. Where someone left an account of the value of their experience, we include it without comment. These voices of the College and its friends await you in the chapters to be read.

As L. P Hartley said, *"The Past is a foreign country: they do things differently there."*

We have not attempted to include by name all the individual healers, mediums, librarians, cleaners, tea-ladies, drivers and 'welcomers' at the door, for, even if we

could do so, the list of those who have served the College would fill another book. Unfortunately the records do not exist for this to happen so for those few whose names have been recorded in this book, keep in your memory all those who over the years have worked in the same capacity and whose names have not been recorded. They are not forgotten for it is for them and for you too that this book is written.

Our thanks go out to you all, past and present, for all your efforts to keep this College open for those who come to find what they need.

Gerald O'Hara.

Notes by the Way – Leslie Price: -

Who was Florence?

The bookshop near Brighton Station was already in its closing down sale in late 2006, when I found a first edition of "Testimony of Light" (1969) published for CFPSS[11] by World Fellowship Press. The book was by Helen Greaves, once described by Paul Beard in conversation as the only outstanding sensitive to emerge from the early CFPSS. The communicator was the late Frances Banks, who in life had been one of the CFPSS leadership team. The book has since been the best selling and most influential CFPSS-related title.

Tucked into the book was a photo of Frances clipped from the CFPSS Quarterly Review report of her memorial service at Exeter Cathedral. And there was a handwritten dedication on the inside of the book" *Florence, with love and blessings & thanks for typing this manuscript.*"

Who then was Florence? The answer lay in the same shop, which contained some old issues of "Two Worlds" monthly, from around 1980, to which Sussex writer Florence E. Pettit was a regular contributor. In an article of November 1982 "None has all the answers", she wrote: -

In my quest for the meaning of life and in my work for peace between peoples and nations, I encountered a fine woman who had once been a nun in S. Africa. She taught both religion and psychology, as well as other school subjects.

In late middle age she returned to Britain. Penniless and having by then few living friends or relations in this country, she began the final phase of her life. This was to bring psychic and spiritual truths to the understanding of ordinary men and women. This was probably the culmination of her several past incarnations.

[11] CFPSS: - 'Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies' was founded in 1953.

Frances Banks and I met, funnily enough, at a meditation meeting which I was leading. I squirm now at the remembrance of this humble, yet wonderful woman, sitting before me in borrowed garments because she had only recently discarded the habit of a nun.

We became friends. Whenever possible I travelled to Brighton, Croydon, London and even several times to Devonshire, to hear her address various gatherings of thoughtful, well-read men and women.

At the same time she was writing. One book was about her work as a psychologist at Maidstone Gaol, Kent. Another, entitled "Frontiers of Revelation," was based on her findings when The Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies invited her to collate material sent in by their members concerning their personal psychic and spiritual experiences. A small piece of mine was included in this book. Frances also got me to write for the magazine "Women Speaking" when she was its editor.

Knowing my home circumstances (which were then extremely difficult) Frances stressed I needed the leisure to do more important work. Not until she passed on did I find the time to write my personal spiritual autobiography, among other things. I am absolutely sure that it was Frances Banks from the so-called Other Side who inspired me to produce that book.

In five weeks' concentrated, joyful, inspirational writing, my one and only book was finished. Apart from the physical discomfort of sitting long hours at my type- writer, those weeks were undoubtedly the happiest in my life.

I did not see her clairvoyantly, and I doubt whether I was actually clairaudient at the time, but, always being conscious of guidance, I knew I was being directed because of the ease with which the words flowed through me and kept me at my desk for hours.

I forgot everything during those weeks except the work in hand. Such total absorption was wonderfully healing, though strenuous. I was sublimely happy. Also I had no difficulty in getting it published. I just asked Frances where I should send it. Clear as a bell came the words Aquarian Press, which turned out eventually to be Thorsons, of Wellingborough. [Note by Psypioneer: - "Shrines of Psychic Power", 1974]

Just as while on earth, Frances worked all the hours God gave her, so did I, at least during those self-fulfilling weeks. As she had not spared herself, neither did she spare me, and I found myself laughing even as I worked!

I had been at her bedside when she died on All Soul's Day 1966. My book, however, was written some seven years later, but in the interim I gained confidence. My work had progressed from birds and bees and butterflies to the psychic and spiritual truths I was continually discovering - even with family opposition!

While I had sensed that Frances was a great soul, it was not until later I was informed, by the late Clarice Toyne, that she had been no less a person than

Cardinal Newman. There is certainly a very striking physical resemblance in the two faces, but it was only after a good deal of thought I could accept this belief. It only goes to show that no matter how "great" one is in the world's eyes, there are still lessons to be learned perhaps with a change of sex as well as circumstances, next time round. [Note by Psypioneer: - see Clarice Toyne "Heirs to Eternity" 1976]

Frances Banks was one of several senior CFPSS figures of that era who was a student of Alice Bailey' writings. But Florence drank even more freely from esoteric streams. Of the Aquarian Gospel, she revealed "The latter is my personal bible. Based on Levi's readings of the Akashic Records and coming into publication almost 100 years ago, it is easy to read, but is also poetically very beautiful." (TW August 1981). In TW December 1983, she wrote:

"One of the simplest books about Jesus that I have ever read is called "The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ". I wrote an article about it in 1968 for the international newspaper "The Voice". I also did so for "Two Worlds" in 1973. Heavily sub-titled "The Philosophic and practical Basis of the Religion of the Aquarian Age of the World and the Church Universal" this easily read book has always appealed to the child in me."

More enthusiastic endorsements by Florence of Levi, often to the detriment of Orthodoxy, could be quoted. But who was Levi really?

Levi Dowling, the medium for the Aquarian Gospel, (which is sometimes used for the readings in a Spiritualist church), is the subject of a penetrating investigation in 2007 by Dr John Buescher, author of the recent biography of Spiritualist reformer John Spear.

Dr Buescher's report "Aquarian Evangelist" appears as volume X1 of the series of occasional papers published by www.theohistory.org.

Dr Buescher discovered that Dowling began as a Church of Christ evangelist and Sunday School organizer in the Midwest. He added New Thought healing practices to his preaching and, just before the turn of the century, turned his attention to the study of an amalgam of occult arts. He left the Church of Christ and associated himself with Spiritualists and Theosophists, and, in 1903, moved to Los Angeles to help usher in the New Age. There, convinced that he was the medium for a new revelation, he produced *The Aquarian Gospel*, a supplement, as he regarded it, to the traditional Gospels. It filled in the gaps in their narrative, describing Jesus as an initiate into an esoteric brotherhood in Egypt, and a traveler to India and Tibet.

After the book's publication, he formed an occult society in Los Angeles, which he called "The Aquarian Commonwealth," and which, from 1909, published *The New Age Magazine* for its members. The society's activities were cut short by Dowling's death of a heart attack in 1911. *The Aquarian Gospel*, however, continued to find readers and to influence the development of esotericism, being extensively quoted, for example, by AMORC founder Spencer Lewis in his *Mystical Life of Christ*, playing a

part in the Sixties' countercultural "Age of Aquarius" and in the 1964 founding of the Five Percent Nation by Clarence 13X.

Dr Buescher also reveals some of the sources of Levi's ideas. His report should be read by any organisation which proposes to use Levi's work for educational purposes. To what extent Dowling was consciously promoting a spurious message he deliberately composed himself is uncertain.

Florence was a typical product of her generation. Her regular articles showed how, during a hard life, she had moved away from Sunday school teachings to a more universalistic outlook.

MRS. CARL WICKLAND PASSES ON

She Cured Hundreds of Victims of Obsession

[**Note by Psypioneer: -** *Thirty Years Among the Dead* by Carl A. Wickland, originally published in 1924 was for many years a Spiritualist classic. His wife Anna W. Wickland, through whose mediumship his work was conducted, died March 1937. Below is taken from *Psychic News* April 10th 1937.]

I REGRET to advise you that my wife and companion, Mrs. Wickland ' departed this physical world on March 3rd, after a nine-months illness.

"Mrs. Wickland's going has indeed left a great vacuum in my life and our household. At the same time, we also rejoice because we know she has earned a good rest after over forty-five years of psychic labour and is now among friends, many of whom she knew in physica1 life and hosts whom she has been a benefactress, through communication with their kindred and those she has helped from darkness to light"

This letter which reached Hannen Swaffer in, London last Monday- it was signed by Dr. Carl Wickland - tells of the passing of one of the world's greatest mediums, a charming, simple woman who gave most of her life to the great task of helping her husband to cure lunacy by driving out obsessing spirits.

Like her husband, a Los Angeles medical man, she was of Swedish origin. They blazed a new trail in psychopathic knowledge, risking professional ostracism but developing a method of dealing with "evil" and blundering spirits which has been copied by Dr. Titus Bull in New York and by Dr. Oscar Parkes in England, and which is destined, ultimately, to transform the means of curing lunacy.

Their system of treatment was to give the patient a charge of static electricity, not sufficient to hurt the victim, but enough to dislodge the obsessing spirit, who then controlled Mrs. Wickland, a remarkable trance medium.

Often these spirits were ignorant of the fact that they were "dead," and did not realise they had attached themselves to people on earth.

The task of Dr. Wickland and his helpers was to convince them, once they controlled the medium, that they could release themselves from their earthbound state. The investigators interrogated these spirits, obtained proofs of their identities and then showed them how to progress. It often took more than one seance to convince the obsessor that he had passed from earth.

They used many novel methods. For example, if a spirit was of the male sex, they would say, "What are you doing wearing women's clothes? Look at your hands. They are those of a woman." That would bring him to realise that he was no longer on the earth.

Dr. Wickland's book, "Thirty Years Among the Dead," is a record of scores of these cases.

Two thousand years ago, the Nazarene drove out evil spirits. Mrs. Wickland was used to perform similar tasks in our own generation.

Opponents talk vaguely of the dangers attending Spiritualists from associating with "evil spirits." Dr. Wickland and his wife, realising that the next world is composed of the people who leave this, tried to help the less fortunate ones.

When Dr. Wickland came to London some years ago, Hannen Swaffer sent him to see Dr. Porter Phillips, the head of Bedlam. He did not laugh, but was most interested.

Dr. Wickland become interested in Spiritualism through experimenting with an ouija board. Then he discovered that his wife was a medium with remarkable powers. At first, he was troubled as to whether he had any right to "disturb" the "dead."

The Spirit Promise

But he was told of the great work he had to do in helping unenlightened spirits. His guides informed him that his wife was a suitable instrument for instructing ignorant entities and that, if she would allow herself to be used for that purpose, they would see that no harm befell her.

Dr. Wickland's curiosity was naturally aroused, as he realised the great bearing this new knowledge would have on criminology and psychopathology. So they began, forty-five years ago, what seemed a hazardous undertaking.

Their first case was a striking one. Dr. Wickland had left home to carry out some dissecting work. The subject was a man of about sixty years of age and that afternoon he began dissecting one of the lower limbs.

The "Dead" Victim

When he returned home, he had scarcely entered the door when his wife, apparently afflicted with a sudden illness, complained of feeling strange and staggered as though about to fall. As Dr. Wickland placed his hand on her shoulder she drew herself up, and became entranced by a foreign intelligence who, with a threatening gesture, said: "What do you mean by cutting me?"

When Wickland replied that he was not aware of cutting anyone, the spirit angrily answered: "Of course you are. You are cutting on my leg."

Then the doctor realised that it was the spirit of the man whose body he had been dissecting that day.

That was the prelude to the work that occupied the major part of Mrs. Wickland's earthy life.

They lived in a cottage in a Los Angeles suburb, called their centre the National Psychological Institute, and had recently built several bungalows near, so that patients could stay with them.

Dr. Wickland and his wife had planned to visit Glasgow next September for the International Spiritualist Congress. Although, no doubt, that visit will be abandoned, his work will go on, with a new medium.

PR0- PSYCHIC BISHOP CRITICISED

Mervyn Stockwood, Bishop of Southwark from 1959-1980, has generally been regarded positively because of his support for psychic studies. But he emerges less favourably in the newly published autobiography "Driven To It" (publisher- Michael Russell) by Jean Overton Fuller, the doyenne of theosophical historians in Britain.

Through a common interest in Shakespeare's sonnets, Fuller was brought into contact with Ivor Cook, the whistleblower schoolmaster at the centre of the Court Lees Affair. Stockwood had denounced Cook in the House of Lords. But by successful legal actions, Cook had obtained documents which showed that Stockwood's allegations were not only unfounded but were clearly not true at the time. However, under UK law, Stockwood could not be sued for statements made in Parliament. An epic struggle then ensued to get Stockwood at least to withdraw his false statements, which had made it more difficult for Cook to obtain employment. At that time, however, he was close to the government in power, very much a pillar of the establishment, and was able to evade these pressures until Cook died

Stockwood's attack on Cook can be read on the Net to this day. But if Stockwood was in error and would not withdraw on the Court Lees Affair, how reliable are his accounts of psychic phenomena? LP.

ARTHUR FORD

1897 – 1971

MAKES PSYCHIC HISTORY IN AUSTRALIA

FIRST BROADCAST OF SPIRIT MESSAGES

[Note by Psypioneer: - See Psypioneer Newsletter Arthur Augustus Ford 3.2[12]. Ernest W. Oaten also made an historic achievement, for the first broadcast talk on Spiritualism which was transmitted from the B.B.C., London on Friday, April 13th, 1934: - See Psypioneer Newsletter 2.3[13]]

Below is taken from Psychic News April 17th 1937

Arthur Ford Makes Psychic History

AUSTRALIA SHAMES THE B.B.C.

AUSTRALIA, having beaten England at cricket, has now beaten us on the air.

Arthur Ford, the famous American medium, now on tour in Australia, has had one of his meetings in Sydney broadcast, complete with messages from the "dead" to their friends and relatives.

Yet the B.B.C., strangled by its Religious Advisory Committee, packed with representatives of orthodox religion, will not broadcast a Spiritualist religious service!

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[12] See: - Book review by Leslie Price, On the Spiritual Frontier in America, by William V. Rauscher page 32: - http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.2February07..pdf

[13] See: - What I Believe - Ernest Walter Oaten, page 59: - http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/2.3%20PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf

Police Called Out

Ford's tour is attracting more public attention to Spiritualism than at any time since Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's visit. At his third public meeting, the hall was sold out and police had to be called to control the crowds.

Ford's clairaudient spirit messages were broadcast by arrangement with the magazine "Woman," which rightly claims that it is the first attempt to broadcast public spirit messages. The broadcast was a complete success.

Ford has been making the fullest use of his time, with meetings, weekly radio talks and a series of articles in the leading magazine. His tour is sponsored by the Australian Society for Psychic Research.

Press Pays A Tribute

One daily newspaper published a long article on Ford's mediumship, in which it paid tribute to his psychic powers.

"His messages to large audiences," it said, "come to him as fluently and as easily as though he is carrying on a telephone conversation in the ordinary way of everyday life.

"Names, surnames, pet names, outlandish names come rolling out in astonishing fashion.

"The secret of his popularity lies not merely in the gift of mediumship itself. Arthur Ford is an artist. He never makes his audience tired.

"In a natural and business-like manner he announces the spirit visitor in the same way that human visitors are announced in our drawing rooms - by name, and not by detailed descriptions of nose, eyes and other features.

"He then, in corroboration, gives some evidential fact, often of a startling nature, emphasising in the mind of the recipient of the message and in the minds of the audience, the reality of spirit communication."

Then the newspaper paid the medium this tribute:

"Arthur Ford has won wide recognition for himself and the cause he serves not only throughout the United States, but also in England, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany.

"It is interesting to note that his psychic gift operates with the same evidential accuracy when dealing with foreign-speaking audiences of whose language he may have no knowledge."

In its first article, the magazine "Woman" devoted more than two pages to a detailed account of how, through Ford, Mrs. Houdini received the secret code message from her "dead" husband[14].

Coverage continues in P.N. May 1st 1937

RADIO SPIRIT MESSAGES CONFIRMED
Listeners Telephone To Identify Their "Dead"

ARTHUR FORD
MAKES PSYCHIC HISTORY IN AUSTRALIA

CONFIRMATION of the world's first radio seance messages, given by Arthur Ford in Australia, has been enthusiastically received by the Press of that country.

Of the twenty-one messages given by the medium over the microphone, fourteen had been claimed and checked within a week of the event, and five of the remaining seven had been claimed though not then checked.

Not only did the medium give the full surnames - some of them very unusual - of some of the "dead" he described, but he also gave the full names of their earthly relatives.

He even gave the home towns of these spirits and said relatives were listening-in to his clairaudience in these places. They included Brisbane, Newcastle, Mayfield, Queensland, Victoria, Marrickville, Wallonga and Alexandria.

As announced exclusively in *Psychic News,* one of the meetings at which Arthur Ford, the famous American clairaudient, gave spirit messages from the "dead" was broadcast by the Sydney radio station 2GB.

The broadcast was arranged by the magazine "Woman," which printed the following week verbatim accounts of the messages given, asking its readers to claim any that remained unrecognised.

One of the recipients of the wireless messages interviewed by "Woman" was Mrs. Edith Chapman, of Woollahra, who heard a remarkable message from her nephew, Clyde Hetherington, known to his relatives as "Clem."

"It was a wonderful message," Mrs. Chapman told the paper. "My sister has been greatly comforted and quite thrilled by the undeniable evidence of its truth. There were many things concerning her son's death which not only grieved her but had worried her considerably. Now it has all been cleared up.

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[14] 'The Houdini Code Mystery A Spirit Secret Solved', by William V. Rauscher See : - http://www.mysticlightpress.com/index.php?page_id=96

"All the names given were exactly correct, even to the names of Clem's grandparents, Ellen and John Hills, who were mentioned." Mrs. Chapman said the message had given them all great joy and a new belief in the survival in another world of her nephew.

Another woman, writing to confirm her message, was able to say, "I think this wonderful demonstration of Mr. Ford's powers should be acknowledged, as well as the truth of survival after death."

A local medical man, Dr. Howard Greenwell, who was present at the seance, recognised at once a message that was intended for his brother from his "dead" nephew.

"I am quite satisfied that we can contact those who have passed over," he said. "What happened was evidential."

"During the seance, so many telephone messages were received from excited listeners claiming messages," recorded "Woman," "that it was impossible for the telephonist to get an accurate record of names and addresses, in many cases the claimants being so excited that they forgot to be explicit."

The magazine declared that it had carefully checked as many as possible of the messages claimed, and printed some of the stories told by the recipients.

The Press generally gave the broadcast considerable space and has been, in the main, very fair. All Ford's meetings have been so crowded that special police have had to be summoned to handle the clamouring hundreds.

"I myself have been present at each seance," wrote the radio correspondent of "Woman," "and have marvelled at the joy, incredulity, amazement and happiness in the faces of one and all who have been given these messages."

The orthodox parsons have not taken it lying down, but have made full use of their opportunity to get attacks on Spiritualism printed in the newspapers.

One weekly paper made a sweeping onslaught on the subject, inspired by an interview with a Rationalist lecturer, and printed on its front page the headline "Ford Comes In On A Wave Of Superstition." But Australia wanted to find out for itself.

Ford has been welcomed everywhere, and the editors of leading Sydney newspapers have acted as chairmen at his meetings.

In addition to the broadcast seance, the medium has been giving weekly half-hour radio talks.

Now he has been asked to lecture and demonstrate in Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane, after which he will go to Auckland, New Zealand, for a month, then paying a return visit to Sydney. On his way back to America, later in the

Summer, he will stop at Honolulu for a few weeks, spreading the message of Spiritualism there as well.

Arthur Ford will give further radio talks from the same station when he returns to Sydney.

And finally issue May 8th 1937

ARTHUR FORD'S NEW TRIUMPHS IN AUSTRALIA

ARTHUR FORD'S Australian tour is one long procession of triumphs.

His weekly articles and radio talks have brought him hundreds of letters, while his propaganda meetings have been crowded. The first two were sold out days before.

For his third lecture and demonstration of clairaudience there was such a crowd in the street that all traffic was blocked, and this despite the fact that admission had to be paid for.

The sale of tickets at 4/6 each was so great that the management sold practically all of the 2/6 seats at the higher price.

When Ford arrived, he was unable to reach the auditorium and had to get a policeman to manoeuvre him through the crowds.

By the time the lecture was due to start, the hall was filled and hundreds were clamouring for admission. The management filled the stage, the stairs and the aisles and allowed people to stand at the back. Then the police said no more were to be allowed in. At least a thousand were turned away.

So great was the crush that the police sent for further help and there were ten officers trying to control the situation before Ford started his lecture!

He received such an ovation when he appeared on the platform that it was ten minutes before the applause was subdued.

His chairman was the Rev. Wyndham Heathcote, one of Sydney's most popular ministers, to whom the medium had given a spirit message at his first lecture.

Just before Arthur Ford went on to the platform, the head of the broadcasting station, where the medium gives his radio talks, came to tell him that he had been in touch with his office and they had decided, for his next wireless talk, to re-arrange the programmes and give him a two-hours' broadcast instead of his usual half-an-hour!

As it is part of a network of radio stations all over the country, many thousands were able to hear Arthur Ford put the case for Spiritualism.

This two-hour broadcast was announced on the air during the week and advertised extensively in the Press.

The magazine "Woman," in which Ford is writing a weekly article, takes down his spirit messages verbatim and reports them in its columns.

Already Ford has had to employ a secretary to answer his radio correspondence, because he could not cope with it.

In less than two hours, after one broadcast, he had one hundred and twenty-one telegrams!

Spiritualism in Australia is receiving a tremendous fillip through Ford's visit.

Bravo. Arthur Ford!

BOOKS FOR SALE

Please e-mail psypioneer@aol.com for details

'*Red Cactus: - The Life of Anna Kingsford*' By Alan Pert @ £14.95 + pp ISBN: - 978-1-74018-405-2 See. Psypioneer 3.5 issue: - http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.5May07..pdf

'*Six Lectures on Theology and Nature*' By Emma Hardinge first published in 1860. £14.95 + pp. ISBN: - 978-0-9556539-0-2. See Psypioneer 3.6 issue: - http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.6June07..pdf

'*Magical Spiritualism a warning address given in 1878 to mark thirty years of Modern Spiritualism*', Andrew Jackson Davis Published May 2000 by Psychic Pioneer Publications, this is a small booklet 7pp £2.00 Inc postage (please add 10% for airmail).

'*The Mystery of Stainton Moses an address given in 1992 on the centenary of his death*' Leslie Price Published December 1999 by Psychic Pioneer Publications, this is a small booklet 8pp £2.50 Inc postage (please add 10% for airmail).

Both Psychic Pioneer Publications £4.00 Inc postage (please add 10% for airmail).

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