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*Psypioneer would like to extend its best wishes to all
its readers and contributors for the festive season and
the coming New Year*

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# The Queen of Spiritualism

Under this title, W. F. Neech<sup>1</sup> wrote an article on Emma Hardinge Britten, part of a series in *The Two Worlds*:—"World's Greatest Psychics Stories", which began on August 9, 1958 with Swedenborg. EHB was no.12 in the series published on October 25<sup>th</sup>. What caught my eye was this photograph which accompanied the article and which I remembered seeing on my visit to Stansted Hall earlier this year. Under the photograph in TW is this caption:

"William Foster Morgan, a professional artist, based this painting of Emma, which hangs at the SNU's London headquarters, on a miniature, hitherto unknown. As she forecast at a seance, it came unexpectedly into his possession. No comparable likeness of her at that age, 30, was thought to be in existence.

Richard Boddington,<sup>2</sup> that grand pioneer, was the last person to have appeared on the same platform as Emma. She regularly spoke to him through the entranced Morgan. Last year, the 51—year artist and Boddington both joined Emma in the spirit world."



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¹ William Frederick Neech wrote two well known Spiritualist books:—*No living Person could have known*, Psychic Book Club, London 1955 and:—*Death is her life*, (Lilian Bailey) Spiritualist Press, London 1957.

² Richard Boddington (brother of Harry Boddington) was a well known pioneer of London Spiritualism, see Richard Boddington's reminiscences:—*The Days When It Was Difficult—A pioneer looks back*, pages 8-10:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08.pdf>

The original painting (not a miniature) now hangs in the Britten Memorial Museum housed within the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall.

It is a full length watercolour, and captures Emma elegantly dressed in the fashion of the day. Long ringlets fall loosely about her cheerfully serene face. She is holding a bag or fan in her hands which are draped casually across her.

Under the painting the plaque reads:—

Water-colour of Emma Hardinge Britten dated 1851

Emma worked as an actress in various theatres in London, including the Adelphi. Due to personal circumstances she changed her name from Floyd to Hardinge and went to live and work in Paris. This painting may have been done in Paris or while she was an actress in America in the 1850s

Duncan Gascoyne, the museum's curator informs me,

“The painting you are referring to is the one that was done in 1851 when Emma was working on the stage in either London or Paris. I feel it is London. The watercolour is dated 1851 but not signed.

The one in the old London Headquarters building is a partial copy of this by Morgan. We do not have this picture, it will be somewhere in one of the London churches.



**Part of the Britten Memorial Museum
housed at Stansted Hall**

Another picture of Emma at Stansted is a reproduction of the original one done in America after she became established as a medium by J Shore. It shows Emma holding a scroll with the words ‘Message of Love’ on it.

The reproduction was done later on in Emma’s life and it has around the edges small miniatures of other prominent spiritualist workers of that period namely W Colville, Cora

Richmond, Nellie Brigham, and R S Lillie.³ It was published by E B Ruggles of Brooklyn, New York.”⁴

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The names quoted by Duncan, apart from possibly Colville and Richmond, are now largely forgotten, although the name Brigham can be linked to the Spiritualists’ National Union (SNU), which succeeded the National Federation (NF).<sup>5</sup>

Mrs. Helen Brigham, also referred to as Nellie Brigham<sup>6</sup> was a well known international inspirational speaker. We can pick up her name in our 2006 series on James Morse’s trip to Australia between September 4<sup>th</sup> 1902 and June 15<sup>th</sup> 1903.<sup>7</sup>

In 1896 she attended the Seventh Annual Conference of the National Federation at Liverpool under the presidency of Mr. A. J. Smyth. Brigham received an enthusiastic reception and was invited to the platform and addressed the conference on both nights.<sup>8</sup> At the following year’s conference in Blackburn, Brigham along with others including EHB, gave a cash donation.



**The “Two Worlds” Portrait  
Album 1897**

<sup>3</sup> She was one of the most well known lecturers on Spiritualism in America

<sup>4</sup> It was Mrs. Emily B. Ruggles while at a meeting of the First Society of Spiritualists of New York heard about a woman who was about to be turned out of her lodgings at No. 456, West 57th Street, New York. The invalid woman was Mrs. Margaret Fox Kane. Margaret (Maggie) Fox-Kane last of the Fox sisters died peacefully under Emily Ruggles’ care at 4.30am March 8<sup>th</sup> 1893. See *Psypioneer* Volume 2, No.6:— *In memoriam-Margaret Fox-Kane—Margaret Fox’s Poverty*, pages 121-126:—  
<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.6June06.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> *Psypioneer* Volume 6, No.11:—*National Federation—Spiritualists’ National Union*, page 139:—  
<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Nellie was a common nickname for Helen in the late 19th century.

<sup>7</sup> The series started in Volume 2, No.6:—*Farewell to Mr J.J. Morse and Tien—Australian Letters from J.J. Morse*, page 131:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.6June06.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> She was in good company with other distinguished American Spiritualists who also attended:—Miss Cushman, Mr. John Slater, and Mr. Walter Howell.

Although we have criticised Leah Underhill's book on her interpretation of the Hydesville story involving her younger sisters and her mother's account of events, we re-publish below an interesting, and hopefully more accurate account, involving Nellie Brigham:—<sup>9</sup>

"It is generally known that the "inspirational speaker," Mrs. Nellie J. T. Brigham, has for several years conducted, at Republican Hall, West 33d Street, the religious services of the "First Association of Spiritualists" of New York, on Sunday mornings and evenings, with an improvised eloquence of extraordinary sweetness, strength, and holiness. The custom is this: After a prayer, etc., she improvises responses to questions or topics proposed by the audience, and also poems on subjects suggested by them on the spot. In the evening she improvises a single consecutive discourse, or what may be called a sermon, on some subject prompted to her by her Spirit guides. The practice in the morning is that as many of the promiscuous audience as choose deposit on the desk their questions, tending usually to the elucidation of topics more or less connected with Spiritualism, she has possessed and exercised this Spiritual gift since very early childhood. A few weeks ago, among the subjects for poems thus laid on her table was a copy of the title-page of this volume. Her improvisation in regard to it was the above poem,\* introduced by the following prefatory remarks.

"We have with us this morning a lady, a Medium, who has been known for years among the Spiritualists as one who has sown the seed in the early forming of our faith, and scattered it with open heart and hand. This lady, well known to you as Mrs. Underhill, Leah Fox, has written a book, to be called 'The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism,' which you will soon have an opportunity of reading for yourselves. The dedication of it is most beautiful, as follows: 'To my husband, Daniel Underhill, who, before I had other claims than those of the Truth and the Right, when other friends wavered, nobly sustained me, this narrative is dedicated, gratefully and lovingly.' This is an expression of just appreciation. It is the soul of the Worker, and the soul of Justice, and the soul of a Wife. Nothing is needed to be added to it, but this is suggested as a subject for a poem." She then proceeded to deliver it.

\* I have not included the poem as it's quite long; it is entitled "*The Missing Link*" and is the final chapter heading of the book.

### **"The Eagle and the Dove"**

In the ranks of Mediumship there are no small number of noble men and women possessing this splendid power. They are called Inspirational or Trance Speakers. They speak as the mouth-pieces of Spirit guides, using not the singular pronoun, but the collective "We." The only two whom I happen to know are Mrs Brigham and Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten. One of the most

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<sup>9</sup> *The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism*, by A. Leah Underhill Thomas R Knox & Co., New York 1885 pages 472-473.

competent of judges has said of Mrs. Britten: “No living orator could improvise, on half a dozen different high and deep subjects, in style to compare with her. I have heard most of the great orators of our times, pulpit, forensic, and parliamentary, and she is the most eloquent man of them all.” She and Mrs. Brigham have been well called “the Eagle and the Dove.”<sup>10</sup>

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## WHAT WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT ONE WHO KNOWS

In the launch issue of the weekly newspaper “Two Worlds” in 1887, there appeared an unusual statement. The first part was autobiographical, and the second expounded some tenets of Occultism. It has sometimes been assumed that both parts are from the same hand. But since the first part is known to be an account of the early life of the editor, Mrs Britten, that would mean that she was “Sirius” who signed the second part. We will not make that assumption here, and will in any case focus on the first part. In fact, Paul Gaunt, Marc Demarest and I believe that Emma is the “One Who Knows”. But the identity of “Sirius” remains a vexed question, and in any case there are two authors involved here, not one.

Let us first reprint that first part, and then pose certain questions: <sup>11</sup>

### OCCULTISM DEFINED

(by ONE WHO KNOWS)

My own claims to be considered as an exponent of true Occultism are founded upon the following grounds: When quite young, in fact, before I had attained my thirteenth year, I became acquainted with certain parties who sought me out and professed a desire to observe the somnambulic faculties for which I was then remarkable. I found my new associates to be ladies and gentlemen, mostly persons of noble rank, and during a period of several years I, and many other young persons, assisted at their sessions in the quality of somnambulists, or mesmeric subjects.

The persons I thus came into contact with were representatives of many other countries than Great Britain. They formed one of a number of secret societies, and all that I am privileged to relate of them is, that they were students of the two branches of Occultism hereafter to be described; that they claimed an affiliation with societies derived from the ancient mysteries of Egypt, Greece, and Judea; that their beliefs and practices had been concealed from the vulgar by cabalistic methods, and that though their real origin and the

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<sup>10</sup> *The Missing Link*, pages 437-474

<sup>11</sup> *The Two Worlds* November 18, 1887 pages 3-4



purpose of their association had at times been almost lost, it had revived, and been restored under many aspects. They claimed that alchemy, medieval Rosicrucianism, and modern Freemasonry were off-shoots of the original Cabala, and that during the past 150 years new associations had been formed, and the parties who had introduced me into their arcanum were a society in affiliation with many others then in existence in different countries.

These persons, deeming that the intrusion into their ranks of unprepared minds would be injurious to the harmony necessary for their studies, carefully avoided assuming any position of prominence in reference to the society, so that they might never be solicited to admit those whose presence might be prejudicial. Indeed it was one of their leading regulations never to permit the existence of the society to be known or the members thereof named, until they passed from earth to the higher life. It is in virtue of this last clause that I am at liberty to say that Lord Lytton, the Earl of Stanhope, and Lieut. Morrison (better known as “Zadkiel”), and the author of “Art Magic,” belonged to this society.

I should have known but little of its principles and practices, as I was simply what I should call a clairvoyant, sought out by the society for my gifts in this direction had I not in later years been instructed in the fundamentals of the society by the author of “Art Magic.” When modern spiritualism dawned upon the world, for special reasons of my own, the fellows of my society gave me an honorary release from every obligation I entered into with them except in the matter of secrecy. On that point I can never be released and never seek to be; but in respect to the statements I am about to make, my former associates—deeming their publication might serve to correct some of the erroneous opinions that are put into circulation by individuals who arrogate to themselves a knowledge, of which they have not the slightest iota—not only sanction, but command me to present to the candid enquirer the following brief definition of genuine practical

#### OCCULTISM—ANCIENTLY WRITTEN IN “CABALA.”

[Then follows the second part, which is not reproduced here.]

Now this was a strange autobiographical statement to appear in the first issue of a new newspaper chiefly aimed at provincial Spiritualists. It had a certain similarity to those narratives in which a person explained how they became a Spiritualist, but there is also an assertion of “true” occult authority far beyond this. This is an implied contrast with the Theosophists, whose journal *Lucifer* had just been launched in London in September 1887 by Madame Blavatsky.

Emma says that at the age of 12 she was recruited into an occult group because of her somnambulic abilities. This is a term that extends from simple sleep walking, to being in trance and uttering messages. Cahagnet published some valuable evidential records of such material.<sup>12</sup> In which category was Emma—a sick child sleepwalking, or a gifted clairvoyant, or both?

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<sup>12</sup> See:—“Tate” lecture by Leslie Price to the SPR in London on 2 October 2008, published in *Psypioneer* Volume 5, No.11:—*Early survival research, is it still relevant*, pages 352-363:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP5.11November09.pdf>



**Marc Demarest**

One might turn to her autobiography for enlightenment. Just as it has become possible, thanks to Marc Demarest and his co-workers, to read the first volumes of *Two Worlds on the Net*, so also on his site is the full text of Emma's "Autobiography". This can be searched, for example with a word like "diary" or "diaries".<sup>13</sup>

It is immediately apparent that the Autobiography is almost silent on Emma's origins. We are not told her place of birth or any details of her parents, though her mother looms large in Emma's later life. A few details are provided in an article she quotes (p.4) from *The Medium and Daybreak* July 16, 1886 pages 450-452,<sup>14</sup> supposedly written by "one of my occult associates", such as:

"Descended from the renowned 'Welsh wizard,' Owen Glendower, little Emma also partook of the characteristics of her father, a sea captain, and a man of phenomenal powers of prevision, and other qualities of Spiritualistic order."<sup>15</sup>

Her father certainly worked at sea for a time, in the coasting trade between Minehead and Liverpool, but at her birth he was a school teacher and at his death worked in a Bristol apothecary shop.

Emma explains her general silence thus: (p.11)

"If I have abstained from dwelling upon the details of my early life and education, except in their general features and occupations, it is because I could not do justice to their many sad, strange, and even startling events without recalling names that I should now be reluctant to involve with my own, and mention personages who have played out their parts in life's fitful drama, and passed on to scenes far removed from the paths which I have been called upon to tread."

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<sup>13</sup> From this valuable page, much original material can be viewed or downloaded:—  
<http://ehbritten.org/bibliography.html>

<sup>14</sup> This article was titled:—"Some Passages in the Spiritual Experiences of Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten.", by the author of "Art Magic" Louis De B—. Burns published an engraved portrait in the same issue "To welcome the return to the platform of Emma Hardinge-Britten". This portrait was published in the last issue. A full copy of "Some Passages ..." is available in an ocr pdf on request.

<sup>15</sup> Marc Demarest comments:—No where else in the half-dozen autobiographical summaries EHB published during her lifetime does she claim descent from Glendower. This claim is UNIQUE to the Autobiography, and before that to the Medium article.



As Emma was born in Bethnal Green, which soon after became one of the worst slums of London, this was certainly different from the impression she gave of affluence (p.3). "... the servants of the family would often say" or again "... my delight was to steal away alone and seek the solitude of woods and field, but above all to wander in churchyards, cathedral cloisters, and old monastic ruins."<sup>16</sup> Marc Demarest observes "She said, at various times, that she was "an English lady" which of course was a loaded phrase implying gentle birth. All of her "English lady" statements were made AFTER she adopted the Hardinge surname"

Emma gives us to understand that she was a medium from birth, both clairaudient and precognitive, and apt to fall into a trance. She studied music in Paris "But there it was that my unconquerable somnambulic tendencies impelled me to midnight wanderings, wild screams, and ultimate loss of my promising voice" (p.6).<sup>17</sup>

This sleepwalking suggests a traumatised child, and perhaps by more than the death of her father.<sup>18</sup>

But Emma obtained work as a child pianiste, until "it was found that I was also a magnetic subject, and by a wave of the hand above my head, and even an unspoken wish on the part of my audience, that I could play any air desired ..." (p.6)

It was also supposedly in Paris, at later time when she was an actress rather than a musician, that (p.9)

"... my intense susceptibility to occult powers brought me prominently under the notice of the magnetisers, amongst whom were not a few of the highest personages in the land."

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<sup>16</sup> Marc Demarest comments:—When we read her description of London slums in the transcripts of some of her lectures from Australia and NZ, we are probably reading stylized and dramatized descriptions of the period of her life when she lived with her mother in Tufton Street, in Westminster, which area was at the time quite rough—and NOT a stylized or dramatized description of Bethnal Green, which was when she resided there, still somewhat bucolic.

<sup>17</sup> Marc Demarest is doubtful about Emma's Paris claims. He told Psypioneer:—"Remember that EHB also claims, at one point, to have studied in Paris AND in Milan. I am pretty sure she did work as a piano dolly in Erard's studio, but I think it was Erard's London studio, not his Paris studio. I believe this in part because Pierre Erard, whom EHB mentions specifically, spent most of his time in the late 30s and early 40s in London—he was pursuing Parliamentary patent grants.

<sup>18</sup> Marc Demarest notes:—"If you read her last novella, *The Mystery of No. 9 Stanhope Street*, you could conclude that Emma was—there's no nice way to say it—pimped out by her mother as a young girl, as an "artist's model". Other novellas feature young women artists having children out of wedlock. It's hard to read some of these "fictional" texts and NOT conclude there are autobiographical elements in them. We also need to remember that EHB wrote, during her life, more fiction than non-fiction. Fiction was an important medium for her; we don't think of her as a fiction writer because her fiction never achieved anything like canonical status.

Nevertheless, Emma places her first work as a clairvoyant and magnetic subject in London in the Orphic Circle as she termed it in her book “Ghostland”. Marc Demarest has suggested this in his draft paper “Revising Mathiesen”<sup>19</sup>

Emma gives the impression that the Orphic Circle enjoyed the services of many young clairvoyants, and that it was part of a network of occult organisations.

Indeed her claims curiously echo those of Madame Blavatsky, except for HPB’s tendency to locate her centres further east. We may wonder how numerous were the clairvoyants, and if the occult powers of the members were as vast as suggested. That organisational links existed with other groups abroad is perfectly feasible.<sup>20</sup>

Emma claims to have progressed from being just a clairvoyant to being an occultist with some understanding of what was happening, when (at a later time) the author of Art Magic instructed her.

Marc Demarest adds:

“There’s a real problem in EHB’s narrative(s) in this area. She went out of her way to claim, usually, that she could not, in most cases, remember what took place when she was in a clairvoyant state. If true, that would tend to support her claim that she didn’t know anything about supermundane or submundane worlds prior to being exposed to Spiritualism in NYC. But ... she met TAOAM [The Author of Art Magic] in the Orphic Circle ... did he instruct her then?

If so, she knew much well before coming to the US, and her claim to have been shocked and dismayed by Spiritualism is disingenuous. Certainly her collection of short stories—The Wildfire Club—which I believe she had largely done, and had offered to Charles Dickens, before coming to the US, suggests a familiarity with the gothic and supernatural (and suggests trauma, including rape). If TAOAM did not instruct EHB during the Orphic Circle period, he must have done so when he supposedly came to the US (the period covered by the material in the second volume of Ghost Land) in the late 1860s or early 1870s. Yet, EHB clearly has more than a working knowledge of both Rosicrucian and Freemasonic traditions well before that date—see for example her knowing

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<sup>19</sup> “I believe it was [Chauncey Hare] Townshend who may in fact have “discovered” Emma (as he was closely connected to Thomas Welsh [proprietor of a music school where Emma was employed as a pupil-teacher] and to French artistic and musical circles) and who was the means by which Emma was introduced into the Gore House circle around Lady Blessington (and the means therefore by which EHB came to know Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, and Bulwer-Lytton).”

See:—*Revising Mathiesen: Updating Richard Mathiesen’s Work On Emma Harding Britten*:—[http://www.ehbritten.org/papers/revising\\_mathiesen.pdf](http://www.ehbritten.org/papers/revising_mathiesen.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Marc Demarest comments:—“We know that Richard Morrison and Philip Henry Stanhope were both avid collectors of female clairvoyants. Morrison left us records of his experiments with them, in remote viewing of other planets.”

references to Freemasonry in “Six Lectures”.<sup>21</sup> Given that we now KNOW Emma was in the company at Covent Garden, and we also know that Hargrave Jennings was the stage manager at Covent Garden during the period Emma worked there ... is that explanation—Emma’s tutelage by Jennings, from whom she borrows liberally in AM—not a more likely explanation?

I am not a Jennings scholar, but I do not recall much having been made of the fact that Jennings was the Covent Garden stage manager. He discusses this aspect of his life, somewhat obliquely, in his *The Childishness and Brutality of the Time: Some Plain Truths in Plain Language* (1883), particularly Chapter VII, “Before and Behind The Curtain at the Opera”. In 1877, the New York Times theatre writer speaks of Jennings as “connected with Her Majesty’s Opera for over 20 years...” which pushes his time there back to at least the early-to-mid 1850s. I think it’s probably a decade earlier, and that Emma and Hargrave knew each other from the early 1840s onward. Proving that hypothesis will be difficult, or impossible.”

Unfortunately the book “Art Magic”, as was recognised by some reviewers in 1876, is a mélange of occult fragments, often gathered from sources (as is now apparent) that had been generally available a few years before. There is little evidence of a clear mind expounding a philosophy.<sup>22</sup>

It has been pointed out before, that there is a possible contradiction between the suggestion in the Autobiography that Emma first encountered Spiritualism in the States knowing little about it, and the statement in Emma’s article above. “When modern spiritualism dawned upon the world, for special reasons of my own, the fellows of my society gave me an honorary release from every obligation I entered into with them except in the matter of secrecy.”

What is Emma implying here—that she approached Spiritualism with some special agenda? Again this is reminiscent of Blavatsky’s claim to have gone to America and started the TS for an occult purpose.<sup>23</sup>

Emma uses the word Cabala to describe “Practical Occultism”. What did she really know of this? Where does she write with any authority on, say, the Tree of Life? Again, there is

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<sup>21</sup> ‘*Six Lectures on Theology and Nature*’ By Emma Hardinge first published in 1860. **Re-Published by Psypioneer** @ £9.95 + pp for details see ‘Books for Sale’ at the end of this issue.

<sup>22</sup> Marc Demarest adds:—“What clarity, consistency, or structure there is, is EHB’s belief that “mesmerism and psychology are the twin pillars of Spiritualism”—a (deliberately Freemasonic) metaphor EHB uses before, and after, AM is published.”

<sup>23</sup> Marc Demarest comments:—I don’t think she was “sent” to the US, or that she wanted to be thought of as having been “sent.” I think she wanted to be seen as having precedence, in time if not in depth and breadth of knowledge, over HPB.

an implied rivalry with Madame Blavatsky, whose own knowledge has lately been discussed on the web site “Blavatsky News”.<sup>24</sup>

More about the long rivalry between Britten and Blavatsky soon. Meanwhile, to end here is an informal summary of how Marc Demarest currently reconstructs the sequence of events:

As best we can determine, the sequencing of things is as follows: Ebenezer dies in 1834 in Bristol, and Margaret is soon thereafter sent to live with Ann Sophia’s sister Frances, where the next census will find her. After a period of more or less complete documentary darkness (1834-38), which I presume was a truly awful time in the family’s life, Ann Sophia goes to work in early 1838<sup>25</sup> to support Emma’s budding career, which breaks publicly in November of 1838,<sup>26</sup> when Emma Floyd debuts in Bristol as a VOCALIST (not a pianist). I presume that Ann Sophia’s turn to the working world ONLY in 1838 implies that Emma and Tom were keeping the family from 1834-38, given that we \*think\* Ann’s marriage to Ebenezer caused a rupture between Ann and her much more affluent family, in Liverpool, denying her access to those resources (though Ann did apparently receive a bequest when her father died in 1866, enough to purchase an annuity for her). In late 1838, Emma is taken in hand by T. Machlin, a Bristol impresario, and operates under his tutelage and promotion until mid-1839. Some time in 1839 or 1840, T. Machlin hands Emma to T. Welsh, in London, where Emma moves with Ann Sophia and Tom (but not Margaret), and begins a (now we can call it) three-year articling to Welsh, a famous English music master, with articles due to terminate in 1842. During this period (according to Emma), she is loaned to Pierre Erard as a piano demo dolly (whether in Erard’s Paris workshop, as Emma claims, or in his London workshop, is to be determined). (In 1841, with Emma’s articles coming to a close, Thomas goes to sea, where he will die that same year.) On or before April of 1843, Emma joins the Covent Garden company, where she will appear (as Miss Floyd)—in London, and in the provinces, when the company tours—in operas and burlettas, in named minor roles. On or before August of 1843, Emma moves from Covent Garden to the Princess’s Theatre, where (as Miss Floyd), she will appear in several productions, in named minor roles, and receive notices, primarily for her looks and her voice. In early 1844, Emma moves from The Princess’s to Sadlers Wells, to do Shakespeare (singing roles) briefly, and adopting the stage name of “Emma Harding”, before moving to the Adelphi at the end of 1844 (as Miss Emma Harding), and from there to the Royal Surrey in 1854 (still as Miss Emma Harding).

The search continues!

LP.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://blavatskynews.blogspot.com/2010/09/blavatsky-and-kabbalah-again.html>

<sup>25</sup> <http://ehbritten.blogspot.com/2010/02/emma-and-bristol-charity-trustees.html>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.ehbritten.org/blog/2010/02/1838-start-of-career.html>

# THE FIRST MODERN THEOSOPHICAL PUBLICATION

**“You can have it for a quarter”**

What was the earliest modern Theosophical publication, bearing in mind that the T.S. was founded in New York in 1875?

“Isis Unveiled” (1877) by Madame Blavatsky?

“Art Magic” (1876) by Emma Hardinge Britten?

The first publication was possibly the “*Inaugural Address*” (1875) by the president, Henry Olcott.<sup>27</sup>

The background to this is provided by Walter Carrithers (pseudonym Adlai Waterman) in his paper “The Founding of the Theosophical Society”, now available in Blavatsky Archives.<sup>28</sup>

Carrithers noted that the address was delivered on 17 November 1875 at a meeting where the T.S. was fully constituted, and was ordered printed. Over time, Olcott lost his own copy!

“It would be interesting to know how many copies of the original booklet containing President Olcott’s *Inaugural Address* were printed. It certainly could not have been many, for by 1906, its author himself was unable to obtain an original to replace his own, then long since lost or given away. During his tour of America that year, H.S.O. learned with delight that the Boston Public Library had on file an original of the booklet; and in September, 1906, he had a typewritten copy of the text made from it, his original script of the address also having long since passed out of his hands. Three months later, mortally disabled by a fall suffered on board ship during his return to India and to the Society’s Headquarters at Adyar, near Madras, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott made his last address to fellow theosophists when, at the Convention of 1906, two months before the death of his body, he read once again and for the last time the address he had delivered thirty-one years earlier on that historic evening in Mott Memorial Hall in New York City.”

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<sup>27</sup> Item 1740 in Michael Gomes, “*Theosophy in the Nineteenth Century, An Annotated Bibliography*,” New York: Garland, 1994.)

<sup>28</sup> <http://blavatskyfoundation.org/founding.htm>

But the manner in which Carrithers acquired a copy was also remarkable:

“On July 2, 1947, an original copy of this address was discovered in a Los Angeles bookstore by the theosophical historian, Walter A. Carrithers, Jr., who had been drawn to the city from his home in Fresno, California, by the opportunity to meet with a number of theosophists of various affiliations who had responded to the appearance, in March of the same year, of his own booklet, *The Truth About Madame Blavatsky*, published in refutation of Gertrude Marvin Williams’ book, *Priestess of the Occult: Madame Blavatsky*. Coincidentally with his visit, Dawson’s bookstore was disposing by public sale of theosophical and spiritualist books remaining from the estate of Professor Hiram Corson, to whom this booklet was a gift from its author, Colonel Olcott. Together with a jumble of discontinuous periodicals and other miscellanea, it was found lying, *unpriced*, on a table; and, when queried, the clerk answered, “You can have it for a quarter.” Thus, by a “fortuitous concurrence of events,” was rescued—possibly from oblivion—the only original copy of the *Inaugural Address of the President of The Theosophical Society* known to bear its author’s *autograph* and the one copy, of all those printed, which also has obtained a unique *historicity* of its own. This booklet, on its title page, is inscribed by its author’s pen, “To Prof. Hiram Corson, with the friendly regards of H.S. Olcott.”

So is that settled, that the *Inaugural Address* is the earliest publication? Well no, because as Carrithers observes:

“It may be noted that while Col. Olcott, writing twenty years later, speaks of the *Preamble and By-Laws of The Theosophical Society* as ‘our first published document,’ and though he shows that the order for its printing was adopted at the Meeting of October 16, 1875, the fact remains that the By-Laws were not ‘finally adopted’ until October 30, at which latter date the Preamble had yet to ‘be revised. . . .’ On these facts, therefore, one cannot properly discount the possibility that *both* that publication and the booklet containing the President’s *Inaugural Address* .... were issued *simultaneously*, both equally meriting the appellation “our first publication,” *first* of that long and distinguished list of *several thousand* titles which have appeared under the imprint of The Theosophical Society and its Publishing House during the century that has followed.”

Actually there was still an earlier publication, if one may include ephemera.

“The meeting of the 13th having ‘adjourned subject to the call of the Chair,’ the first official use of the Society’s name was when Col. Olcott, signing himself ‘*President, pro. tem.*,’ issued on post cards a notice, under title ‘THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,’ convening a ‘preliminary meeting’ at the Britten family residence, ‘No. 206 West 38th St., on Saturday, October 16, 1875, at 8 p.m., to organize and elect officers.’”



Find that postcard, and you really will go back to the first publication of the Theosophical Society.

LP.

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## The History of Psychical Research in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*

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The *Journal of Scientific Exploration (JSE)*, edited by Dr. Stephen E. Braude, is published by the Society for Scientific Exploration.<sup>1</sup> The *JSE* is a high-level refereed forum for the discussion of a variety of unexplained phenomena, among them those studied by parapsychology, ufology, cryptozoology, and other areas of science (including topics such as cold fusion). Because readers of *Psypioneer* may not be aware that the journal has increased its coverage of topics related to the history of psychical research, I present here an overview of such developments with emphasis on psychic phenomena.

### Historical Perspective Section

In 2008 I contacted Dr. Peter Sturrock, then editor of the *JSE*, and suggested to him the creation of a section in the journal devoted to historical topics. He agreed and the section first appeared in the Fall 2008 issue of the *JSE*. Since this issue I have been an Associate Editor in charge of having the papers refereed for the section.

Similar to the journal itself the section is meant to cover a variety of topics. As stated in the journal these include: “(1) the life and work of researchers, research participants, and experiencers; (2) the content and reception of important books and papers; (3) phenomena, areas of study, methods, theory, and other conceptual issues; (4) past developments in specific countries and periods; (5) the role of institutions and conventions, as well as funding, training, professionalization, publishing, and popularization; (6) important incidents or moments in the history of the field; and (7) discussions of published historical studies, and of bibliographical and archival resources” (Alvarado, 2008a).

Originally the papers were supposed to be very short. But thanks to the vision of Dr. Braude, the *JSE*’s current editor, the section now includes longer papers.

The first contribution to the section was a list of digital libraries I compiled with materials relevant for the history of psychical research and other topics such as mesmerism and spiritualism (Alvarado, 2008b). The following issue carried two papers in the section. One was about neglected aspects of a paper by Charles Richet (Alvarado, 2008c; Richet, 1884), and the other provided examples of resistance and denial of psychic phenomena shown by David Hume and Edward Gibbon (Grosso, 2008).

Since then there have been papers published about particular students of psychic phenomena: Marco Levi Bianchini (Biondi, 2009), Carl du Prel (Sommer, 2009a), and Albert von Schrenck-Notzing (Sommer, 2009b). In addition others have produced papers about psychical research in the American journal *Psychological Review* (Alvarado, 2009), the Groupe d'Études et de Recherche en Parapsychologie in France (Evrard, 2010a), and Italian physiologist Filippo Bottazzi's seances with Eusapia Palladino (Giuditta, 2010).

## Book Reviews

Based on the belief that there is much to learn from the past literature of psychic phenomena, the *JSE* has started to publish discussions of classics and other works in its book review section. In addition to summaries of the books, the reviews are designed to briefly present information about the authors and to relate their work to current concerns.

I led the publication of these reviews in the Spring 2010 issue of the *Journal* with comments about Hereward Carrington's *Eusapia Palladino and Her Phenomena* (1909; Alvarado, 2010a). This was followed by a double review of Ernesto Bozzano's *Phénomènes psychiques au moment de la mort* (1923) and William F. Barrett's *Deathbed Visions* (1926; Alvarado, 2010b), and of Charles Richet's celebrated *Traité de métapsychique* (1922; Alvarado, 2010c). The latter book was an overview of psychical research, or, as Richet referred to the field, "la métapsychique." This was one of the most influential general introductions to the topic. It was divided in four sections presenting a general view of the subject, mental and physical phenomena, and a conclusion.

Thomas Rabeyron (2010) reviewed Eugène Osty's *La connaissance supra-normale* (1922), an important study of the psychology of ESP. He pointed out the variety of features of ESP manifestation identified by Osty, including mistakes.

Finally Renaud Evrard (2010b) published a review of Gustave Geley's *De l'inconscient au conscient* (1919). In Evrard's views, the point of the book was "to build a theory of the evolution of the living that incorporates and, at the same time, supports the existence of ectoplasmic materialization" (p. 543).

While these reviews are the only ones published to date, others have been commissioned. This includes reviews of the works of Aksakov (1890), du Prel (1885), Gurney, Myers and Podmore (1886), Kardec (1857), Morselli (1908), Wallace (1875), and Warcollier (1921). There are also plans to have reviews of more recently published works by such authors as Ehrenwald (1947), Thurston (1952), and Owen (1964).

## Concluding Remarks

It is to be hoped that these articles and book reviews will bring to the attention of modern readers the rich legacy of psychical research of past years, an international literature that is often forgotten by current workers in the field. This can only enlarge our general knowledge of the complex and fascinating past of psychical research.

## Note

1. For information about the Society and the *JSE* see, respectively: <http://www.scientificexploration.org/> and <http://www.scientificexploration.org/journal/>

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**Psypioneer would like to extend its thanks to Carlos Alvarado
for sending us this excellent article and updating us on the *Journal of
Scientific Exploration*.**

New search for Blavatsky source

A renewed effort is being made to collate what is known of the Stanzas of Dzyan, the poem used by Madame Blavatsky as the basis of her book “The Secret Doctrine” (1888).

The question of Blavatsky’s actual knowledge of oriental wisdom has been very controversial.²⁹

The leading scholar today of Blavatsky’s links with Buddhism is David Reigle.³⁰

He is participating in the present on-line discussion, which is being hosted by the Theosophical Network.³¹

Launching the project in September 2010, Joe Fulton wrote:

“Undoubtedly the most mysterious piece of writing in the entire Theosophical tradition, the *Stanzas of Dzyan* are an extremely beautiful and complex work of art. Without the commentaries provided by HP Blavatsky they would stand as a modern sphinx, clothed in poetic beauty and vivid imagery. With the various axioms and commentaries, they are the outline for a complex cosmology and a spiritual anthropology as fantastic as it is intuitively insightful.

“But what are the Stanzas? What do we know about them? What can we truly say for certain?

“The goal of this exercise is extremely ambitious. Various individuals, most notably David Reigle, have spent their entire lives at this question. Others, including Gershon Scholem have posited their origin/inspiration as being from other than Tibet.”

LP.

²⁹ www.blavatskyarchives.com/price.pdf See also Psypioneer Volume 1, No.14:—*Madame Blavatsky gave post-mortem message—Madame Blavatsky, Buddhism and Tibet*, pages 171-179:—
http://woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP14_2005.pdf

³⁰ www.easterntradition.org

³¹ www.theosophy.net

The Beginnings of Full Form Materialisations in England

In the early part of the 1870s, Spiritualist mediums were starting to demonstrate a new public phenomena which was then in its early development; the most sensational of them all—Form Materialisation. This new phase of Spiritualism would bring British Spiritualism into the public eye as never before, and in some ways bring it into decline for the remainder of the Victorian era.

William Henry Harrison was to become a major historian in these early beginnings of form materialisations. Harrison was the founder editor of: *The Spiritualist:—A Record of the Progress of the Science and Ethics of Spiritualism* (1869-1882). Before the materialisations began in England,³² he issued this statement as published below (1870) which was published by Hudson Tuttle and J. M. Peebles in 1871, in America:³³

ACCURATE RECORDS OF SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS

BY WILLIAM H. HARRISON, EDITOR "LONDON SPIRITUALIST"

THOSE scientific investigators on this side of the Atlantic, who have acquired the knowledge that Spiritualism is true, at once wish to set to work to classify the details of the phenomena, so as to establish laws and principles. As Spiritualism is only just beginning to get an extended hold in England, the periodicals and literature of America are examined by such inquirers, not so much for the communications given by spirits, as for accurate statements of the earthly conditions under which the messages were obtained. At present, the American literature of Spiritualism is very disappointing, because it furnishes such meager information to this class of inquirers. I write to suggest, that if more attention were given in America to the accurate reporting of *séances*; that if the thermometer and barometer could be generally introduced into rooms where intelligent circles sit, so that readings of these instruments should be taken,—useful information in time would be gained. The direction and force of the wind, and the state of the atmosphere, at each sitting, should also be recorded. Who knows whether those sudden chills and sensations of warmth, which are often felt while powerful physical manifestations are going on, are real changes of temperature, or psychological impressions? It may be said, "You in England can investigate these

³² In the last issue we published some material on the American physical medium Mary Andrews, who is reportedly the first medium "*through whom spirit faces first began to appear regularly to many witnesses at once*". See Volume 6, No.11:—*The Beginnings of Full Form Materialisations—Mrs. Andrew's Mediumship*, pages 308-313:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

³³ *The Year-Book of Spiritualism for 1871* by Hudson Tuttle and J. M. Peebles, William White and Company, Boston, also James Burns, London 1871, pages 31-32.

matters as well as we.” Yes; and it *will* be done. But, with the vastly wider range of phenomena passing under observation in the United States, more valuable information could be collected in a shorter space of time with you than with us. At present, taking the reports of physical manifestations in “The Banner of Light” as an example, the writers usually occupy much space in expressing their private opinions on religious and other subjects, instead of keeping to their narratives, and recording facts which might prove useful to science.

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Harrison’s newspaper was probably the first *editorially researched* Spiritualist newspaper. Frank Podmore commented:—<sup>34</sup>

*The Spiritualist was avowedly intended to represent the scientific element. It essayed primarily to record the phenomena, to analyse the evidence, and discuss the explanations, and proposed to defer theological and Socialist speculations until a more convenient season. This paper, which was conducted with fairness and ability for some years, did in effect adopt a more critical standpoint than any of its predecessors or contemporaries, and did contrive to keep clear of theological controversy and irrelevant humanitarian enthusiasms.*

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Harrison gives us a useful overview of the progress of form manifestations up to the beginning of 1873:

SPIRIT FACES

*The Spiritualist:—*³⁵

THE systematic appearance of spirit-faces to ten or twenty people at the same time, at *seances*, although a comparatively new manifestation, has now developed to such large proportions that it may be as well to review the whole range of facts, as far as they have been recorded. In all the past history of Spiritualism, there are occasional instances of the appearance of a spirit to one or more persons; for instance; Lord Lindsay and Mr. Home once saw the spirit of Mr. Home’s first wife, Sacha; and Mr. S. C. Hall and several other witnesses saw the materialised spirit-form of Mr. Hall’s sister at a *seance*. The regular occurrence, however, of such striking and interesting manifestations, is a thing of comparatively recent date.

³⁴ *Mediums of the 19th Century*, by Frank Podmore (two volumes). University Books, Inc New York 1963. Page: 168 Volume 2. Originally published by Podmore under the title *Modern Spiritualism*, 1902.

³⁵ *The Spiritualist* Feb 1, 1873 pages 82-83.

One Sunday morning, about a year ago, Mr. Benjamin Coleman, of Upper Norwood, called our attention to several New York and Boston newspapers, containing column after column of descriptions of the *seances* through the mediumship of Mrs. Andrews, at Moravia, U.S.; the *New York Sun*, a daily paper, had sent a correspondent to the scene of the occurrences, and he fully authenticated the facts. Mrs. Andrews, it appeared, sat for manifestations in a cabinet, as the Davenport brothers did, but instead of spirit hands and arms making their appearance, spirit-faces were formed in the dark, and afterwards showed themselves at the opening in the cabinet, so as to be recognised by friends or relations present. The faces were living, and could in some instances talk. At once full details of the new manifestations were published in *The Spiritualist*. Mr. Guppy read the account thus published in these pages, and resolved to try at home whether he could not get spirit-faces through the powerful mediumship of Mrs. Guppy. He accordingly turned a photographic dark room into a cabinet, by cutting square openings in its wooden sides, out of which the spirits might thrust their heads if they could make them. Spirit faces were seen, obtained in a very feeble light at first; and a long account of the first manifestations at Mr. Guppy's; written by Mr. Harrison, was published in the *Daily Telegraph*. Shortly afterwards, Messrs. Herne and Williams began to obtain spirit faces at their dark *seances*, the spirits themselves making an artificial phosphorescent light to reveal their features to the observers. Next, Miss Florence Cook, of Hackney, and her spirits resolved to give their time and attention almost exclusively to the production of spirit-faces. Lastly, Mr. Holmes, an American medium, who recently arrived in England, began, a few months ago, to obtain spirit face manifestations.

Before the manifestations became common, it was thought that the appearance of spirits to several persons at once would be one of the strongest proofs of spirit identity that could possibly be had, but the facts have not borne out the anticipation. The faces are *manufactured* by the spirits, and are not usually like themselves as they are at present, but are made to resemble the faces they had on earth, in order that friends present may recognise them. The spirits who make these wonderful living faces often speak of them in a most irreverent manner, just as a hairdresser might speak of the wax dummies in his shop window. "That last spirit had scarcely any nose," remarked an observer, one evening. "Yes," replied the spirit Katie, "I know that. I only had a little dab of stuff left, and stuck it on for a nose."

In the earlier development of the manifestations, the first spirits who showed themselves were not deceased relatives of the sitters, but the chief spirits almost always in attendance upon the mediums for the production of the physical phenomena,—the spirits calling themselves John and Katie. Most of the first spirit-faces strongly resembled the faces of the mediums in shape, though not usually in colour. Many can testify how much Miss Cook's "Katie" usually resembles herself, though there are often unaccountable differences. Mr. Burns and Mr. Harrison have testified that Mr. Williams's "Katie" had features much like himself, though softened, more effeminate, and of fairer complexion. Mr. Guppy has published that in the lines of the eyes and nose, the faces he has seen through Mrs. Guppy's mediumship strongly resemble herself; he also says that the faces seen by him through Mr. Herne's mediumship were much like Mr. Herne. Mr. Holmes, who has been the most

successful medium as yet in getting recognisable faces, said that at first they bore a certain amount of resemblance to himself, but not enough to excite comment.

In the early days of Spiritualism the question of the possibility of the duplication of the whole or portions of the human form had been mooted. An article published by Mr. Coleman in the *Spiritual Magazine* of March, 1865, tells how, at the house of Sir Hesketh Fleetwood, where the Davenports gave a *seance*, a match was suddenly struck by a spirit, and the “double” of Ira Davenport, who himself was firmly bound in his chair, was seen gliding before the observers. Mr. Coleman states also that Miss Laura Edmonds, a medium, the daughter of Judge Edmonds, of New York, had the power occasionally of leaving her body, and appearing to friends at a distance. She frequently appeared in this way, and delivered messages to Miss Mapes, daughter of Professor Napes, the American agricultural chemist. Once, Mr. Coleman was on the platform with Mr. Fergusson at one of the Davenports’ public exhibitions. The brothers had been elaborately tied and sealed as usual by a committee elected by the observers. Their hands, moreover, were filled with flour, as usual, to show that they did not unclasp them during the dark *seance*. Four hands came out of the cabinet, and after the *seance* Mr. Fergusson said to Mr. Coleman,—“Did you see those hands?” “Yes,” was the reply, “and one of them was covered with flour.” Mr. Fergusson remarked,—“It’s a good job the audience didn’t notice it, or we have had a row.” There was a particularly noisy audience that night. *The Banner of Light* recently stated how some ink was squirted by observers on some spirit-hands, and the ink was afterwards found on the hands of the boy medium in the cabinet, so that he was denounced as an impostor there and then. A gentleman, who had seen spirit-hands thrust out of one end of a shawl, when the boy simply put his hands under the other end to get darkness, was not satisfied. He tried experiments, and discovered that colouring matters placed upon spirit-hands, were afterwards found upon different parts of the body of the medium. The spirits told him that the colouring substances went into every part of the body of the medium. A little tar was once rubbed round the end of one of the paper speaking-tubes used at the *seances* of Mrs. Andrews, at Moravia, and a ring of tar was afterwards found round her month, yet the spirits who appeared at her *seances* had been recognised by their friends at the rate of more than a dozen a week, so that there was no reason to suppose imposture on the part of the medium.

Recently, at one of Miss Cook’s *seances*, some violet ink was rubbed on the back of a spirit-hand for the purpose of experiment, and the smear—larger than half-a-crown—was afterwards found on the arm of the medium near the elbow. Mrs. Holmes tells us that once she was at a dark *seance* in America. A gentleman called suddenly for a light, saying he had caught a hand. A great, long additional arm and hand was then seen protruding from the body of the medium, and it shot back into one of the normal arms of the medium as swiftly as the eye could follow it. At dark *seances* spirit-hands and arms are very busy. The tying of the medium does not appear to prevent their formation, but the holding of his hands seems, so far as we have seen, to do so. After a short time has elapsed, the holding of the medium’s hands does not matter much; but if the hands be held closely from the first; it is, probably, a barrier to the production of many manifestations. This is one of the many reasons why persons of a thoroughly suspicious nature, get fewer tests and more inconclusive manifestations than nobler people.

It would seem that the spirits always in close companionship with powerful physical mediums, because of similarity of tastes and character, can make themselves visible with more ease than others. They rise out of the bodies of the mediums, and, at first, exactly resemble the mediums, though they can change their features within certain limits before they show themselves. They do not materialise more of their bodies than is necessary, but usually form only a head, and sometimes arms and hands. The faces at Mr. Holmes's *seances* do not seem to come from him, but have been seen forming near the ceiling of the dark room, and then floating down towards the opening. Katie has been seen rising from the body of Miss Cook; and while she manifested, she was connected with the medium by cloudy, faintly luminous threads.

The recognisable faces of deceased persons seem to be formed with more difficulty, and to be able in all cases to bear less light, than the faces of the spirits in affinity to the medium. The latter spirits have the advantage of constant practice in making themselves visible, which, they say, is one reason why they can bear more light, their first attempts producing but weak results. The recognisable faces have less life in them, and but few of them can talk. At Mrs. Andrews's in America, where this kind of manifestation is more developed, they can talk more than they can at present, through any British medium. In no case, as yet; has a recognisable face been known to come directly from the face of the medium, in the same manner that the faces of their attendant spirits do. Some of the heads are bound up in white spirit drapery, or have white turbans upon them, the object, they say, being to economise power, as the heads would not last so long were they bare, and wholly materialised. The intelligences animating the heads for the time being, say that both light and the intense gaze of the eyes of the spectators, give them a burning sensation while manifesting, and cause them to feel tied.

The influence of the spiritual state of the observers finds optical expression at face *seances*. Worldly and suspicious people get the feebleness of manifestations; the spirits then have often a pale, ghastly look, as usual when the power is weak. Spiritual people, in whose presence the medium feels thoroughly happy, see by far the finest manifestations. Different mediums, however, vary very considerably in their power of resisting and overcoming adverse mental and psychological influences. Although spiritual phenomena are governed by fixed laws, those laws so work in practice that Spiritualism undoubtedly partakes much of the character of a special revelation to special people.

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Harrison, himself a Spiritualist, was an important well balanced historian into the early phases of materialisation. He was a frequent sitter and investigator with many of the early British physical mediums. Well respected and ideally positioned with his journalistic contacts and the major societies whom he served with; notably the Dalston<sup>36</sup> and BNAS.<sup>37</sup> His newspaper was also the first well known publication in England for the promotion of a National Organisation.

Below, Harrison again gives an equally valuable overview of the different classes of form manifestations:

## **CLASSES OF FORM MANIFESTATIONS**

*The Spiritualist Newspaper:—*<sup>38</sup>

OBSERVATION shows that there are two great classes of form manifestations; in the one class the forms appear with living, flexible features, plainly visible to all the observers, and in the others the features are rigid, or not visible at all.

### **FORMS WITH FLEXIBLE FEATURES**

Sometimes when strong mediums, like Dr. Slade, are sitting with their hands in full view, in broad daylight, living hands and arms are thrust into view from some position where shade prevails, usually from under a table. These hands, when we saw them in Dr. Slade's case, were apparently the duplicates of his own, like the invisible hands which do the writing on his slates, for the said writing generally bears a very strong resemblance to his own, tending to show that it was executed by fingers and muscles like those of his own hand.

And this fact of the duplication of hands and forms has been demonstrated in many ways during a long course of years.

It was first well proved through the mediumship of Florence Cook (Mrs. Corner); indeed, it was better and more continuously tested in her case than in any other. She frequently left her own home to present the phenomena in the rooms and laboratories of men of science, and submitted patiently to every test which they could devise. For the last two years or so of her mediumship she scarcely ever sat without being carefully secured with tapes, applied by scientific and carefully considered methods by numbers of responsible people; the knots were sealed with

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<sup>36</sup> Volume 3, No.7:—*Thomas Blyton and the Dalston Association...*, pages 149-158:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.7July07.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> British National Association of Spiritualists

<sup>38</sup> *The Spiritualist Newspaper* Friday, December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1877 front page.

signet rings. The upshot of all this was to prove that in some cases a separate form, bearing a strong resemblance to herself, was materialised; also that the power about her could free her, like the Davenports and other mediums, from any kind of bonds, and return her to the same.

The same phenomena took place with the Davenports, for there are records that when lights have been suddenly struck at their *séances* one of the Brothers has been seen in duplicate.

It is the same with Mr. Eglinton. The materialised form bears a strong resemblance to himself, as testified to at the last meeting of the National Association of Spiritualists by Mr. Fitz-Gerald. Moreover, in one case it was the medium himself, for Mr. Stainton Moses recently recorded that, at Mrs. Makdougall Gregory's, Mr. Eglinton became covered with white drapery, and that when his entranced figure stood before them there was no medium on the sofa where he had been lying. Mr. A. P. Wallace and others searched him thoroughly after one of his sittings, and no white drapery was found upon him. Yet had the form been seized, plenty would have been obtained, and this shows how much injury might be done by rough "investigators" to the reputation of an innocent medium, the subject of abnormal phenomena understood neither by himself nor the sitters.

The late Mr. Samuel Guppy once printed in these pages how through the mediumship of his wife (now Mrs. Volckman) he had seen materialised faces strongly resembling her own.

With Mr. Williams a form appears, with a face strongly resembling his own in the lines of the eyes and nose, when a close view of it is obtained in a good light. This form has sometimes appeared under good test conditions in an open circle with no cabinet, and while the medium was held by both hands.

Mr. C.P.B. Alsop has often seen in Mr. Herne's presence a form, the duplicate in features of that medium.

In the presence of Miss K. Cook a form appears, which on the one occasion we saw it had a face resembling that of the medium.

The forms once presented through the mediumship of Miss Showers, bore a strong resemblance to herself.

Mr. C. C. Massey and others can testify that at Miss Lottie Fowler's form seances, the faces strongly resembled her own.

Mr. Olive told us that Mr. W.G. Haxby's recent *séances* at his house, the faces had some similarity to that of the medium, but that some of them had beards.



Mrs. Fay's spirit forms, as observed by Mr. Serjeant Cox, ourselves, and others, resembled herself, and were accompanied by undoubted evidence that the medium herself was not presented.

The Blackburn Spiritualists are quite satisfied that Miss Wood's forms resemble the medium.

Thus it is well established that there is a class of manifestations in which forms and faces, more or less the duplicates in appearance of those of the medium, present themselves to view, and that the intelligences animating the forms claim to be spirits. These forms have living flexible features, which are seen by all the observers, but while they are visible, the medium is usually in a cabinet out of sight; on other occasions his body, transformed by abnormal power, and released from the securest bonds, is presented to the gaze of the observers.

## FORMS WITHOUT FLEXIBLE FEATURES

In another class of manifestations, the medium is in full view, instead of in a cabinet, but the forms do not generally as yet under these conditions, present flexible features, with the life in them visible to all the observers.

Once, while Mr. Eglington was held on both sides, at the house of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, a draped form, with no features visible, rose from the floor behind him to a height of about two feet six inches, then sank again.

Sometimes when Mrs. Volckman has been similarly held, not in her own home, a form has appeared in the same way, without the presentation to the gaze of all the observers, of flexible, living features.

In the presence of Miss Cook, in Signor Rondi's studio, a form appears while the medium is in full view; but it does not present living, flexible features.

Thus the established manifestations divide themselves into two classes as yet—those *with* flexible, living features, visible to all the sitters, and those *without* flexible, living features, visible to all the sitters. We have patiently watched for years for a living, flexible face in a good light, which face bore no resemblance to that of the medium, and was not produced on his or her own premises. Hitherto this search has been prosecuted without success.

Mr. A. R. Wallace and Mr. Crookes have witnessed a great number of form manifestations, without once recording, that off the premises of the medium, they have seen a living, flexible, materialised spirit-face, bearing no resemblance to that of the sensitive. Neither has Mr. Varley made any such record.

We have been present at *séances*, on the premises of professional mediums, where perfectly honest and enthusiastic sitters saw anything the spirits gave them a sug-

gestion that they ought to see, accompanied by any objective “something” which gave them a slight excuse for seeing the thing desired. Also, on the premises of mediums, who afterwards proved not to be trustworthy, we have seen a few living faces, bearing no resemblance to their own. But, sweeping these things away as “not yet proven,” one can but wait patiently for living, flexible faces to make themselves visible to all the sitters at once, off the premises of the medium, in a good light.

In the next issue we continue with Mr. Charles Edward Williams.

Paul J. Gaunt

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## FORGOTTEN PIONEERS OF THE S.N.U:

# MRS. JESSY GREENWOOD

In the last issue we focused on the first Spiritualists National Union’s treasurer Mr. William Greenwood, in this issue we publish an article on his wife who continued her Spiritualist—Lyceum work for many years after her husband’s death on April 22nd, 1905.

In the last issue, I noted we could trace Jessy<sup>39</sup> Greenwood back to the Fourth Conference of the National Federation, under the presidency of James Robertson (Glasgow) in 1893; Duncan Gascoyne has kindly supplied me with a photograph (as published) of Jessy Greenwood taken from the Golden Jubilee Programme of 1954 for Hebden Bridge, William and Jessy were the founders of Hebden Bridge Spiritualist Society in 1903, Hebden Bridge Lyceum was formed a year later:

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Mrs. J. GREENWOOD, J.P.,

who will celebrate her 94th birthday on

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8th, 1954.

³⁹ Also spelt Jessie

Mrs. Jessy Greenwood, J.P.

*The Two Worlds, 1921:—*⁴⁰

The congratulations of her many friends will be extended to Mrs. Jessie Greenwood, of Hebden Bridge, on the honour conferred upon her as the first woman magistrate⁴¹ to be appointed in her division of the West Riding. The Hebden Bridge press agrees that no wiser choice could have been made.

For many years she has occupied herself with work for the good, and the local Trades and Labour Council has successfully put forth her claims to be enrolled as J.P. For a dozen years she served on the Todmorden Boards of Guardians, but did not seek re-election at the last election; she, however, still retains her position on Boarding-out, Committee, and was one of the foremost workers for the establishment of a Children's Home for Destitute Children at Mankinholes.

A few years ago she was elected the first lady member of the Hebden Bridge Council, a position she has well filled. Long before then, however, she had served as a member of the Hebden Bridge and District Elementary Education Committee, Hebden Bridge and district Secondary Education Committee, and was a member of the Secondary school Governors, of which body she served as chairman. For this work she was eminently well qualified, having for a number of years engaged in the teaching profession. Since the Old Age Pensions Committee was formed Mrs. Greenwood has acted as a clerk, being the only female occupying a similar position in the country. For about eight years she has been a director of the Hebden Bridge Co-operative Society, and, as president, has taken a leading part in the local Co-operative Woman's Guild. She has been president of file Sowerby Division Conference of Youth. In fact, Mrs. Greenwood has been active in all democratic and education movements in the district.

⁴⁰ *The Two Worlds* August 19, 1921 page 387

⁴¹ Leslie Price commented:—“*Her appointment as a magistrate was very significant. A trance medium as a Magistrate! The law had only recently been changed.*”

See:—http://www.traffordmagistrates.info/html/body_history_of_magistrates.html “It was not until The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 came into force on 23 December 1919 that women became magistrates.”

In the Hebden Bridge Spiritualist Church and Lyceum she has been a leader and speaker for 30 years.⁴² Her husband⁴³ (the late Mr. Wm. Greenwood) and herself were the original founders. The devoted couple had been well trained by their membership of the Sowerby Bridge Lyceum, from which so many of our stalwarts have emerged.

Mr. and Mrs. Greenwood established the Hebden Bridge Society over 30 years ago, and a high standard of Spiritualistic presentment has always been maintained there. Both became workers in the larger field of national service, Mr. W. Greenwood being treasurer of the Spiritualists' National Union until his call to higher service.

Mrs. Greenwood was for many years on the Executive Council of the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union, she being the first lady to obtain that dignity. She was also the first lady to occupy the Presidential chair of the same body.⁴⁴ For many years she has also been on the Council of the S.N.U., and had much to do with its success in its early years of struggle. She is a remarkably fine trance medium, and has taken the public platform from one end of the country to the other, her kindly and sympathetic presentation of our philosophy exciting general approbation. In the select and home circle she has often evidenced her mediumistic powers as a link between two worlds.

We believe that her extreme sensitiveness and insight, balanced as it is by a keen practical nature, will enable her to add luster to the magisterial bench and a large measure of tact to the administration of justice.

She is another example of the fact that fine mediumship and the application of common sense to the practical side of life are by no means incompatible, and we wish her all success in her new role.

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<sup>42</sup> It may appear that the article author is referring to Sowerby Bridge, e.g., *Mr. and Mrs. Greenwood established the Hebden Bridge Society over 30 years ago* in this 1921 article Hebden Bridge Society was only 18c years old whereas Sowerby Bridge was much older.

<sup>43</sup> Leslie Price noted Jessie a spinster! See the SNU website <http://www.snu.org.uk/snu/memo.htm>:—Jessie Mabel Greenwood, Spinster Ashleigh Fairfield Hebden Bridge

<sup>44</sup> 1898:—<http://www.snu.org.uk/Lyceum/history.htm> Also note:—Spiritualists' Lyceum Union Pioneers:—<http://www.snu.org.uk/Lyceum/pioneers.htm> a younger picture of Jessie Greenwood can be seen. If you Google, Emma Hardinge images you will see that Jessy / Jessie becomes Emma!

In 1923 Jessie Greenwood would break yet another first, by becoming the first woman president of the Spiritualists' National Union. Other nominations for the year 1923-1924 were E.W. Oaten, the then serving SNU president; R.A. Owen and W.D. Todd. The Annual Conference of the Union was held in the Rectory Hall, Gateshead-on-Tyne, on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup>, and Monday, 9<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Owen would become vice-president, and then in 1925 he took over from Greenwood as president.

Retiring president and conference chairman (Ernest Oaten) recalled:<sup>45</sup>

*"... that twelve years ago he had joined the National Council in that very hall. Since then the Union had grown from one hundred and thirty churches to three hundred and fifty, and every quarter saw the acceptance of others. The work had been hard but pleasurable. He came back to Newcastle as their President. He thanked them for their confidence and would like to express his thanks for the fraternal support received from the Council.*

*"Mr. Oaten then inducted the new President. Mrs. Greenwood, into the chair, and pinned upon her breast the badge of office."*

Mrs. GREENWOOD recalled:

*"... that twenty-six years before she had been made President of the Lyceum Union in that very hall. She valued the honour conferred upon her, and would do her best to serve them.*

Mrs. Greenwood remained active well into the 1950s.

Paul J. Gaunt

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<sup>45</sup> *LIGHT* July 14, 1923 p 445 (When the business of the Union was transacted, one hundred and seventy-five delegates attending)

# Christmas Quiz

Each December we present a quiz to see if subscribers remember what they have read in Psypioneer during the year, one question for each 2010 issue in succession. Thanks to our Australian colleague Garth Willey, you can consult all back issues at [www.woodlandway.org](http://www.woodlandway.org)  
Results appear in the January 2011 issue

- 1) Where is Arthur Findlay's desk? (Clue - look at the photograph!)
- 2) Who was Emma Hardinge Britten's sister?
- 3) Who was the young lady in a picture with the Fox sisters who wasn't their sister?
- 4) Who seized a spirit form at a séance and shouted "I've got you"?
- 5) Which famous medium had hopes of an operatic career, until she caught diphtheria and lost her voice?
- 6) What did the secretary at the British College of Psychic Science find in the cistern of the ladies?
- 7) Whose grave bore the epitaph "Steel true, blade straight".
- 8) Who took hold of Sir Oliver Lodge's secretary in a fond paternal manner?
- 9) Whose funeral was according to the Greek ritual, with children singing around the coffin, and priests in festive garments?
- 10) Which clergyman was scandalised by a Spiritualist hymn book?
- 11) Which medium appears to have been first to produce materialised spirit faces regularly?
- 12) Which trance medium served as a magistrate?

LP.

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*'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 incl. U.K., postage. \*

*'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 U.K., postage.\*

\*For both Psychic Pioneer Publications £4.50 Inc U.K., postage.

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