

PSYPIONEER JOURNAL

Founded by Leslie Price

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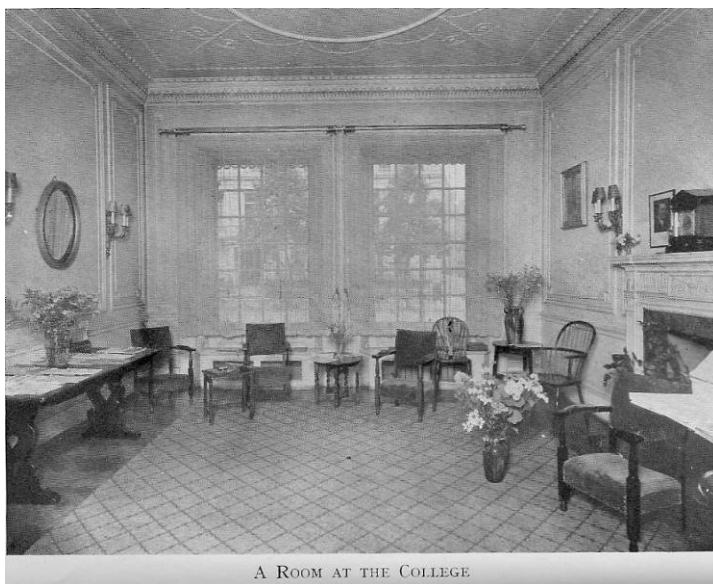
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WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE BRITISH COLLEGE?

Psypioneer has over the years made numerous references to the British College of Psychic Science (BCPS) which “opened on April 12th 1920, as a centre of Instruction, Demonstration and Research in all that relates to the great subject of Psychic Science”. In April 1922 it started its journal, “*Quarterly Transactions of The British College of Psychic Science*” which holds significant research into many famous and infamous cases, for example: The Flower Medium - Hilda Lewis.¹ Miss Ada Besinnet’s Mediumship was the first reported in detail, by James Hewat McKenzie, in *Psychic Science*, covering sixty pages. We have published later reports on her by Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, and others.²



In 1934 another society, The International Institute for Psychical Research (IIPR) was founded by Mrs. Dawson Scott, Mr. J. Arthur Findlay and Mr. Shaw Desmond as described in Psypioneer September 2005 “International Institute for Psychical Investigation” by Leslie Price.³ [its later name—see below].

On January 1st 1939⁴ the BCPS and the IIPR amalgamated forming the International Institute for Psychic Investigation (IIPi).

¹ Sometimes spelt Hylda, see Volume 6, No.6:—*The Flower Medium- Mrs. Hewat McKenzie*, pages 149-154:— <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.6June2010.pdf>

² Volume 6, No.3:—*Ada Maud Besinnet Roche 1890-1936—The Implications of Ada* by Leslie Price and Paul J. Gaunt, pages 61-80:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.3March2010.pdf>

³ Volume 1, No.17, pages 198-207:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/17.PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf>

⁴ The new society (IIPi) was actually formed in December 1938.

In the January 1939 issue of *Psychic Science* Vol. XVII No.4:

EDITORIAL NOTES

The present issue of PSYCHIC SCIENCE, which completes Vol. XVII, is the last to be issued under the auspices of the British College of Psychic Science. The magazine will be continued as the official organ of the newly formed International Institute for Psychic Investigation, in which the B.C.P.S. is now incorporated.

Founded in 1922 by Mr. Hewat McKenzie, the first issue appeared in April of that year and has been published regularly, since as the Quarterly Transactions of the College, and its complete file of seventeen volumes contains a record of valuable investigations made on the College premises, and reports and articles dealing with psychic matters elsewhere.

The first Editor was Mr. F. Bligh Bond, who held the office till October, 1926; he was followed by the late Mr. Stanley de Brath, who resigned for reasons of health in April, 1936, when the Editorship was assumed by Mrs. Hewat McKenzie.

All members receive this publication free, and there is also a growing list of subscribers at home and abroad who value its thoughtful presentation of the subject which commands their interest.

Past numbers of PSYCHIC SCIENCE, except for some of the very early issues are still available for those who wish to have a file of the journal for their library shelves.

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It is from this last issue<sup>5</sup> we publish the report below:

**AMALGAMATION OF THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC  
SCIENCE AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR  
PSYCHICAL RESEARCH**

**UNDER THE NAME OF**

**THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE  
FOR PSYCHIC INVESTIGATION**

By the time this issue of PSYCHIC SCIENCE is in the hands of readers (members of the British College and subscribers) knowledge has reached them of the above proposed amalgamation which is now an accomplished fact, dating from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939. The memorandum issued to all members of both Societies on December 1<sup>st</sup> outlined the proposals; this was followed by general meetings of members of both, on December 12<sup>th</sup>, when the recommendations of the joint Councils were adopted.

The idea of such a union of forces is no new thing. It was first mooted three years ago, but at that time was not considered feasible. Raised again in the spring of 1938, a decision was again postponed, and not until last autumn was it finally resolved to appoint sub-committees representing both societies to definitely look into the matter. It was on the report of these Committees, submitted to the respective Councils, and approved by the joint Council, that the amalgamation was put before members for confirmation and has received their approval.

When the British College of Psychic Science was founded in 1920 by Mr. Hewat McKenzie, there were only two or three leading societies in London, and these far from active in many branches. The Founder's idea was to establish a centre for psychic investigation, so that members could gain first-hand experience on all aspects of psychic study, and to this end he invited mediums from many parts of the world to the College, then housed at 59 Holland Park, W.I I. In 1929, the College was removed to 15 Queen's Gate, S.W.1, under the Principalship of Mrs. Champion de Crespigny,<sup>6</sup> who was followed at her death by Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, succeeded by Mr. S. O. Cox, who resigned in 1938. Mr. McKenzie's example revived the older societies and inspired new efforts, till, at the present moment, there are almost too many societies on the ground, many with commodious premises and engaged in active work. The Research side of the College work diminished after the death of the founder for various reasons.

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<sup>5</sup> Pages 172-175

<sup>6</sup> Volume 1, No.20:—*Mrs de Crespigny and the British College of Psychic Science*, pages 258-261:—  
<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/20.PSYPIONEERFoundedbyLesliePrice.pdf>

The International Institute for Psychical Research was founded in 1934 by the late Mrs. Dawson Scott (a pupil and admirer of Mr. Hewat McKenzie), Mr. J. Arthur Findlay and Mr. Shaw Desmond, for the purpose of investigating psychic phenomena by the objective methods of laboratory research. The late Prof. Fraser Harris was appointed Research Officer, and on his resignation Dr. Nandor Fodor filled the position which he held until the summer of 1938. The new society proved attractive to many younger people and others anxious to participate in experimental work; valuable photographic and recording apparatus were secured and used, and the Institute became widely known as expressing a practical attempt to investigate and record voice and physical phenomena, though the lack of good mediumistic material for these phases was keenly felt. An original member who for many years had realized the need for a different approach to scientific investigation and who had assisted the I.I.P.R. from its inception, two years ago, when it outgrew its original premises in Harrington Road, S.W., put at the disposal of the Institute admirable premises at Walton House, Walton Street, S.W.3, for the carrying on of the work. Such accommodation envisaged an extension of activities.

The British College had meanwhile concentrated on Mental mediumship in all its aspects, but found itself hampered by a heavy increase in expenses on its premises in Queen's Gate, and when an opportunity came last autumn to dispose of its lease, the way was open to bring the two wings of investigation together and incidentally to reduce the expenses of both by an amalgamation of members and workers.

The newly-formed International Institute for Psychic Investigation promises to be a strong centre where the best opportunities available will be provided for members of whom a new influx is anticipated. Some members belonged to both the original societies; some, of both, are convinced of survival through psychic proofs, others are not so convinced, but all are seekers after knowledge along these lines, and it is on this basis alone that they unite to further the efforts of the I.I.P.I.

The work will be carried on at Walton House, which has ample accommodation. Popular publicity is not the aim, but rather the building up of sound knowledge on a subject which sets many problems to its students, and a human and practical approach rather than a cold and often negative scientific attitude, to the study of little known powers of the human body and brain which may so easily be misinterpreted. Investigations with mediums will be careful, and scrupulously fair and courteous with regard both for their psychic powers and for themselves personally. It is hoped that sensitives will offer themselves for experimental as well as for the general work which will be carried on, so that a wider understanding of their powers may further public knowledge of psychic laws and the conditions necessary for the best results.

The B.C.P.S. will transfer many of its workers and its fine Loan and Reference Library, to which will be added the existing Library of the I.I.P.R., whose workers are also being retained. Well-known leaders of both Groups will continue in association and with such united forces members of the new society will be excellently served and should reap increased advantages at very moderate fees.

As regards Finance, the former societies will clear their existing obligations and start the new society without former commitments, and there is every reason to feel that the work can be carried on on sound financial lines. Research work, if done adequately, is, however, an expensive item, but when there is good work to be done members are usually generous, and a promise has already been received which may mean substantial assistance for this purpose.

Some alterations, not very extensive, are required at Walton House to meet the new influx of members, and donations towards the expense of this necessary work will be welcomed from any members who feel that this amalgamation is supremely right at the present juncture and will mean a strengthening of the work. Such donations should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Walton House, Walton Street, Knightsbridge, S.W.3. All communications on any subject from members of the former B.C.P.S. should now be sent to the same address.

Some members of the former Councils, who have given long service, have taken this opportunity to retire from office, but remain available for friendly counsel. The new Council is composed of keen and experienced men and women ready to give their best in time and energy to the new society in a purely voluntary capacity. The amicable way in which all the negotiations for amalgamation have been carried out reflect credit on the Councils of both, for the necessary adjustments have been complicated and required expert knowledge.

The thanks of members of both societies are due to all those who have assisted in bringing the amalgamation to a successful conclusion.

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The journal continued retaining its name *Psychic Science—Quarterly Transactions of The International Institute for Psychic Investigation*, with Mrs Hewat McKenzie as editor.

The first Quarterly Transactions of the IIPi was Vol. XVIII April 1939:

EDITORIAL NOTES

This first issue of Vol. XVIII of PSYCHIC SCIENCE appears under the auspices of the International Institute for Psychic Investigation. The society which was formed in December, 1938, by the amalgamation of the former International Institute for Psychical Investigation and the former British College of Psychic Science is now well established at its headquarters at Walton House. It has not been an easy three months for the workers concerned since the change-over took place. The alterations, the adaptations, the adjustments were many, and if now these are mostly happily settled it is largely owing to the valiant and generous assistance of Mrs R.W. Dundas, the Chairman of the new Institute Council, and to her band of helpers.



Mrs. R. W. DUNDAS

Photo by Dora Head

Mrs. Dundas, a charming portrait of whom, by Dora Head, we present to our readers, has up to the present chosen to hide the work that she has been doing for psychic science for a considerable period under a bushel. But for her there might have been no Walton House, so excellently suited for the work of the Institute. But now with the amalgamation in being, and the increased calls of the work, her anonymity must cease, for upon her shoulders, as one of the officers of the Council, much of the responsibility of the new work must fall. This she is fully capable of bearing, and with the burden as it must be, will come increasing knowledge and wisdom which leaders in such pioneer work gain by actual experience.

From a child Mrs. Dundas has known something of these matters. Her childhood was spent in a house reported to be haunted and she was constantly conscious of mysterious sensings though no explanations were forthcoming. She feels that she must have been a trying person to bring up by reason of this sensitivity.

In 1930, after the death of her husband, she became seriously interested. This interest had been aroused by a message given to her in public from the platform of the Queen's Hall, and from that time the scientific investigation of these matters became important to her. She began to seek to prove these things, securing knowledge wherever available, and freely acknowledges the excellent evidence she received from many types of mediums in these early days. She had, at this stage, a bias against survival, and vigorously questioned the evidence offered and adopted her own methods of research. She also sought to reawaken in herself the early sensitivity, undertook psychic development, and found that in Psychometry and Experimental Telepathy she secured verifiable results. Then began sittings with a friend, using the Additor⁷ for the reception of messages and seeking to develop voice phenomena. This has been continued with the greatest patience and it is through this effort that she has gained full assurance of the manifestation of a surviving personality. She was a member of the British College while Mrs. de Crespigny was Hon. Principal, and when the I.I.P.R. was started she found herself in full sympathy with its policy and threw herself whole-heartedly into its furtherance, seeing in its declared methods a half-way house between those sponsored by previous Psychic Researchers and Spiritualists.

⁷ A ouija board modified:—<http://www.answers.com/topic/additor>

So our Chairman comes with a wealth of personal experience to undertake her new voluntary duties. She feels that the evidence and the phenomena must be able to stand full square to the world if it is to carry weight, and for this attitude the Institute stands. Those who are already convinced of survival must become the keenest of researchers and those who hold a different view must continue to seek for the most adequate explanation of the evidence. When both groups work loyally together and refuse to consider themselves in antagonism then we may see some real progress.

All members will seek to give Mrs. Dundas their most loyal support in a very difficult task, and express to her their gratitude, not only for her outstanding generosity, but for the resolute strength of character which she brings to her task.

Having occasion recently to examine many of the correspondence⁸ files at the British College I was impressed with the great volume of work that had been accomplished since its inception in 1920, the many difficulties it had faced and conquered, the many enterprises in which it had led or shared with other societies and the many famous persons who under its roof at Holland Park or at Queen's Gate, had sought and often found evidence of psychic facts which had changed their outlook on life. The most intimate human stories came to light, long forgotten and belonging only to those who, under the weight of the evidence received through mediumship, had made them known to the leaders.

Among the corresponding members was the name of the fine Irish poet, William Butler Yeats, who passed in January last, and who never hid his deep interest in psychic knowledge. In his periodical visits to London he made many opportunities for investigation, and with Mrs. Blanche Cooper,⁹ the voice medium at the College, had excellent results. He was impressed by the knowledge that his communicator, whom he accepted as his father, showed in all that he was doing, even giving the ideas and outlines of plays on which he was engaged. Curiously, Geraldine Cummins in a letter to *Psychic News*, mentions a similar experience on one occasion when he had a sitting with her. The plot of a new play which he was then writing was unfolded by her guide and accepted by Yeats. Miss Cummins remarks: "Mr. Yeats had a remarkable influence on a séance, and undoubtedly had a great capacity for conveying thought to the control." His own view on the Blanche Cooper sittings was that it was his father who possessed the knowledge and conveyed it.

⁸ In the original article the word is:—*corresdence*

⁹ Volume 6, No.5:—*Mrs. Osborne Leonard 1882-1968*, pages 118-129:—
<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.5.May2010.pdf>

When failing health overtook him one of his last verses expressed his deepest thoughts about the passing years and the persisting underlying life to which he looked forward.

“An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter on its mortal dress.”

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To continue we publish the first IIPi activities:<sup>10</sup>

## NOTES BY THE WAY

The first programme of the Institute under the new auspices has been received with appreciation both by members and visitors, and the audiences, whether at the weekly public lectures on Wednesday evenings or at the many other gatherings have been excellent. Such speakers as the Hon. Ralph Shirley,<sup>11</sup> Mr. G. N. W. Tyrrell, Dr. L. Bendit,<sup>12</sup> Capt. H. Bland, Miss. Phoebe Payne,<sup>13</sup> Mr. Eric Cuddon, Col. Rivers-Moore, Baron Palmstierna and the Rev. Leslie Belton, should never be missed for a hearing, for they are men and women keeping abreast with their own particular subject and have something valuable to give their hearers.

The Tuesday Discussion Teas, with fare in lighter vein, provided happy intercourse and conversation.

Original features were provided by the Monday evening Educational Talks to encourage more consecutive study; Herbert Bland's course on Psychometry and Mrs. Barkel's series of teachings by her Hindu guide were excellent.

To Mrs. Barkel our thanks are particularly due for she most kindly made these talks possible out of a very busy life and gave them as a gift to the Institute.

Yogi Vithaldas again demonstrated his remarkable postures and on his second visit answered questions put to him on Yogi methods Dr. Hector Munro was another welcome speaker.

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<sup>10</sup> *Psychic Science* April 1939 page 49-50

<sup>11</sup> Later Ralph Shirley became one of the vice presidents of the IIPi. For Shirley see *Psypioneer* Volume 6, No.8:—*The Honourable Ralph Shirley - The story of the "Occult Review" by Ralph Shirley - Psychic Science*, pages 207-213:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.8August2010.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> *Psychic Science* had printed some of the names incorrectly, which we have corrected: e.g., Dr. L. Bendit, was spelt "Benoit", Miss. Phoebe Payne, was titled "Mrs."

<sup>13</sup> Volume 4, No.10:—*Phoebe Payne Bendit – Laurence Bendit* pages 225-231:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.10October08.pdf>

The Philosophical Teachings from the 'Controls' of Mrs. John Richardson and Mr. P. Annan aroused the greatest interest.

One member who has had long contact with China and is a student of the Chinese classics speaks most highly of the addresses given by 'Wong,' Mr. Annan's control, and finds the teaching harmonious with the tenets of Taoism.

The next programme will be equally full of interesting events.

Visiting and London mediums have been busy both in groups and with private appointments during the term, three classes for psychic development were held and will be continued next term. Mr. Sharplin's Healing activities, and his Clinic on Mondays have given constant help to sufferers and should be remembered by all in need of such. The new Healing room is a pleasant spot, and with the beautiful Chinese furnishings which Mrs. Robinson has kindly allowed us to retain, presents a familiar aspect.

There have been many necessary alterations at Walton House to meet the larger membership. These are now nearly complete and make the beautiful house a most commodious centre. The large library is finely housed in one of the spacious halls, and there is a retired corner in the gallery for those who wish to make use of the Reference Library. The whole is under the care of Mrs. Taylor, the Hon. Librarian, and Miss Ohlson, a new member of the staff.

A new Séance room has been constructed with much thought for the particular experimental work it is hoped to carry out.

In the Office, Mrs. Greenfield, the Organizing Secretary, is available for interviews with members or others, and with the help of Mrs. Dundas and Miss Russell Scott, many visitors have been seen, and opportunities made for the testing of the psychic gifts of new sensitives, a feature which the Institute particularly wishes to foster.

In the general office staff we retain Miss Tufnell, from the I.I.P.R., and Miss Marshall from the staff of the B.C.P.S. We have had to part with Mrs. Smith (Miss Key) for domestic reasons, and do so with the greatest regret. Mrs. Kelly has given yeoman service during this time of transition, and continues to do so in her responsible position as our Hon. Treasurer. I mention all these workers at this time by name so that members may know whom they will meet when they visit Walton House. It is the desire of all to provide the warmest welcome and assistance, and members must make themselves known to the staff.

A special feature was introduced in the programme on January 26th when Tahra Bey, the Mahommedan Fakir, visited the Institute, and before a large audience, demonstrated his ability under a cataleptic condition, to endure heavy blows upon a great stone laid upon his body. This was followed by the insertion of steel skewers in various parts of his body, some inserted by members of the audience. He seemed to experience no pain, smiling and joking during the demonstration. No marks or blood were seen when the skewers were withdrawn. A bed of sharp nails was provided but the fakir found that he could not prolong

the state to use it. Two doctors present took his pulse while in this condition and found a pulse of 120 in one wrist and 108 in the other.

A Telepathic demonstration of some interest followed.

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I hope at a future date more details can be given on the IPI from 1939 up until its closure. Internet information tell us:—“*With the outbreak of war the organization had a difficult time, however, and collapsed in 1947. The library and records were dispersed or destroyed by bombing.*”¹⁴

I conclude with my last, but important reference from *Psychic Science*, Vol. XXIV No.2 July, 1945:

EDITORIAL

Now that the war in Europe is over and we are already beginning to look back on the blitz, the flying bombs and the rockets with a feeling of slight incredulity and are growing accustomed to going to bed with a reasonable expectation of waking again next morning, we must adjust ourselves to the prospect of living our lives and fulfilling our tasks with the consciousness of greater responsibility and permanency. Amid the immense destruction of life and of inanimate things of material and spiritual value, the inevitable aftermath of strife and the confusion of ideas and ideals, we must become clear as to our aims and not hesitate to revise and enlarge them.

During the long, weary war years, this Institute has carried on with a skeleton staff and a minimum of facilities; that it has survived at all is entirely due to the courage and devotion of the chairman, Mrs. Dundas, who shouldered the financial and administrative burden alone in the face of appalling difficulties.

Despite the inevitable curtailment of the Institute's activities during this period, in some respects its scope has been enlarged. I refer to the valuable work done by Mrs. Harrison in the training of mediums—some of whom show great promise—, to the distinguished contributors who have allowed the Journal to publish their manuscripts, and to the treatment carried on at Walton House by means of the radionic instruments which as effected some positive and interesting cures, and opens out vast avenues of speculation. [... the editorial continues into other directions]

At the end of the editorial the editor concludes:

The name used by the Institute and its journal no longer expresses the full range of the studies we hope to undertake. A more comprehensive one is under consideration, and we are indebted to Professor Saurat for the suggestion that the title of his paper (published in our Journal) “Experimental Metaphysics” would be more appropriate. No term expresses so well the sphere of our interests, which embrace mysteries of matter as well as of mind.

¹⁴ <http://www.answers.com/topic/international-institute-for-psychic-investigation>

At the same time it stresses the fact that we are not a body of scientists concentrating on one particular question, nor group following one particular leader and propagating certain teachings: our task is to learn, by experiment and reflection, as much as we can of the natural and supernatural world.

NORA WYDENBRUCK.

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By July 1945, Mrs. Hewat McKenzie, was no longer editor but vice-president, together with Mr. Denis Conan Doyle and The Hon. Ralph Shirley; Countess Nora Wydenbruck, was editor.

On the back cover of the issue we can note the change in name to:—"The Institute of Experimental Metaphysics", also stating:—"The quarterly Journal hereafter to be called "EXPERIMENTAL METAPHYSICS".<sup>15</sup>

At this point the Library was in operation, ruling out the possibility of "*destroyed by bombing.*"



Countess Nora Wydenbruck, had been profiled by Mrs. Hewat McKenzie (Editorial Notes) in *Psychic Science*.<sup>16</sup>

Countess Nora Wydenbruck is becoming increasingly well-known in London as a charming speaker on psychic matters, and is often to be heard at the Institute as a speaker or a chairman. Recently she opened a discussion at a large gathering under the auspices of the London District Union of Spiritualists, on the Psychic Practitioners Bill, which Mr. Harry Price proposes to get presented for a reading in the autumn. The *Evening Standard* for June 7th reports an interview with Mr. Price and the Countess on this Bill, which proposes to test mediums by an examining Board before permitting them to practise. Countess Wydenbruck thinks that such a test might not do the medium justice. "To ask them to prove their genuineness before such a board is like asking a painter to prove his worth in a

court-of-law by painting a picture on the spot." This is common sense. A medium's work might have to be judged over a long period and reputable societies are the best fitted to decide such gifts.

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<sup>15</sup> As shown at the end of the article.

<sup>16</sup> *Psychic Science* Vol. XVIII No.2 July, 1939 page 59-60

Countess Wydenbruck is a member of the Council of the Institute and on its research Committee and is ever ready to serve its interests, particularly in keeping in touch with foreign students. She was born in London when her father was First Secretary at the Austrian Embassy. As a diplomat's daughter she shared the family social privileges in various capitals, but at the outbreak of war lived in complete retirement with her family in the country. Then she began to study seriously, painting, the classics, mathematics, and philosophy were some of the subjects she tackled during these terrible years for Austria. When these were over she married the artist, Alfons Purtscher, by whose kindness we are allowed to reproduce a very interesting recent sketch by him of his wife. They have two children. It was after their marriage that they both became interested in psychical research through the amazing experiences described in the recently published book *The Para-Normal*. The Countess affirms that these experiences gave them both the courage they had need of when they were financially ruined and had to leave Austria and settle in England in 1926. Since then she has continued to examine the subject from many angles, has studied psychology and become acquainted with well-known researchers. Besides *The Para-Normal*, she is the author of several other books: *An Austrian Background* (Methuen), *Woman Astride* (Lovat Dickson), *Spring in September* (Hutchinson), and a long historical novel of the Renaissance period called *Gothic Twilight* which she has just completed.

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Mediums and entrance to lectures; and the use of the up-to-  
date Psychical Lending Library.

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hereafter to be called  
“**EXPERIMENTAL METAPHYSICS**”

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subscription.

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The Secretary can be seen on Monday–Friday, between 10 a.m.  
and 4 p.m., except between 1 and 2 p.m.

The Institute is not open on Sundays.

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# The Quest of the Golden Dawn: A Cautionary Tale

By  
R. A. Gilbert:—<sup>17</sup>

In his *Library Manual* of 1883, J. H. Slater, who was later to become a prominent member of the Golden Dawn, gave a list of “Works on Occult Philosophy” and commented that

Notwithstanding the death of the *quondam* science, great curiosity respecting works of the kind is evinced by the public. The booksellers, if asked, will say that they cannot procure these works in sufficient quantities, and that whenever they are offered for sale they are immediately bought up at extravagant prices. (p. 48)

But the public were curious observers rather than occultists *per se* (who, in a strict sense, had no existence before Madame Blavatsky brought the word “occultism” into common use with the rise of the Theosophical Society). The few collectors who *were* committed followers of the Hermetic Tradition saw the birth of the misnamed “occult revival,”<sup>18</sup> but were not caught up in it for they were themselves part of the very tradition that was supposedly being revived. Except, that is, in an unwitting sense, for when their libraries were dispersed the books were snatched up by a new generation of occult *literati* who formed the solid core of the revival’s most spectacular offspring, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.<sup>19</sup>

Thus fed by tradition and fired with their own peculiar and decidedly heterodox religious zeal, the more articulate members of the Order both preserved the hermetic literature of the past and continued to create it anew. And just as earlier works were rare in their days, so theirs are now. Nor is this the only problem for the collector: the literature of the whole “occult revival” is so vast—encompassing Spiritualism, “New Thought” and Theosophy, as well as the traditional concerns of the adept—as to be far beyond the means of any impoverished bibliomaniac who might seek to embrace it in its entirety.

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<sup>17</sup> Author and retired antiquarian bookseller specializing in Hermeticism, R. A. Gilbert now lives in a Somerset village a few miles outside his native city of Bristol, where he continues to write on such aspects of Hermeticism that still appeal to him.

<sup>18</sup> This paper was written over twenty years ago and subsequent research and analysis, for my doctoral dissertation on Victorian publishers of esoteric literature, have led me to reject the concept of an ‘occult revival’. There were then far too few persons and institutions across the entire field of the ‘occult’ for the term to be justifiable or even remotely appropriate.

<sup>19</sup> The three major collections sold in the late 1880s and early 1890s, those of Frederick Hockley, Walter Moseley and one unnamed collector, all passed through the hands of George Redway, who employed Arthur Machen to produce some of his catalogues and who published, among others, Waite, Westcott and Mathers.

Indeed, assembling a representative collection of just one aspect of the “revival” is a formidable task, not helped by the voracious appetites of fiercely competitive librarians who are themselves scourged at their task by frantic scholars, desperate to read, misinterpret and publicly distort the contents of that which they can never hope to own. And yet there is hope for the collector, for librarians are dependent on the scholars they serve, and these are so lamentably (or from another point of view, satisfactorily) ignorant of 19th and 20th century occult literature that amateurs still have much of the field to themselves: a bibliographical *terra nova* populated by esoteric analogues of First Folios. Or rather, it *was* so before the recent elevation of book collecting into a sport for the masses.

All of which may serve as an introduction to an account of my own twenty-year hunt for the visible remains of the Golden Dawn, a hunt undertaken first as a collector and only gradually as a scholar. In the beginning, the omnivorous lust of the collector was paramount for I had no initial recognition of the value of Westcott, Waite and their fellows to historians of ideas. Fortunately, I had also no bibliographical guide to lure me into the pure way of the book and nothing but the book, so that mounds of marginal (but fascinating) periodicals, ephemera, manuscripts and memorabilia of the Order grew happily around me—culminating recently in, a lovingly recreated, but miniaturised, replica of the Vault of the Adepts.

At this point it will be as well to explain to those who do not know (a greater multitude than I had first imagined, to judge by the royalty statements for my books on the Order) that the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was a creation of the Victorian “occult revival,” a magical society dedicated to practical and ceremonial ways of bringing about spiritual enlightenment. It was conceived in 1887 in the fertile brain of William Wynn Westcott, a London coroner and prominent Rosicrucian Freemason, and brought to birth in the following year with the aid of two fellow Rosicrucians: Dr. W. R. Woodman, the respectable father-figure of the Order, and S. L. MacGregor Mathers, who successively developed both rituals within the Order and megalomania within himself. Westcott was creator and organising genius.

For fifteen years the Order flourished and then fell into warring factions and entered upon the slow decline which has continued down to the miserable remnants of today. It would still remain almost unknown to the outside world save for its seminal influence upon W. B. Yeats and its summary rejection of Aleister Crowley, whose venomous wit was turned upon the Golden Dawn and all within it. Nor were these the only members for whom the Order provided the stimulus to creativity: all too many of them were spurred into fits of good, bad or, more often, indifferent writing. And all of this output was my collecting goal.

Of the bad writers the first I encountered was Isabelle de Steiger, whose translation of Eckartshausen’s *Cloud upon the Sanctuary* (1896) turned up at an auction sale among the books of a former member of the Bristol Hermes Temple of the Stella Matutina (one of the post-1903 warring factions). It was a Golden Dawn book *par excellence*: translated by one prominent member, introduced by another (J. W. Brodie-Innes) and owned by a third (W. Carnegie Dickson) who had pasted into it a cabinet photograph of Mme. De Steiger and



notes of his own memories of her at Edinburgh. And yet for some unremembered reason I parted with the book, selling it to Gerald Yorke from whom it passed to the Warburg Institute where I sometimes look at it and lament my loss. There was, however, to be no further folly of that kind: from then on everything would be kept.

As my enthusiasm for the Order grew, I gained the friendship of Geoffrey Watkins,<sup>20</sup> who gave me the key to the Golden Dawn door. Geoffrey had known many of the original members from his childhood on, and as they and the Order progressively faded away he acquired their books and papers, some of which came to me—including W. A. Ayton's Second Order notebook, containing his transcript of the original cipher manuscript: the only complete copy extant outside the famous "Private Collection."

Ayton's real love, even within the Golden Dawn, had been alchemy, and it was from among his papers that I acquired my one link with Yeats (I could never afford Yeats's Golden Dawn pamphlets). This was the G. D. Library copy of Westcott's translation of the anonymous *Hermetic Arcanum* (1893), which Yeats is known to have read and used at the Order's headquarters in Clipstone Street. But I have failed to convince anyone that any of the annotations are in Yeats's hand—anyone, that is, other than myself.

Other members proved easier to find and as the collection grew so its parameters were defined and its purpose made clear to me. I began to see the Order as an integral whole and to view the collection as more than a mere adjunct to my obsession with A. E. Waite. To the brief essays of members written for the Order, and the exposures of its rituals by Crowley and Israel Regardie, I added other works that betrayed their authors' involvement with the Golden Dawn, or that showed their influence upon it. A major obstacle on my quest was the indifference to it on the part of booksellers and librarians who, even after the publication of Ellic Howe's seminal study *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn* (1972), remained resolutely unaware of and uninterested in the Order and its literary output, and who were thus of little help in my self-imposed but essential task of finding and examining every book or journal contribution of every member of the Golden Dawn and its many offspring. Only by carrying out this task (or some part of it) could I hope to see and interpret an overall picture of the Order and its place in late Victorian society, and knowledgeable cooperation would have been a welcome asset.

In one sense, of course, their indifference was advantageous, for what I did find cost me very little: Brodie-Innes's self-serving pamphlet of 1902, *Concerning the Revisal of the Constitution and Rules of the Order R. R. & A. C.*, cost me £1 (the seller evidently thought that the initials were to do with the Royal Automobile Club), while his *True Church of Christ* (1892) bearing Carnegie-Dickson's bookplate and Hugh Elliott's signature (the man who was instrumental in breaking up the Concordat between Waite and the Stella

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<sup>20</sup> Geoffrey M. Watkins (1896-1981) ran the remarkable bookshop in Cecil Court (off Charing Cross Road in central London) that had been founded by his father John M. Watkins, with the initial aim of fostering theological literature. It rapidly became wholly unsectarian and a meeting place for what might be termed "alternative culture" in the shape of every esoteric author of the first half of this century. Its recent eclipse has been a sad loss to the world of books and bookmen.

Matutina) cost me even less. Acquiring association copies of this sort is always highly satisfying, and better than Brodie-Innes were Westcott's copy of Eliphas Levi's *Dogme et Rituel de l'Haute Magie* (1861) and Dion Fortune's *Mystical Qabalah* (1935) presented by her to Waite. Best of all—and it came quite by chance—was Regardie's *My Rosicrucian Adventure* (1936) presented to Crowley and filled with the Beast's acerbic notes.

But this essay is not designed to act as a roll-call of my book-collecting triumphs; it has a more serious purpose: to encourage others to take up the Quest of the Golden Dawn, for there is much that I have never found and never will find (nor would I always wish to—I can happily live without the novels of Violet Tweedale or the musical studies of Anna de Bremont). No one collector or librarian could ever hope to build a complete collection of everything written for and about the Order and by and about all of its members. But if we are ever accurately and adequately to assess the place of the Golden Dawn in intellectual history, or even to record the complete history of the Order itself, then the potential contents of such a collection *must* be identified.

It will be no easy task. There is, for example, no full record of the office-holders of any of the Temples of the Order and its offspring, and in the absence of minute books which are presumed missing or destroyed, the only way to establish such a record is by analysis of the regular summonses to meetings sent to members. Many of these have never been seen; in the course of my own quest I have obtained or examined some one hundred pieces of Golden Dawn ephemera, but this is considerably less than half of the minimum number that must have been issued. When found, such pieces are usually hiding between the pages of books once owned by members, and examples thought to be unique can—like copies of Poe's *Tamerlane*—be disconcertingly turned overnight into “one of twelve known copies.” The point to be emphasized is that they not only need to be found but can be found.

Manuscripts are more difficult. Virtually all of the Order's surviving official records are in one or another of the “Private Collections,”<sup>21</sup> but letters to or between members can still be discovered. The library of the United Grand Lodge of England was recently given (after it had surfaced unexpectedly) a splendid and eccentric letter to Westcott from Albert Pike, who declined to join the newborn Golden Dawn. It is sobering to speculate what might have become of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry had Pike decided otherwise.

The collector tends to resent the absorption of such finds into institutional libraries, but the true scholar is more concerned with reading them than with possessing them and is usually content to own facsimiles of rare works. Those lunatic few of us who combine both roles pine for the originals as well and spend far too much time on the chase. We would be better employed rummaging through endless shelves of dead periodicals, seeking the

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<sup>21</sup> The various ‘Private Collections’ – so labelled by Ellic Howe in order to disguise their identity – have been described in some detail in an article, ‘Magical Manuscripts: an Introduction to the Archives of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn’, that I contributed to *Yeats Annual No. 5*, edited by Warwick Gould (Basingstoke & London, Macmillan, 1987, pp. 163-177). Since 2009 three of the collections (including mine, for after forty years of hunting the Golden Dawn I have had quite enough of the Order) have been housed in the Library and Museum of Freemasonry in London.

reviews and letters that can help to solve such problems as gauging the extent to which Waite's alchemical translations fostered the revival of interest in alchemy, or the degree of cross-fertilisation between the Golden Dawn and the Theosophical Society.

But how does one determine which periodicals to examine and which to ignore? A close reading of *Light*, *Lucifer* and *The Occult Review* is clearly *de rigueur*, but should one also examine popular weeklies and literary reviews? Alas, one should and must do so: Brodie-Innes, for example, appeared regularly in the columns of *Chambers' Journal*, as did Waite in his early days, and Dion Fortune's "Dr. Taverner" made his debut in the pages of *The Royal Magazine*. I am convinced that files of *Pall Mall*, *The Strand* and their fellows will provide a great insight into the literary influence of the Golden Dawn, just as medical journals of the time will show how (if at all) the esoteric ideas of Westcott, Felkin and the other medical magicians influenced their professional thinking.

It will not, however, be an easy task, for the true extent of the writings of members of the Golden Dawn is still unknown. In my twenty years of hunting I have acquired most of the major works of the more significant members (although stopping short of W. F. Kirby's books on butterflies) and almost all that has been written about their Order, but there is certainly much that I have never discovered.

Six months after my bibliography of Waite was published, I purchased his private papers and subsequently identified five new "A" numbers, many unrecorded contributions to books and almost one thousand previously unknown contributions to periodicals. When one reflects that the Golden Dawn had, in its heyday, some three hundred members, not a few of whom were almost as prolific as Waite, it becomes clear that the Quest has not ended: it has barely begun.

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**Psypioneer would like to extend its thanks to Mr. Gilbert for sending us this excellent article. Ed.**

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



MR. ALFRED KITSON (DEWSBURY),

Alfred Kitson was born on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1855. He sat on the first elected Council of the Spiritualists' National Union (S.N.U.).<sup>22</sup> His name needs little introduction to the Spiritualist movement, and he is still today referred to as the Father of British Lyceums. In the days of the National Federation,<sup>23</sup> the Lyceum was an integral part of its make up, teaching Progressive (non-Christian) Spiritualism to the younger generations. In Leslie Price's article, "Maurice Elliott and the Challenge of Spiritualism": — "Outlines of Spiritualism for the Young" by Alfred Kitson was "*a deliberate attempt to poison the minds of our children against the Christian's Christ and the Christian Church.*"<sup>24</sup> We can see from this quotation the type of challenges Kitson and the National Federation faced.

At the London Conference in 1895, Kitson addressed the Conference (as did other Federation members):—<sup>25</sup>

"Mr. KITSON was called upon for his paper upon the duty of Spiritualists to their children, in the course of which he said: "Spiritualists, as a rule are such, not from choice of belief but from force of facts witnessed by them, which, by their persistency, have compelled acceptance where the parties receiving them had the moral courage to avow their convictions and would not do violence to their reasoning faculties by ignoring them. Having accepted the facts of spiritual agency, the avenue for spiritual communion is opened through which they can receive the testimony of millions of arisen souls as to the nature, conditions, laws, morals and ethics of the great beyond. These testimonies be it remembered are not the subtleties of the metaphysician, vapourings of an over-heated imagination, or the party bias of the religious fanatic, but the veritable observations and experiences of the parties communicating then. These testimonies are opposed to the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, viz., the

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<sup>22</sup> Photograph of the "First Elected Council of the Spiritualists' National Union, Ltd" although Kitson is not on the group photograph. See page 267:— <http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.10October2010.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Psypioneer Vol, 6. No.11:—*National Federation—Spiritualists' National Union* – Paul J. Gaunt, page 319:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Page 290:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.10October2010.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Quote from:—*The Two Worlds* Friday, May 24, 1895 Front page-319.

creation, the fall, the immaculate conception, the crucifixion, and the vicarious atonement.

“In opposing these Spiritualism does not stand alone, for the science of geology has shown that the creation, according to Genesis, is utterly wrong. And the science of archeology has proved that the human race is immeasurably older than the age assigned to it in the Bible. Moreover, these revelations point out most clearly and incontestably that man was not originally perfect, only a little lower than the angels, but instead he was at the bottom of the ladder of civilisation only a *little* higher than the brutes. Therefore there could be no fall, no degradation, and mankind owes its present status of civilisation to a gradual and hard won ascent.”

Kitson caused a storm of protests from William Stead the chairman,<sup>26</sup> Mr. Emmore Jones, and other Christian Spiritualists. The well known Lyceumist, Mr. Samuel Southern Chiswell (1852-1910)<sup>27</sup> in discussion “... urged Mr. Spriggs<sup>28</sup> and all who wanted to know about the Lyceums to go North. He had not realised how great was the ignorance in London regarding the Children’s Progressive Lyceums or he would have brought a supply of literature to enlighten them.” Incidentally, Chiswell’s paper at the Conference was on Organisation.

In fact, many of the key National Federation Council members were very active within the Lyceum and served as Lyceum Union presidents.<sup>29</sup> However, Kitson himself was never president of the Spiritualists’ Lyceum Union. Among the great highlights of the Federation

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<sup>26</sup> We can note apparently another occasion when Kitson and Stead met, reported by the well known London Spiritualist Richard Boddington. See *Psypioneer* Vol, 4. No.1:—*A Pioneer Looks Back*, pages 8-10:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08.pdf>

In Richard Boddington reminiscences he states:—“*In 1898 was held the first really big International Conference in London, the old St. James’s Hall and the Portman Rooms being utilised. It was here that W. T. Stead first identified himself publicly with our movement.*” In the next issue we will be publishing an article *W. T. Stead: Chief of the Old Brigade* by Edith K. Harper author of *Stead, the Man*, 1914, who states:—“*Mr. Stead’s first public confession of faith took the form of an address given at the invitation of the London Spiritualist Alliance, at their old rooms, Duke Street, Adelphi. It was on the 14th of March, 1893, ...*”

<sup>27</sup> Chiswell was National Federation President and Lyceum president for the year 1895 (Also, NF president: 1891-1892).

<sup>28</sup> This is George Spriggs (1850-1912). See *Psypioneer* Vol, 3. No.9:—Experiences of Mr. George Spriggs, pages 207-213:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.9September07.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Former Lyceum Presidents:—Mr C. Chiswell:—three times National Federation President, Mr. T. O. Todd:—Proposed Legal Status, which lead to the legal foundations and introduction of the Seven Principles, becoming the S.N.U., Mrs J. Greenwood:—Later S.N.U., president see December 2010 issue, Mr J. Venables:—National Federation President, Mr J.J. Morse:—twice National Federation President, Mr A. Wilkinson:—Later S.N.U., President, Mr W. Johnson:—Last National Federation President, Mr E.A. Keeling:—Later S.N.U., President etc.

Conferences were the street marches, banners and the singing of the Lyceum children.<sup>30</sup> I wonder how many of these young Lyceumists were to become well known Spiritualists?

Today the Lyceum is closely knitted within the S.N.U., with its committee (including key SNU leaders) under the presidency of Minister Brian Gledhill, Scarborough. For details of the Spiritualists' Lyceum Union Museum & Library, (link also to the artifacts). Another link is to the Spiritualists' Lyceum Union Pioneers. The "Autobiography of Alfred Kitson," has now been re-published, as well as other publications and is available on the S.N.U., shop link.

Lastly on the History page we can note:—"In 1948 the BSLU amalgamated with the SNU and from that point the Lyceum became a branch of the SNU with special responsibility for training the young." All these links can be found on the Lyceum home page.<sup>31</sup>

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[The photograph of Alfred Kitson that heads this article is taken from:—"The Two Worlds Portrait Album" page 22. Published around mid October 1896, this album is now available at:—http://www.ehbritten.org/texts/primary/ehb_two_worlds_album_189x.pdf]

Paul J. Gaunt.

³⁰ My proposed book:—*THE CAUSE. The Formation of the Spiritualists' National Union 1865-1902.*" When published later this year, it will contain all the Lyceum activities during the National Federation Conferences.

³¹ <http://www.snu.org.uk/lyceum.htm>

The sketch published below is a delightful reminiscence and an excellent educational piece of forgotten history:

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ALFRED KITSON

The Two Worlds:—³²

IN acceding to the editor's request to furnish him with one of my photos for the *T.W.*, and my name having been before the public for a number of years as an advocate for the formation of the *Children's Progressive Lyceums* in connection with all Spiritualistic Societies, I deem the occasion suitable to give a sketch of my life.

I was born February 15th, 1855, in a little village called Gawthorpe, located about two miles east of Dewsbury. My father was a coal miner, and fell severely ill soon after my birth, from which illness he never recovered sufficiently to follow his trade and earn a living. Being the oldest of six, and mother having to go out to work, I had to be both nurse and housekeeper. Schooling was out of the question, with the exception of a few weeks. I learned my letters in the Sunday School; and how to make "pothooks" and letters at home, mainly under my mother's tuition. The rest has been self-acquired, with a slight exception.

Before I was nine years old I went, to work in the pit as a "hurrier" boy, but was objected to on account of my age. After I was nine I went into the pit again, and had to attend the school two half-days per week. In the winter seasons, when night schools were being held, I put my school attendance in at them in order to earn a day's more wage.

I was very fond of reading, writing and drawing. In the latter I was passionately fond of birds, flowers, landscapes, lakes and mountain scenery, and my efforts were frequently admired by visitors. One gentleman wished to see this talent put to use by having me apprenticed to carpet designing, and got a place for me. But father had got into a little work, and could not leave it to go with me to have the agreement properly drawn up, and I had to continue in the pit. My father was a Primitive Methodist, filling the offices of Sunday school teacher, class leader and preacher whenever his health would permit.

I always revered "things sacred," and paid great attention to the preacher's weekly exhortations whenever my clothing was sufficiently decent for me to attend chapel, and was "brought in" before I was eleven years old. The dreadful doctrines affected my sensitive nature very much, and made the subject of death and the hereafter one of terror. My desire was to escape the wrath and vengeance of God. "Love Him" I could not; fear Him," I could do no other. Numbers of times, before I was ten years old, have I sat on my

³² *The Two Worlds*, Friday February 8, 1895. Front page, and page 78, continued Friday February 15, 1895, pages 95, 96 and 97.

little stool considering what eternity for the “lost” meant, when something like the following thoughts passed through my mind. “One year, a whole year, what a long time to be burning. But this was only one year, how much worse when it amounted to ten, then twenty, one hundred, one thousand, and even when ‘the lost’ have been burning all this length of time, they are still no nearer the end, for it is for ever and for ever.” Whenever I got to this period I shuddered at the enormity of the suffering, heaved a deep sigh, and wished I had never, never been born.

Mine is not an isolated case. I have met several people who were similarly affected by their early religious teachings (?), or more correctly speaking by orthodox dogmatic doctrines. It must be borne in mind that I was continually in contact with these doctrines. I never heard one word of doubt, one breath of suspicion, as to there being any possibility of their being erroneous. The mental tortures of those days have been a continual incentive to save the children of Spiritualists from similar sufferings. This was the state of my mind when I first heard of Spiritualism.

In the year 1868, strange rumours of “table rapping,” “raising the dead,” etc., etc., were circulated in our little village. The person who was credited with possessing this power as a result of being in league with the Devil, and being wicked enough to disturb the peaceful dead in their graves, and make them rap tables, etc., was Mrs. Sarah Ann Swift. Hearing that the “spirit-rappers” said there was “no burning hell, but many places of darkness and horror in which the wicked had to suffer, where there was “weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth”; and that all sinners had to suffer until their sins were atoned for, and that as there were various degrees of suffering, so also were there various degrees of happiness, and all people were punished or rewarded according to their merits or demerits,” this report was the most precious that ever greeted my ears as a youth, for if it was true it meant new light and life to me, and the justice displayed in it felt to be in harmony with my inner being.

After this I was very anxious to learn more of the teachings of the “spirit-rappers.” But as all the meetings were private, and held in cottage houses, there was no possibility of one so young as I being admitted, and I had to content myself with listening at the windows, in company with others (men and women who were there for far different purposes), and take my chance of being caught and punished. This continued for some months. In the meantime my father, who was fully persuaded that it was trickery and fraud, commenced to investigate, with an avowed determination to expose the whole thing. But, like many others, he proved that spirit-return was a genuine fact and he had the moral courage of his convictions to fully declare them, though it meant the loss of all the friends and associations he held dear.

He himself proved to be a good medium, both for speaking and healing, and what was far more precious to his family, the development of his mediumship did for him what all the doctors had been unable to do, viz., *restore him to health and strength*. After this, meetings were held in our house, at which I was always careful to be present. After much pleading, I was admitted to others, and scarcely an evening passed without a meeting being held.

I have been a member of quite a number of circles in the hope that some form of mediumship would be developed in me that would enable me to hold direct communion with our spiritual visitants for myself. For several years I sat on an average four times per week, but up to the present time no signs of mediumship have manifested themselves. I have varied my efforts by sitting alone, but with no better results. I have assisted several mediums to develop their gifts, and have even been able to render them clairvoyant, but when I have seen those same persons discard the whole thing, not valuing their splendid and precious gifts one iota, while I, who have hungered, prayed, sought and worked for years for such, have had them denied me, I have felt very, very sad and disheartened, and it has seemed so hard that at times unbidden tears of anguish have suffused my eyes. In the year 1870 I visited the camp meetings held at Bowling, near Bradford, and there met the late Mr. James Burns, the Rev. J. M. Peebles, and Elder Frederick Evans, of America. Mr. Peebles was compiling his "Year book"³³ at the time. Subsequently the two former gentlemen visited Gawthorpe, where a small Meeting room had been opened, and a public meeting was held in honour of their visit, and I was much surprised that Mr. Peebles kept me beside him the whole of the evening, frequently stroking my head, on which his hand would occasionally rest. On bidding him goodnight he promised to send me one of his photos, which he did.

I afterwards learned that, before he bade my father good night he drew his attention to me, asked if he had noticed anything special about me; and on learning that he had only noticed I was very much drawn to the meetings and circles, he requested him to take special care of me, as I had a work to do of which he had no idea. This remark became a theme of comment and wonder, but as no signs of mediumship showed themselves it finally dropped.

Soon after this a Lyceum was opened in our room, as an outcome of the members attending Sowerby Bridge anniversary,³⁴ where they saw the Lyceum in operation, and returned full of enthusiasm. Two copies of the *Lyceum Guide* were purchased, and for a few Sundays the members attended in good numbers, but then began to drop off one by one until I, along with another, who was about eight years my senior, were left to continue it as best we could. We struggled on for some time, but it ultimately lapsed, and the society soon followed, which, however, was soon after reconstructed, and a beautiful room, on the ground floor, with a grass-plot in front, was taken, and meetings were held at Ossett Green.

³³ *The Year-Book of Spiritualism for 1871*, by Hudson Tuttle and J.M. Peebles published: William White and Company, Banner of Light Office, Boston, James Burns, London. The idea of the Year-Book was to represent the *status* of Spiritualism throughout the world. Unfortunately after the first issue of 1871 this was not continued as planned by the editors Tuttle and Peebles.

³⁴ In this series of:—Forgotten Pioneers of the S.N.U., we have previously mentioned Kitson and Sowerby Bridge e.g.:—"The Lyceum at Sowerby Bridge was commenced in 1869 in the house of Edward Woods, and afterwards at the house of Mr William Robinson."—"It was at Sowerby Bridge that Abbey Wilson introduced Alfred Kitson to Lyceum work." Taken from:—"Historical aspects and personalities attached to the early years of Sowerby Bridge Church" by Duncan Gascoyne, former SNU president. See *Psypioneer*:—Vol, 6, No.7:—William Greenwood and the Hebden Bridge Lyceum Opening, pages 314-318:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

I could not rest inactive, and gathered the children of the Spiritualists together, and taught them easy lessons on human physiology one evening per week in the parlour of Mr. John Booth, which he kindly lent for the purpose. This work proved a success, and made such good progress that it was finally decided we should remove to the meeting room at Ossett Green, and carry on a Children's Progressive Lyceum.

Here I had the assistance of Messrs. Charles and James Halgarth, the former still lives at Ossett, and success again attended our efforts. A. T. T. P., Esq., the Recorder of Oriental and Historical Centrals, visited Ossett several times at this period, and was so pleased with our work that he several times placed £1 to our credit with Mr. Burns, to obtain such books as we needed. The Lyceum flourished until some months after my marriage, when I removed from Gawthorpe to Batley, and the distance was too great for me to continue walking.

Adverse circumstances prevented me from prosecuting the work until the year 1882, when I could rest no longer. It seemed so glaringly inconsistent for Spiritualists to send their children to the orthodox Sunday schools to be taught that which they knew to be wrong, that I felt impelled to plead with our members at Batley Carr, and to the Spiritualists in general, through the pages of the *Medium and Daybreak*, and as none would volunteer to assist me, I decided to commence again single handed, and announced my intention for two consecutive Sundays.

On the third Sunday in May, 1882, I commenced the present Lyceum movement in Batley Carr with five of Mr Joseph Armitage's family, the others held back until they saw whether it would succeed or not, and I carried it on single-handed for nearly two years, during which I sent reports of our sessions to the *Medium and Daybreak*, my one object being to draw attention to the question in the fervent hope that a more able pen than mine would plead the children's cause, and allow me to drop into the background, and confine myself to our local Lyceum, as I did not consider myself fitted for the larger task. These reports at last attracted attention, and drew forth letters of inquiry. As there were no books that I could refer inquirers to, my only course was to transcribe the constitution from the Lyceum Guide, one or more series of calisthenics, how to conduct the marching, explain how to convert the hymns into silver-chain recitations, and transcribe a golden chain recitation or two, the whole of which would fill from 15 to 20 pages of notepaper. But I never faltered. The work gave me pleasure. I felt sustained by a power outside of myself which seemed to electrify me from head to foot while so engaged. It impelled me to redouble my efforts and increase my pleadings. I kept the editor of the *Medium*, fully posted in what was being done, and solicited him several times to print the instructions on marching and calisthenics in his paper. He finally consented, and I sent him the M. S. He subsequently printed the Lyceum Constitution on card-board.

My labours now became easier, as I could refer inquirers to the numbers of the *M. and D.* containing what they required in the way of exercises. Lyceums began to be formed in various places, and a Lyceum Guide, was felt to be a necessity. I pointed this out to the editor, and requested him to publish one, promising to assist him all I could in compiling it, and backed my promise by sending him a batch of silver-chain recitations and a long list of

hymns from the Spiritual Harp which I considered suitable. But unfortunately he could not see his way to accede to the request, as he was afraid the demand would not warrant it. In September 7th, 1884, the Yorkshire Federation discussed the matter as a general question at one of its monthly meetings held in the Walton-street Spiritual Church, Bradford, at which I attended. The result was the formation of a Lyceum in the Church, and I attended seven consecutive Tuesday evenings to get them fully established.

There were three resolutions passed at the meeting; one was that we should meet in conference annually to confer together on the best methods to be adopted for the furtherance of the cause and for mutual help, but we failed to meet in the following year, although several letters about it appeared in the *M. and D.* On March 27 and 28, 1886, Mr. Burns courageously engaged the Temperance Hall, Leeds-road, Bradford, for he was deeply attached to the cause, and I was deeply attached to him, and had grown to look upon him as a spiritual father, and confided in him, and sought his advice accordingly. I helped him all I could to make the Saturday evening's entertainment a success.

The following afternoon we had a Lyceum Conference in the same hall, at which Mr. Craven, of Leeds; Mr. S. Cowling, of Keighley; Mr. B. H. Bradbury, of Morley; Mr. Pemberton and Mr. Brindle, and another gentleman from Blackburn; Mr. Ambler, of Walton-street, and several friends from Sowerby Bridge were present. I had intended reading a paper on the Lyceum question, but on being unanimously elected chairman I read it by way of address.

The question of a "Lyceum Guide," among other things, came up for discussion, and a strong desire for one was manifested, and Mr. Burns was naturally looked upon as the person who should publish it. In reply he declared in public what he had expressed to me in our correspondence, that in his opinion there was not a sufficient demand to warrant it, and that the capital sunk in such a book would have to lie dead for years. He suggested as an alternative plan that the various sections of such a "Lyceum Guide" as was asked for be printed from time to time. But this piecemeal plan seemed to please no one, and met with no approval. And there the matter rested until the following September, when I received an invitation to visit Newcastle-on-Tyne to open a Lyceum. While there I was pleased to learn that Mr. H. A. Kersey, at the suggestion of Mrs. E. H. Britten, who had very generously compiled the MS., was about to print a small "Lyceum Manual" for their own use. This appeared to me to be a splendid opportunity to secure the much pleaded for "Lyceum Manual" for the whole movement, and I explained to Mr. Kersey how matters stood. He promised to consider my proposal, and consult with Mrs. Britten, who had so kindly furnished him with the matter he possessed. The plan meeting with her kind approval and willing aid he consented to publish it at cost price, carrying forward any small balance there might be left to the next edition. This plan he has faithfully adhered to, and submitted his accounts to the Conference auditors annually. It will be thus seen that Mr. Kersey's work has been a labour of love from the first, and by it he has placed the Lyceum movement under a deep obligation that few, if any, can estimate.

A very painful time followed, which I will pass over without comment, save only that in my hour of need none stood nearer, truer and firmer than Mrs. E. H. Britten and Mr. H. A. Kersey, to whose solicitations I owe my continued adherence to the work.

Matters went from bad to worse, and as a final protest against the misrepresentation to which I had been subjected, Mr. W. Johnson, of Hyde, moved, at the Lyceum Conference held at Oldham, 1890, and Mrs. E. H. Britten seconded, that a testimonial should be raised for me, against which I strongly protested, but in vain. A committee was formed to give practical effect to it. Mrs. Britten acted as secretary, and made the presentation of the testimonial in the following August, in the Albert Hall, Dewsbury, on the occasion of the Batley Carr Anniversary. The testimonial was in the form of a purse containing three five pound notes and a half-penny.

This manifestation of practical sympathy so overwhelmed me with a deep sense of obligation that I there promised to present the MS. and copyright of my book, "Spiritualism for the Young," which I had revised and enlarged, to the Lyceum Union. The presentation was formally accepted at the Lyceum Conference held in May, 1891 at Sowerby Bridge, and has since been issued by the Union under the title of "Outlines of Spiritualism."

With the help of the "English Lyceum Manual," the cause made headway by leaps and bounds; and its sales have averaged over one thousand copies per annum, which proves that my estimation of its need was not a visionary one.

If I felt my position keenly when letters of enquiry concerning the management of Lyceums were addressed to me, it was doubly accentuated when I was asked to open the Lyceum and give an address at Newcastle-on-Tyne. Most bitterly did I feel my lack of education and mediumistic gifts to fit me for this most important work. Spiritual guides I had, but they could not control my organism to make plain the great truths they possessed, and fire the people with enthusiasm. Nor had I any gifts whereby they could instruct them and me. Moreover the rostrum I was called upon to occupy was generally filled by the best talent our movement possessed. But I felt the work must be done, and relying on the justice of the children's case I went and did my best, though I am afraid it was but a poor best.

I subsequently wrote Mr. A. J. Davis, the founder of the Lyceum movement, on the matter, explaining my position, and gave him a brief outline of my address, asking his advice on the same. His reply was to go on and follow the impressions my band of inspirers gave me; that advice from him was unnecessary. When my book was published I sent him a copy, of which he spoke well, and described the address at the close as a "splendid exposition of the case, full of clear thinking and close reasoning."

Since then I have tried to settle down to what feels to be my life's work. I found that my engagements as a musician interfered with my Lyceum labours. So I gave them up and sold my instrument, &c. By doing so I have forfeited a means of increasing my weekly earnings very materially, as I could obtain one shilling per hour, and in summer time, when our trade is bad, and pleasure parties are plentiful, this is a most serious consideration.

A little over two years ago I had a good chance of regular work with a standing wage, a house with garden and coals free, but had I accepted it I should have been unable to devote any time to the Lyceum cause, and rather than it should suffer I declined the offer.

I should not have referred to these matters but for the fact that there are a number of people who hold the opinion that I am “making my living out of the advocacy of the Lyceum cause.” I came across one of those persons who was residing within seven miles of Batley, and whom I had known for several years. If my *neighbours* entertain such absurd notions as to my motives and position, I cannot wonder when those at a distance do likewise.

My labours for the Lyceum cause have always been gratuitous. A *few* have insisted on paying me the same as they do others. Where I have found it impossible to return home on Sunday night so as to be able to attend my work in the morning, I have unhesitatingly charged for the day’s work broken. But in order to be at my work on the Monday morning I have *often* walked home from Huddersfield at 1-50 a.m., once from Leeds, and once from Sandal and Walton Station near Wakefield.

I have never refused to help a Lyceum in any way when requested, except when circumstances have been against me. I received so many invitations from societies that I found I was soon going to be drawn entirely from the Lyceum if I was not very careful, and in order to prevent this, I made it a rule to accept only such engagements as were coupled with the opening of Lyceum or a Lyceum anniversary, and this rule I still adhere to. I was elected secretary to the Lyceum Conference, held at Leeds, March 26, 1887, and was re-elected at each subsequent Conference up to the year 1890, when the Lyceum Union was formed, when I was elected its secretary, much against my will, for I cannot get away from a feeling of diffidence, which is the result of having no schooling when a child. Evidently the Union has a different opinion of my abilities, or it would not have re-elected me every year since. During the time of its existence, which is now nearly five years, its work has increased by leaps and bounds, and needs an ever-watchful eye, and all the time and devotion that can be put into it. As I look back on the past, and note the great change that has taken place in the work on behalf of our children, a feeling of deep thankfulness fills my heart. Thirteen years ago there were but two Lyceum, viz., Sowerby Bridge and Keighley, to-day there are 75, 51 of which are in the British Spiritualists’ Lyceum Union. And I hope and trust ere long, with the help of the district visitors, and the no less needful help of the mediums, that each society will see to the teachings and training of their children, and not send them to other places to have their minds cramped and distorted by traditions and doctrines that are not true, and save them from the suffering and agony of mind that I had to endure.

My hopes and desires are not confined to the Lyceum work. My heart yearns to do something for the orphans and castaways of our slums and the fallen ones on streets. I should like to see an orphanage and home of refuge instituted, where these poor helpless ones be safely harboured, cared for, and assisted to some useful and respectable work.

The Brotherhood of Man is not taught by the angels as mere sentiment, they intend it being practised. All those waifs and outcasts of society are as dear and precious in their sight as the more respectable. We are all of one family, of one father—God. And by-and-bye Spiritualists will wake up to the fact, and set themselves to work to realise it. They will not allow it to be said that it is left for Christians to do all the philanthropic work. But the Spiritualists in entering upon the work will lay the axe at the root of the Social Upas Tree, that it may cease to produce such unhappy beings.

While I have stated most frankly that I have no mediumistic gifts, I wish to state quite as frankly that I am conscious of an overshadowing intelligence that prompts and impels me in the work. This power has impressed and sustained me from the first. It is under its influence that all my articles have been written; this also applies to the serial and short stories. I get the impression to write a certain article or story, and until it is fully accomplished every fibre within me feels aglow with magnetic fire. Privations incurred for its sake feels to give me more happiness than success in worldly gains could.

Whether this is the work of the band of inspirers Mr. A. J. Davis speaks of or not, I cannot say; and whether this is the work my old friend, J.M. Peebles, M.D., discerned I am equally ignorant. I only know that I am guided and inspired in the work. And by striving to work in harmony with that power I hope to save the children of Spiritualists from such sufferings as were mine. And in doing this I still retain a sincere desire to be permitted to hold direct communion with my guides, that I may see, hear, and realise their presence for myself, and thus be better able to carry on the work of reformation.

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### **Psypioneer Note:**

Unfortunately due to the size of the articles in this issue, we have had to miss out the concluding part of Herne and Williams:—Professional Partnership. This will appear in the March issue.

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