

PSYPIONEER JOURNAL

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- 137 – Victoria Helen McCrae Duncan (née MacFarlane) – Paul J. Gaunt
Impressions of Mrs. Duncan's Mediumship – George F. Berry
Early materialisations photographed through Duncan's Mediumship
Later materialisations photographed through Duncan's Mediumship
Fine Materialisations – *The Two Worlds*
The story continues – Britten Memorial Museum.
- 151 – Notes by the Way: Friends of Theosophical Archives – A Proposal –
Leslie Price
- 153 – Mr Gardner Again – A reader responds – Leslie Price
- 154 – The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union Part Five – Paul J.
Gaunt
- 157 – After Forty Years – An Outline of the History of "The Two Worlds." – *The
Two Worlds*
- 163 – Théodore Flournoy on Veridical Hallucinations – Carlos S. Alvarado
- 171 – Some books we have reviewed
- 172 – How to obtain this Journal by email

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Victoria Helen McCrae Duncan (née MacFarlane)

November 25th, 1897 – 6th, December 1956¹

Mediumship and Spirit Forms Photographed through the mediumship of Helen Duncan

In the early 1930's there was severe criticism regarding Duncan's mediumship.² In October 1930 she began a series of grueling test sésances for the London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA), conducting over 50 sittings. Reports of these tests were published in their journal *Light*, between May – June 1931.³ In breach of her contract to the LSA, she was also tested by Harry Price during the latter part of this period (first sésance May 4th 1931) both reports placed Helen in negative light. Harry Price concluded she was fraudulent and used regurgitation to produce the ectoplasm.⁴ Later in 1933, Helen faced her first ordeal in a court of Law. It was alleged that the purported materialisation of a child control called Peggy, was in fact a woman's under-vest manipulated by the medium.⁵



Equally, during the early 1930's, there were many positive sésances involving Helen Duncan, and it is true to say she did not shy away from strict pre-sésance procedures often imposed upon her which included stitched garments, strip searches, and internal medical

¹ There are various dates given for Helen Duncan's birth, this date is from a copy of her birth certificate. 1861 – 1965 Register of Births, Parish of Callander, County of Perth 5th, April 2000, certificate No. 204700.

² Much has been written on Helen Duncan; in more recent years, accumulated myth about her life has appeared on the various websites. Helen was the first and only known Spiritualist medium to be charged, and serve a prison sentence (in 1944) under the 1735 Witchcraft Act. Many fell, and some served a maximum prison sentence of three months hard labour under the 1824 Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act. The first to serve imprisonment under the Vagrancy Act was physical medium Francis Ward Monck, known as Dr. Monck. Charged in November 1876 and after a failed appeal he received the maximum sentence to be served at Wakefield Gaol in February 1877.

³ See – *Plain facts about the Duncan Mediumship* – Maurice Barbanell: Volume 4, No 1; January 2008:—
<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08.pdf>

⁴ Bulletin of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research – *Regurgitation and the Duncan Mediumship* by Harry Price, published 1931.

⁵ See – *The first Duncan trial* – Leslie Price: Volume 4, No 8: August 2008:—
<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.8August08.pdf>

examinations. Below is an article by former Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) General Secretary and President George Berry. Published in *The National Spiritualist*,⁶ May 1932 pages 68-69:

Impressions of Mrs. Duncan's Mediumship

By GEO. F. BERRY, Dipl. S.N.U.

The seance was held in the rooms of the Manchester Central Spiritualist Church, on Thursday, April 21st, in the presence of 15 sitters. The medium, in the presence of a committee of ladies, divested herself of her normal attire and put on the special seance dress which had previously been examined by other sitters. The cabinet and the chair on which the medium sat were also closely searched. Once inside the cabinet and the curtains drawn, the medium was quickly entranced, and "Albert," the control, was heard talking to his medium. His voice, as well as those of all the manifesting spirits, is markedly different from that of Mrs. Duncan. She is broad Scottish, and with the exception of the small control, "Peggy," no trace of Scottish accent was heard in the speech of those who talked to us.

The phenomena began with flashes of light inside the curtains, low down and moving upwards rapidly. Later, when seen at the open curtains illuminating the spirit forms or that of the medium, the light showed a deep orange centre, fading to a dull gold glow. Once, when high up, it appeared as a diamond shaped mass, apparently held in the palm of the hand of the control. At other times it showed as a round glowing marble, but always it glowed as through in ectoplasmic envelope.

Before any spirit forms were permitted to manifest, "Albert" instructed his medium to rise from her chair and stand before the drawn curtains. She turned round slowly, in full view of the sitters, to exhibit the masses of ectoplasm that draped her figure from head to foot. The only places not covered were under the arms. The appearance was of a glowing filmy overall covering thrown over her head, completely covering her. Its colour was a creamy white. All the spirit forms, as they successively manifested, were covered in like manner. In no case did I observe any face uncovered. All the actions—even when a "Captain" stood smartly to attention, gave the salute and clicked heels together—the whole actions were performed under the ectoplasmic canopy. The substance showed all the changes in billowing and shadows that would be expected if the same actions were performed by some person in the body swathed in a sheet of light texture.

On several occasions these forms stretched out a hand to be laid in the palm of some sitter. The sitters were in the second row and leaned over those in the front row to meet and feel the spirit hand in theirs. The spirit hand, pale pink in the semi-darkness, was seen as a full-formed hand, but flickering—now visible, now invisible,—as though it required effort to

⁶ *The National Spiritualist* was the official Journal of the Spiritualist National Union Ltd. The duration of its existence was from July 1924 – December 1932, it always remained at twopence.

maintain the solid formation. Those who felt these hands declared they were warm and life-like. One form leaned forward from the side of the cabinet, out of my line of vision, and spoke to a lady sitting at the end of the first row. She was kissed by the form, declaring she felt the touch of a moustache. She was also strongly gripped by the hand, remarking “how well I know that grip,”

The form disappeared, and the lady appealed for its return. The form responded, but this time was not fully materialised. Something invisible pressed against the lady, whereat she screamed loudly. The form, still invisible, apparently made a hasty retreat into the cabinet, brushing over the feet of several sitters on the front row. I distinctly felt the pressure on my foot, by no means heavy, but sufficiently marked to compel recognition. I did not look down, it was gone too soon, so I cannot say if it had shape.

Immediately following the scream, the medium moaned as if in pain. “Albert” sternly rebuked the sitter, said there was nose-bleeding,⁷ and half threatened to end the seance. He was next heard encouraging the medium, and the sitters sang softly to restore harmony and to build up the vibrations.

“Albert” called for someone (by name Lizzie”), saying there was present a lady known to her, a school friend, passed over some years ago with throat trouble. This form was seen at the open curtains, the light sweeping over it rapidly. It came a second time, whispering “Its Jessie.” Singing was asked for during which the light grew more intense. “Albert” requested the sitters to watch the form turn and throw the light on the face of the medium. I and those near me saw distinctly the spirit form holding the light, and at her side the illuminated face of the medium. The sitter, in reply to questions, was informed of success to come in securing voice phenomena in her own home circle. Kisses were blown from within the cabinet as the form vanished.

A lady and gentleman were next favoured. A lady and young boy manifesting. The boy claimed the sitter as “auntie.” She leaned forward to give the boy a biscuit. In childish tones he correctly described the biscuit

⁷ Ernest Oaten was present at this séance; he was present at another séance when a similar incident occurred and is recorded in the *Enigma of Psychic Phenomena*, by Alan E. Crossley in 1974:

“I recall one Helen Duncan seance when it had been arranged for Ernest Oaten, then editor of “Two Worlds,” to be admitted after it had begun.

“Ernest came straight from addressing a London Spiritualist meeting. As was always the case at Helen’s seances, this was held in the dark, though there was a dim red light over the cabinet.

“Albert was told that Ernest was ready to come into the seance room. There was present a newcomer unfamiliar with the procedure at physical seances. To help Ernest find his seat, this newcomer switched on his cigarette lighter. There was a groan from the cabinet. The seance was halted. Helen was seen to be bleeding profusely from her nose.”

See: *A Journey of Psychic Discovery*:—<http://snppbooks.com/a-journey-of-psychic-discovery.html>

as “chocolate and digestive.” He took a good bite and handed the rest back to his aunt. He was asked what his aunt had done for him that day. The reply was “you brought me flowers” This was correct; the sitter declared the hand placed in hers was a baby hand. The voice was like the boy’s, and the height corresponded with his size. “Albert” said he was sending the boy home to bring the flowers to the seance, but they had not arrived when the seance closed.

A young man’s mother manifested next, calling “Harold.” She showed great distress, and the son did his best to comfort her. “Albert” promised the young man great progress in his development if he continued to sit with a gentleman indicated among the sitters. This gentleman was urged to use his influence to keep the young man under good psychic conditions. The mother took her boy’s hand and squeezed it. “Albert” asked the son to note the difference between the spirit hand and that of the medium. The spirit hand was declared to be small and dainty, while the medium’s hand was large and plump; there were also marked difference in the nails. “Albert” asked his medium to stand up, and when the curtain again opened, a spirit form, much taller than the medium, was seen standing side by side with Mrs. Duncan.

The sitter, for whom the form had come, asks about her husband’s eyes. “Albert” replies, and to a further question, “Will it get better?” loud raps were heard within the cabinet. Just before retiring for the third time, this form said “Good-night, George.”

A tall, well-built form came, asking for someone who was present, at a former seance. This was followed by a lady who sang very sweetly some verses of old-time revival hymns. Every word was most clearly enunciated, and the tunes were delightfully melodic. A sitter claimed the form as a niece who had passed away in infancy, and said the hymns were a direct answer to prayer.

The next to manifest was the child-control “Peggy.” An impish little figure, full of vitality and restless energy. Unlike the other forms, “Peggy” left the cabinet and was clearly seen for a full 10 minutes in front of the closed curtains. She maintained a lively conversation with myself and Mr. Oaten. She described articles of furniture in the office, and referred to a framed photograph, and said it contained a picture “of her Mr. McIndoe” (correct). She further mentioned a letter received that day, and said she had overheard Mr. Oaten and I discussing it. She proved her correctness by mentioning our criticism of the writer.

A notable change was seen in the last few forms to manifest. “Albert” informed us that, in consequence of the injury to the medium, the ectoplasm for these later forms was not taken from the month, but from the lower part of the body. Consequently the forms were built up from the floor. A rounded shape—the head—was seen to foam and to shoot up rapidly to the full height. Before disappearing, the form collapsed to the floor. Several times, when the billowy mass of ectoplasm had flowed

through the curtains, a portion was left outside when the curtain closed on the vanishing form. Instead of being drawn into the cabinet, as would be the case were it ordinary drapery, the substance thinned like steam and dissolved into invisibility.

The seance lasted about 1½ hours, and closed with a display of lights. The medium finally left the cabinet and, in reply to a question concerning the accident, she replied that she felt as if someone had given her a blow to the head. There was still a trickle of blood from the nostril.

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The early 1930's marked the introduction of infra-red photography, and could potentially lift many of the barriers of seeing inside the dark séances and photographically record the phenomena as well as detecting fraud; as was the case at the Chesterfield Spiritualist Camp.⁸ According to *Psychic News*, the first photograph using the new infra-red ray process *in the dark* was in Mrs. Dorothy Henderson's séance room in March/April 1934 published in *Psypioneer* May 2012.⁹ In the same issue we also published an earlier experimental photograph of Helen Duncan using the new infra-red process, enabling a photograph to be taken in a *subdued red light* in June 1932.

Early materialisations photographed through Duncan's Mediumship

Psypioneer noted in the July 2012 issue, that the well-known alleged photographs of the spirit form Katie King were not *all* taken by Sir William Crooks as previously assumed, but by William Henry Harrison (1841-1897) the founder editor of *The Spiritualist*, 1869-1882.

This prompted me to look at the Helen Duncan spirit materialisation photographs as various contradictions appear, and where did the various photographs originate from. I first noted that some of the photographs had been cropped and the image reversed which makes it appear there are more photographs than there actually are. Some of the images are claimed by some authors to be the controls Albert and Peggy, but are they?



⁸ See – *Fraud uncovered at Chesterfield Spiritualist Camp* – *Psychic Observer*: Volume 4, No 5; May 2008:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.5May2008.pdf>

⁹ Volume 8, No 5: May 2012:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP8.5May2012.pdf>

Malcolm Gaskill in his book *Hellish Nell* (2001) states:

“A great task lay ahead. Every Thursday, and sometimes twice a week, Helen laboured for many months to shape the diaphanous ectoplasm around otherwise invisible spirits, so that their sprawling and wobbling forms gradually grew in size and definition, thereby perfecting a performance which had been merely impressive but now became absolutely startling. Invitations were extended to selected guests. On numerous occasions in 1928, amateur photographer Harvey Metcalfe visited and, convinced by what he saw, arranged with the spirit guide Albert to take the earliest known flash photographs of the materialized spirits. As Walter had done,¹⁰ Albert gave directions and would not allow pictures to be taken until the medium was ready. Of about fifty glass positives taken by Metcalfe, a handful survive showing Helen sturdily seated, wearing a velour dress and a protective blindfold as Kathleen Goligher had done when she faced Crawford’s camera.”

The image above is one of Harvey Metcalfe’s photographs. In his book, *The Story of Helen Duncan* (1975), Alan Crossley gives us more information on the photographs from Metcalfe with whom he was in contact with:

“Mr Harvey Metcalfe, F.C.I.S., took a personal interest in Mrs Duncan’s mediumship and its development from the beginning and I am grateful to him for providing the four plates depicting some of the very first experimental materializations to manifest. It should be stressed, however, that these ectoplasmic formations do not represent deceased persons but are produced primarily as an exercise in manipulating and controlling the flow of ectoplasm from the medium. Later materializations took on a more realistic appearance and eventually were capable of independent thought and speech as well as being identifiable and giving evidence of their reality to those seeking contact with their loved ones. Mr Metcalfe supplied me with the following statement:

“I screened about fifty glass positives for Mrs Duncan showing physical phenomena while she was in the trance state. These were in the early stages of her development.

“It was obvious that she had God-given gifts in this direction and I had many sittings with her solely to help her develop the mediumship from about 1928. Latterly, she gave semi-public seances to many groups of people, particularly during the Second World War. I knew her spirit guide, Albert, and the child guide, Peggy. I had many conversations with them. All the seances were conducted under test conditions.

“My wife and mother-in-law also had sittings with Mrs Duncan. At these sittings I saw both Albert and Peggy separate from the medium. Peggy as a

¹⁰ This is referring to the spirit control of Mina Crandon (known also as Margery); Walter Stinson was her diseased brother. In recent years, Walter Stinson is claimed to be connected to the physical mediumship of Stewart Alexander. His book: *An Extraordinary Journey:—The Memoirs of a Physical Medium*, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England, 2010. See Psypioneer book review by Leslie Price:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

materialized form, was seen to dance, romp, laugh and sing. From my experience, I feel that Mrs Duncan was one of the greatest and most sincere mediums of the twentieth century.”

(signed) HARVEY METCALFE, F. C. I. S.”



Gaskill publishes a cropped image of the same photograph as shown above, he states the photograph is taken in Scotland, and – “Harry Price dubbed the [...] picture ‘the old witch concoction’.”

This image and another similar Metcalfe photograph shown below have brought considerable ridicule (as have Metcalfe’s other photographs). They do indeed appear to look faked, sometimes referred to as papier-mâché and cheesecloth – or Punch and Judy. Manfred Cassirer in his book *Medium on Trial* (1996), informs us the materialisation form (below) is Duncan’s child control Peggy. Cassirer publishes Metcalfe’s same photograph as shown, of the materialised form of Peggy, but cropped and reversed as shown on the next page.

But is this image really the child control Peggy?

Alan Crossley is quite clear in his statement referring to the Metcalfe photographs, quoted above:

“It should be stressed, however, that these ectoplasmic formations do not represent deceased persons but are produced primarily as an exercise in manipulating and controlling the flow of ectoplasm from the medium. Later materializations took on a more realistic appearance and eventually were capable of independent thought and speech as well as being identifiable and giving evidence of their reality to those seeking contact with their loved ones.”



Crossley publishes four of the Metcalfe photographs in the first edition of his 1975 book;¹¹ each photograph is accompanied with information presumably given by the photographer.

The quoted information below is referring to two Metcalfe photographs shown:

1). – Photograph referred to by Malcolm Gaskill.

“The first time an ectoplasmic form is able to support itself. Again there is an increase in the volume of ectoplasm, the substance used to create the materialization of a deceased person. The intelligence behind such phenomena must surely have access to laws which govern such manifestations, and are, as yet, outside those known to science.

“It should be stressed, however, that the materializations at this stage were experimental and were not intended to resemble deceased persons. The crude appearance of the form in no way justifies rejection of the phenomena which is at its early development stage. A full length form illustrated in another part of the book will indicate the advance and progress made possible through continued development of the mediumship.”



2). – Photograph which Manfred Cassirer claims to be: “Peggy” Helen Duncan’s child control, materialises.”

“A more substantial form is produced. At this stage, the purpose is to manipulate and mould the ectoplasm and perfect the process of reproducing as near a likeness of the deceased person as possible. The infusion of the animating force, the spirit, gives the form the ability to speak and hold a normal, intelligent conversation as well as appearing to resemble the person whom they claim to be.

“Note the rope-like cord which links the form to the medium. With a full materialization, the medium has been known to lose a considerable amount of weight.”

What appears not to have been taken into account is: Were these photographs introduced prior to the introduction of the *later* controls – Albert Stewart and Peggy? Research needs to confirm this, but for the time being work must be with the materials at hand. With regard to the Metcalfe photographs, Crossley appears to be the most knowledgeable and was in contact with the photographer. Quoting again from his book, it may suggest Albert and Peggy came into being after these photographs (p34-35):

¹¹ The later published reprint by Psychic World Classic Publications, 1999, prints only three of the photographs.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS

“Eventually, Mrs Duncan’s control, Dr Williams, was replaced by another control called Donald. He proved to be very ‘earthy’. His task was to convey one hundred per cent evidence to sitters of their departed loved ones. This was necessary to give support to the materializations that were to follow. Donald’s part in the development, important as it was, took only a short time before he was superceded [sic] by Albert Stewart, a former pattern steel maker from Scotland who emigrated to Australia and died there. Albert was to become Mrs Duncan’s regular control throughout the rest of her life as a medium. Another regular spirit which was introduced about this time was Peggy a little Scots girl whom Albert chose to train from his ‘side of life’ so that she could ‘fill in’ at seances when Albert was called away, as he often was during a seance.

“The materializations had by now developed from small, jelly-like forms to full human figures capable of independent thought and speech.”

Peggy was the daughter of Lena Hazeldine, a woman who Helen Duncan had met and who had attended one or more of her séances. Helen and Lena Hazeldine appear to have had a mutual friend in Dr. Montague Rust, who (in some reports) was instrumental in bringing Duncan to the London Spiritualist Alliance in 1930, and later gave evidence for the defence in Helen’s 1933 trial. Dr. Rust was from Newport in Fife, a family friend of the Hazeldine’s who had attended to Peggy while alive. It is said in some reports that Dr. Rust introduced Peggy’s mother to Helen. Peggy’s age varies in different reports; her mother refers to Peggy as a child; some reports place her from early–mid teens to early twenties.

As we hit the various websites and publications, we will find some reports have claimed both of these images; although it is clear, there are marked differences, as the spirit control



“Peggy”

FACT OR MYTH!

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Later materialisations photographed through Duncan's Mediumship



As previously quoted from the accompanying text of the Metcalfe photographs:

“A full length form illustrated in another part of the book will indicate the advance and progress made possible through continued development of the mediumship.”

Again in numerous publications this image is claimed or suggested to be the main control of Helen Duncan Albert Stewart. As in the case of the Metcalfe photographs, this image was taken by flash light. It can be noted in the earlier images Helen wore a blindfold to minimize the shock from the bright flash. It can be fairly well noted that this image does not carry the beard of Albert; and was taken by a friend of Crossley, John Kinsella a leading Liverpool healer. The image appears to have first been published in 1974. There is no indication as to who the materialised form is, or what date it was taken.

A year prior to Alan Crossley's, *The Story of Helen Duncan*, he published a booklet on physical phenomena called *The Enigma of Psychic Phenomena*, published privately by Crossley (Chester), in 1974. The book contained this photograph by John Kinsella on the front page of the January 11th issue of *Psychic News*, Crossley explains:

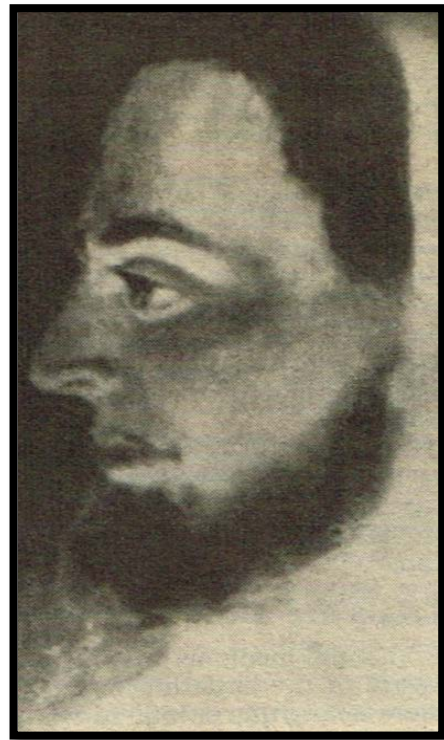
“He was given permission by Albert, the mediums guide, when to release the shutter on his camera because a white flash had to be used. Without such permission the result could have been detrimental to the medium's health.”

The picture is again reprinted in his *Story of Helen Duncan*, and hailed by Crossley as
“one of the finest ever taken of a materialisation ...”

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In the same issue of *Psychic News*, it is stated: *This infra-red photograph of Albert Stewart, the medium's guide taken at one of Helen Duncan's seances.* The Britten Memorial Museum, which is housed at Stansted Hall, holds an original copy of this photograph. There are no details or date given, but it does appear to be more likely a painting, than a photographic image. The only known referenced, infra-red photograph of Duncan with ectoplasm is published in *Psypioneer* May 2012 issue already referred to.

I have not included the photographs taken by Harry Price in 1931, as they are well document and contain no independent spirit forms as such, although there is a girls head wrapped in ectoplasm or as Price reports *wrapped in cheese cloth*.



It is claimed that the photograph shown here was taken at a Helen Duncan séance, I have however, found no details as to its origin or any other information pertaining to the image.

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Further materialisations photographed through Duncan's Mediumship!

The Two Worlds, Friday March 17th 1939 – Front page:

FINE MATERIALISATIONS

MRS. DUNCAN AT CHELTENHAM

Spirit Reads a Letter

REPORTS continue to reach us of the successful seances given by Mrs. Helen Duncan, the well-known materialising medium. On Wednesday, March 8th, she was at Cheltenham, and the opinion of the sitters is that the evidence for spirit return was incontrovertible. The sitting was held in a dim red light, which under normal conditions enabled one to dimly discern all the sitters, but on several occasions, in the course of the seance, spirit lights were so bright that the remotest part of the room could be clearly seen.

On, three occasions, Mrs. Duncan and a spirit form were seen simultaneously; the faces were clear, and the moving lips of the spirit forms could be distinctly seen as they were speaking.

It is not often we hear reports of spirit lights which radiate illumination; most of them are merely self-luminous. This seems a new phase in the mediumship of Mrs. Duncan.

One of the most remarkable manifestations was that of Mr. Carter, father of Miss F. C. Carter, President of the Rotunda Church. This spirit showed himself as he was in his younger days, with a full beard and a moustache. He was instantly recognised, not only by his daughter, but by a Baptist friend, who had been persuaded to attend his first seance. Miss Carter asked her father to give further evidence by telling them the name by which the visitor was called when he was a boy. The answer came immediately, "The Doll-Doll" (laughter). Mr. Carter also located his old friend in the room.

A prominent surgeon who was present held a conversation on purely family matters with his wife, and also spoke to his two sons, who were killed in the Great War. One of them was a remarkable figure, standing six feet six inches, and towered above the form of Mrs. Duncan, who stood by his side. "Albert" gave some remarkable evidence to the doctor by describing to him the ailments of several of his patients who had recently passed on.

"Peggy" was strongly in evidence, and kept the company interested by repeating the doings and sayings recently made in the homes of various sitters. Just as she was going, one of the sitters called out, "What, about the birthday-card I sent to your mother?" Peggy immediately returned and said, "Oh, Mr. Smith, you wrote to my mother at Dundee and asked if she knew a child named Peggy, who would be thirteen on the 14th of September. My mother wrote you and this is what she said." Peggy then read the letter which Mr. Smith had received from Peggy's mother. Mr. Smith had to admit that those were the exact

words. Since this letter was received in answer to a question which no one could have anticipated, it is a remarkable tribute to the quickness of “Peggy” and the accuracy of her memory.

To retain a reliable memory of a letter which has been seen and carefully perused is in itself a feat, but in this case there could have been no knowledge that the matter would have been raised, and there could therefore be no purpose in any preparation.

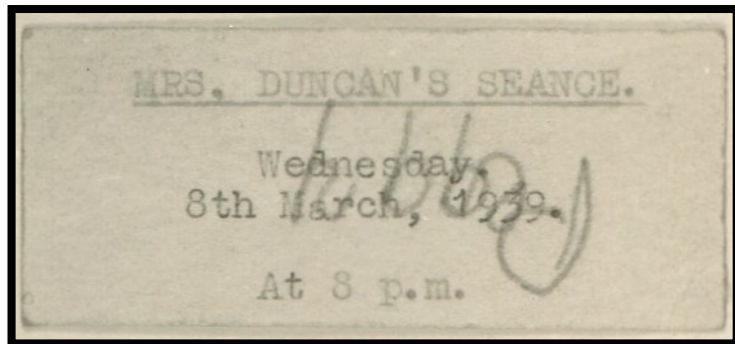
It may well be, however, that clairvoyance was brought into operation.

The whole of the sitters expressed their appreciation of a fine seance.

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The story continues:

In the archives of the Britten Memorial Museum, there are two letters which were sent to the editor of the *Two Worlds*¹² by a sitter who attended the above séance on March 8th 1939.



Accompanying the first letter dated April 14th, by a gentleman named William De Jersey who was living in Cheltenham at the time, were photographs of two spirit forms from the séance, asking for his opinion after examination.

De Jersey also witnessed at the same séance *in public view* a card autographed by the young spirit control Peggy, as shown. In his P.S., to the letter he states: *I understand that Mrs Duncan has no objection to the photos being published.*

In the second letter on April 27th De Jersey was clearly disgruntled, as Oaten had not acknowledged his letter or photographs etc. In the P.S., to this letter he states ... *Mr J. M. Barry is very interested in them and has forwarded the photographs to 'Prediction' with a special report of the seance, both figures in the photos have been recognized by members of the church who attended at the seance.*



¹² Ernest Walter Oaten (1875-1952) took over the editorship of the *Two Worlds* while SNU president, following the death of his vice-President James J. Morse.

If or not *Prediction* published the report and photographs, I do not know. The *Two Worlds* did not publish them during 1939, and presumably never did. The two photographs and the signature of Peggy are in the E. W. Oaten Collection; the images are very small and are mounted on a standard size postcard – displayed in Britten Memorial Museum, at the Arthur Findlay College, Stansted Hall.¹³

Paul J. Gaunt.



¹³ The Arthur Findlay College:—<http://www.arthurfindlaycollege.org/>

Notes by the Way:

FRIENDS OF THEOSOPHICAL ARCHIVES – A PROPOSAL

Readers of Col. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, his account of the early days of the Theosophical Society, will recall his references to the extensive correspondence between Olcott and Blavatsky in the States; and Stainton Moses and C. C. Massey in England. Where are the letters of Stainton Moses now? Probably in the archives of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, India, from which a quarter of a century ago, Michael Gomes kindly sent me notes about some he had come across.

However the TS president, Mrs Radha Burnier, last year expressed regret to me that they had no one to work in the archives. Moreover, although there have been some improvements lately to the once hazardous conditions, much remains to be done to enhance the facilities. And time may not be on our side. In addition to the normal threats to tropical archives (termites are thought to have eaten the birth records of noted psychical researcher, Dr E. J. Dingwall in neighbouring Ceylon) and political dangers (the destruction of Irish records in past unrest there, impedes our enquiries into the youth of medium Geraldine Cummins), Marc Demarest in his blog "Chasing Down Emma" warned on 4 October 2011.¹⁴

Assuming for the sake of discussion that the **undeniably unusual** geophysical and meteorological events of the past couple of years, all over the planet, are related to a systemic change in our climate (never mind the cause), it seems to me that the premium on digitizing one-of-a-kind records, and releasing them into the replicating wilds of the Internet, is a first priority for repository institutions now. One of the beautiful things about digital objects, copied hundreds of times across a global network of cheap compute-and-storage is that those objects **survive** pretty much everything, including the collapse, or the inundation, of entire nation-states.

In my particular domain, I think of the proximity of Adyar to the Bay of Bengal. No matter what your perspective on the TS, you'd have to agree that it's a crime that so much absolutely unique primary material is, every day, in immediate danger of destruction.

In the same post Marc had noted that some archives held in the United States had become unavailable because of the East Coast earthquake. Across the continent, on Oct 21, 2007, a large wild fire in San Diego County consumed the books, significant library and archival inventory where Point Loma Publications had its book storage – PLP had taken a great interest in historical matters. (Fortunately, Jerry Hejka-Ekins had copied all the records of PLP archives, and they are now in Alexandria West Archives.) Not far away, the Theosophical Society Pasadena had closed its archives.

¹⁴ Marc Demarest:—<http://www.ehbritten.org>

It has seemed to several of us that there are modest financial and scholarly resources available which could make an additional contribution to the preservation and use of Theosophical archives in which, as readers know, many psychic pioneers feature, and that some mechanism should be created to focus this. A Friends of Theosophical Archives is projected, not limited to any one organisation or location. We envisage the funds of this body being held in a way which protects them from misappropriation (as has often happened to funds left for psychical research).

Readers will be aware that good work is already being done through various channels. There are donors for example, who will provide money for specific projects, though not for a general fund. There are others who offer equipment, advice and funds for the general digitising of the records of a particular body. FOTA will gratefully receive and disseminate news of such initiatives.

At this stage, I am inviting interested persons to let me know their views. For the present, by kind permission of the editor, *Psypioneer* will be used for updates on developments, as this is a convenient free monthly channel.

Leslie Price
Founder Editor Theosophical History (1985-1989).

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MR GARDNER AGAIN

A reader responds:

In the latest edition of the Psypioneer you mentioned a gentleman by the name of James Gardner,¹⁵ did this gentleman come from Lancashire? Because if he did my father sat with him many years ago and a beautiful apport came through for my father, a carnation grew from the palm of his hand and dropped at my father's feet. This was wintertime and he was dressed with his shirt sleeves rolled up past his elbows. I still have that same carnation which was pressed into our family Bible. I just thought you may be a little interested in the information. We never knew him as James but as "Jimmy."

Kind regards Christine Gregson-Sharp, Australia

In a second e mail Christine noted.

I'm sure, if my memory serves me correctly he may have lived in Burnley, I remember we had to travel by bus from Accrington to get there. I know the carnation must have come from a conservatory as it was the middle of winter and I remember my father saying that he couldn't believe in apports, till he got one himself and that is how the carnation came into being, growing from the palm of his hand and this was not done in darkness.

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Another testimony to the Gardner mediumship came from the psychic artist Coral Polge in her outstanding autobiography *The Living Image* (Regency Press, 1984). After describing a séance with Helen Duncan (p.36) she adds:

“At a later stage I was able to sit with the north country medium, Jimmy Gardner. The forms which materialised at his séances were not as clearly defined as those of Helen Duncan, but at one of his séances a soft hairy form suddenly landed on my lap and barked. It was dear old Trix, our dog. I touched her and felt her paws on my lap. It was only a brief moment, but even dogs have their individuality when it comes to barking, and her spiky white hair was quite clear in the dim light. Thus realisation that our much loved animals live on in the spirit meant as much to me as to know that relatives and friends go on into the next world.”

The passing of James Gardner (67) was reported in PN, September 30 1978 under the headline “Medium whose séances caused controversy passes”. A Gardner séance photo appeared on the front cover of the Zerdin Buzz Sheet April 2007 under the heading “Searching for Jimmy.”

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¹⁵ Psypioneer Volume 9, No 04: April 2013:—*Fraud & Psychical Research* – Leslie Price

THE BUILDING OF THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION

Part Five:

In the February issue we noted: "With the start of a weekly journal, *The Two Worlds*, on November 18th 1887, the final momentum towards an organised National Body of Spiritualists unfolded." This would be finally achieved in 1890 at the 'National Conference of Spiritualists' in the Assembly Room of the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester.

Below is the agenda for the Conference, prepared by its *pro tem* committee which was significantly made up with the Officers, Directors and Editor of *The Two Worlds* Publishing Company Ltd, Manchester.¹⁶

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SPIRITUALISTS.

AT the last meeting of the Committee *pro tem*, on the general order of exercises deemed most desirable to be observed at the National Conference, SUNDAY, JULY 6TH, it was determined to add to the "Agenda" already published in this journal a copy of the principal resolutions which will be submitted to the Conference for consideration, together with such other matters as may be of interest to the friends who propose to attend or the societies sending delegates.

We shall again call attention to the *Agenda* to be carried out in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester, Sunday, July 6th.

Order of Proceedings—

1. Chairman, Mr. Lamont. Call to order at 10-15 for 10-30.
2. Opening hymn and invocation.
3. Reading of letters received by the sub-committee.
4. Call for short written reports or suggestions from delegates, concerning the status of their societies
5. Collection.
6. Resolutions then in order, in speeches of not more than ten minutes' duration. No speaker, except the mover of the resolution, to speak twice.
7. Adjourn at 12-30 for refreshments.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

1. Re-open at 2 o'clock.
2. Call to order by the Chairman.
3. Resolutions and ten minutes' speeches.
4. Collection at 4 p.m.
5. Election of place, time, officers, and committee of management for next year's conference.
6. Adjourn at 4-30.

¹⁶ Taken from the *Two Worlds*, June 20th 1890 page 375

EVENING SESSION.

- 1, Commencement at 6-30.
2. Hymn and invocation.
3. Chairman's remarks.
4. Short speeches from appointed speakers—among others, Mrs. Britten, Messrs. Morse, Wallis, Johnson, &c., &c.
5. Collection.
6. Hymn and benediction.

Sub-Committee to receive the delegates—Mrs. Wallis, Messrs. Morse and Boardman.

Arrangements will be inside for refreshments to be provided for visitors close by the hall, at moderate charges.

Societies who are in sympathy with this movement are kindly invited to send one or two delegates to the Conference, as representative of their views on the best means of advancing the cause of spiritualism.

The Committee have secured the able services of Mr. Smith, organist, of Collyhurst, for the musical portion of the services.

Those Societies intending to send delegates can receive written instructions concerning the location of the place of meeting, and means of reaching it from the various railways, &c., by addressing the secretary, Mr. J. B. Tallow, 46, Harrison Street, Pendleton, Manchester.

At the last meeting of the Committee of Management it was decided to draft and print, for the benefit of those who may attend the Conference, the following important and suggestive resolutions:—

(1) “That this assembly of representative spiritualists consider that an annual movable Conference of the spiritualists of Great Britain and Ireland is a necessity of the present position and importance of our movement.”—Moved by Mr. J. J. Morse.

(2) “That whilst we deem the phenomenal and religious aspects of our movement as of equal importance and essentially necessary each to the other, yet we strongly deprecate the habit of holding circles on Sunday evenings—a practice tending to draw off the interest of enquirers and spiritualists from the Sunday evening public services, thereby limiting the usefulness of Spiritual Societies’ efforts to present the religious and philosophical aspects of the cause.”—Moved by Mr. A. H. Kersey, of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

(3) “That the time has come for a greater unanimity of opinion concerning the fundamental basis of our philosophy, so that the terms spiritualism and spiritualists may be associated with an accepted and definite significance.”—Moved by Ms. Britten.

(4) “That the position of spiritual Societies and spiritual mediums before the law is unsatisfactory, and demands amendment.”—Moved by Mr. Johnson.

(5) “That considering the number and importance of Spiritualist societies now existing, their federal unity is desirable and expedient, but that Such unity shall in no case involve a Sacrifice of *local self-government or freedom of action*.”—Moved by Mr. E. W. Wallis.

(6) “That the next year’s Conference Committee be requested to gather the opinions of societies, representative workers, and Spiritualists upon such subjects as are suggested in the foregoing resolutions, and report thereon at the next annual meeting.”—Moved by Mr. H. Boardman.

We beg to add, on behalf of the Committee *pro tem*, that though the expenses attending the origination and conduct of this meeting are quite considerable, especially when falling on the few, all contributions in aid of the work will be purely VOLUNTARY.

The Committee also take this opportunity of returning grateful thanks to a few kind and generous contributors who have already assisted them, but desire their names to be withheld.

Societies will send delegates at their own expense, and collections in aid of the undertaking will be in order at each meeting. This notice will be continued up to the date of the Conference.

Signed on behalf of the full Committee—

EMMA H. BRITTEN,
Humphrey Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.
MR. E. W. WALLIS,
10, Petworth Street, Cheetham, Manchester.
R. J. J. MORSE,
16, Stanley Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.

SUB-COMMITTEE on printing, announcements, agenda, &c.

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As said the *Two Worlds* would play a significant part in the eventual success in the formation of what is today known as the Spiritualists’ National Union. The *pro tem* committee which was formed to arrange the inaugural Conference consisted of sixteen Spiritualists:

Dr. and Mrs. Britten, Mr. and Mrs. Edward W. Wallis, Mrs. Margaret Wilkinson, (Emma’s sister); James J. Morse William Johnson, J. B. Tetlow (secretary), H. Boardman, Peter Lee, Mr Rayner, Mr J. Gibson, Richard Fitton, Mr Thomas Brown, Mr [J]. Simkin (The original report has the incorrect initial and should read [T] (Thomas) Simkin, and Mr F. Tomlinson (treasurer).¹⁷

¹⁷ It should be noted in that *100 Years of National Spiritualism*, by Jean Bassett, 1990, Jean publishes the sixteen members of the *pro tem* committee but the name Williamson has been misprinted and should read Wilkinson. Also the name Raynor is incorrect, it should read Rayner.

The following year at a second Conference held at Bradford this committee would serve as the first Executive Committee of the Spiritualists' National Federation, which was formally constituted at this Conference on the 4th July 1891.

The *Two Worlds* is part of the history of the Spiritualists' National Federation, which would lead to the Spiritualists' National Union in 1902, and this is reflected in the history of the *Two Worlds* journal. Below is 'After Forty Years,' published November 18th 1927, pages 723-725:

After Forty Years.

AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF "THE TWO WORLDS."

WITH the current number, THE TWO WORLDS completes forty years of publication, during which time it has striven to be the democratic organ of the Spiritualistic movement. We celebrate the event by the issue of a double number of 28 pages, in which we outline the long struggle which has been essential to the maintenance of the high ideals laid down by its original editor, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten.

On November 18th, 1887, the first number of THE TWO WORLDS was placed in the hands of the Spiritualists of this country, and through the intervening years, despite many ups and downs, it has kept its place as the popular Spiritualist journal, the only occasion on which publication was suspended being the two issues which should have appeared during the strike of May, 1926, when it was found impossible either to print or distribute the paper.

It is very difficult to recall the position in which Spiritualism found itself forty years ago. There were two weekly papers available at the time, viz., *Light* (under the control of that talented journalist, Edmund Dawson Rogers, with Rev. Stainton Moses), which catered very largely for the scientific and educated classes, and *The Medium and Daybreak*, which had been for many years conducted by Mr. James Burns. He was a forceful character, a man with independent views and strong convictions, who found himself frequently in conflict, with his fellow Spiritualists. He was a fine type of forceful mind which was essential to the advanced army of a movement which had to fight for recognition every inch of the way, but the fighting instinct which proved so valuable in dealing with critics and opponents oft-times brought him into conflict with his friends.

Both these journals were published in London, and there was a strong feeling prevalent throughout the movement that there was room for a democratic paper which should keep clear of personalities, and present all phases of spiritualistic activity to the world. Many earnest Spiritualists openly said that something must be done to produce a new representative paper if the movement was to develop.

The initiation of THE TWO WORLDS was due in the main to a thought which simultaneously struck both E. W. Wallis and Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, and its object was distinctly stated in its first issue to be "to add to and supplement the work of our contemporaries, and not to supersede or injure it." Throughout the whole 40 years history THE TWO WORLDS has ever maintained the closest fraternal relationships with its Spiritualistic contemporaries, while it has afforded an avenue to every honest Spiritualist

to express his hopes, his doubts, his criticisms, and his theories, provided only they were expressed honestly, fairly, and without personalities. From its very inception it has earned and tried to deserve, the title of the “People’s Spiritualist Paper.”

THE original minute book shows as its first entry that a meeting was convened by invitation at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Britten, on Wednesday August 24th, 1887, Dr. Britten being elected chairman and Mr. Wallis Secretary of the meeting.¹⁸ The first resolution stands in the name of Mr. Wallis: “That this meeting is of opinion that the time has arrived when a new and representative paper is needed for the promotion of Spiritualism.” This was seconded by Mr. Braham, and after lengthy discussion was unanimously carried. Mr. W. Johnson of Hyde, then proposed that a company be formed with a capital of £1,500, and that the paper should be started if £700 be subscribed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Peter Lee, and carried unanimously. The meeting next appointed a Provisional Committee, consisting of Dr. Britten (Chairman), Mrs. E. H. Britten, Mrs. Wilkinson,¹⁹ Messrs. David Brown. Peter Lee, Braham, George Hill, T. Brown, W. Johnson, E. W Wallis, L. Firth, G. Boys and F. Tomlinson. Mrs. Britten and Mr. Wallis were appointed to draft a prospectus.

Most of those present became the first Directors of THE TWO WORLDS Publishing Co. Ltd.

Circulars and prospectuses were issued, and the requested number of shares were taken up and within three months “our paper” became an accomplished fact, with Mrs. Britten as its first editor, and Mr. Wallis as assistant editor and business manager.

Contracts were entered into with Mr. John Heywood, the well-known Manchester printer, for the production of the journal, which was published at the price of 1½d. weekly for the first two months, after which the price dropped to 1d. One of the pleasing features of the event was a cordial letter from Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, then Editor of *Light*, wishing success to the new venture, and promising every assistance, and throughout the intervening years the relations between the two papers have been most cordial.

Mrs. Britten well knew the tremendous struggle which would be entailed in the floatation of a popular journal, for in her address at the first annual meeting of shareholders she pointed out that she had knowledge of 34 papers in America that had been

¹⁸ Another reference can be found in Edward Wallis’s obituary in the *Two Worlds* February 6th 1914:

“In the record of this long and busy public life one thing will always stand prominently out among all other matters. That is the part taken in the formation of THE TWO WORLDS Publishing, Company, Ltd., and the establishing of THE TWO WORLDS as a weekly periodical. A number of pressing reasons led to the call for a representative organ of the Spiritualist Movement. There is no need to call any ghosts from their rest, but the need for such a journal as this was imperative. It was due to the initiative of Mr. Wallis that the preliminary meeting for the consideration of the matter was held at his then home at Petworth-street, Cheetham Hill, in this city [Manchester], at which Mrs. Britten was present to give the benefit of her advice and experience. Mr. Wallis was appointed secretary to the Company in the early Autumn of 1887, and when the paper was started in November of that year he became the general manager. Mr. Wallis occupied these dual positions for several years, and, when Mrs. Britten resigned he was unanimously appointed Editor.”

¹⁹ Emma’s sister Margaret, see *Psypioneer* Volume 6 No 2: February 2010:—*In Memoriam*—Mrs. Margaret Wilkinson – *The Two Worlds*:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.2February2010.pdf>

started in the interests of the cause. Many of these undertakings had commenced on large capital, furnished by wealthy Spiritualists, and yet only two out of 34 had remained in existence. Whilst up to that date, with two exceptions, all the many Spiritualistic papers started in this country had had to cease publication. These two were kept going by the loyalty and sacrifice of those who placed Spiritualism before their bank balance, and she quite expected that THE TWO WORLDS would have a tremendous task to establish itself upon a paying basis.

The office of the Company was originally Mrs. Britten's home, which was freely placed at the disposal of the Company. Then rooms were occupied at Mr. Wallis's home, in Petworth Street, and subsequently rooms were rented at 73a. Corporation Street, Manchester.²⁰ From the very beginning of the life of THE TWO WORLDS it was definitely determined that the journal should be in the hands, and under the direct control of working Spiritualists, and provision was made in the original Articles, giving the Directors power to see that under no circumstances could its shares get into the hands of any clique or section. The system of "one man, one vote" was established in its procedure, so that the holder of a single share had as great a voice as the holder of any block of shares. A large number of the Spiritualist Societies of this country became shareholders, and up to the present time quite a number of them are still registered as proprietors of shares.

Such were the humble beginnings of THE TWO WORLDS which has gradually spread its influence until it is known in every part of the world. The original Directors were Mr. Glendinning (Chairman), Mr. John Lamont, (Vice Chairman), Mr. Oxley, Mr. Braham, Mr. W. Johnson, Mr. P. Lee, Mr. F. Tomlinson, Mr. L. Firth, Mr. T. Brown, Mr. Boys, Dr. Britten, Mr. J. Pemberton and Mr. R. Wolstenholme, Mr. George Hill was appointed Hon. Treasurer. The paper was taken up with avidity, and though each year showed a financial loss, the enthusiasm of that early band was fostered by the guidance of the unseen World.

In May, 1890, as the result of suggestions made by the spirit guides of Mrs. Britten, a consultation was held at THE TWO WORLDS Office with the view of establishing a National Federation of Spiritualist Societies, and a circular was sent out under the signatures of Mrs. E. H. Britten, Mr. E. W. Wallis, and Mr. J. J. Morse, convening a meeting to be held on July 6th, 1890, in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick, for the purpose of considering the establishment of a National Movable Conference. Over eight thousand circulars were sent out, and some sixty representatives assembled under the chairmanship of Mr. John Lamont. Mr. J. J. Morse moved the resolution for the establishment of an Annual Movable Conference. He gave a brief historical summary of conferences which had been held in 1866-67-69 in Darlington, Newcastle-on-Tyne,

²⁰ The last issue published at Corporation Street, Manchester was Saturday February 28th 1953, the following issue (March 7th) was published at their new London address: 48, Old Bailey, London E.C.4. The *Two Worlds* weekly "Spiritualism's Newspaper" as it was then dubbed from January 30th 1960; the last weekly issue of *Two Worlds* was published on October 1st of that year. It then became a monthly magazine and was completely re-structured. The *Two Worlds* Newspaper in 1960 cost five pence, but the new monthly (November) was priced at three shillings. The offices were at St. Andrews House, 32/36 Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C.1. The changes took place under the editorship of Maurice Barbanell, who became its editor in around 1957. On June 20th, 1962 Barbanell returned to *Psychic News* and continued as editor of *Psychic News* and *Two Worlds* jointly until his death in 1981 (born 3rd, May 1902 died July 17th, 1981 at the age of 79).

London and Manchester. In 1872 in Darlington, in 1873 in Liverpool, and in 1880 in Manchester. Those, however, had been gatherings of individuals rather than representative meetings. He claimed that since there were now 120 meetings regularly advertised the time had come for an Annual Conference, in which the various phases of the movement's activity could be discussed.

This meeting subsequently led to the definite formation of the Spiritualists' National Federation, Mr. Wallis moving a resolution "that the number and importance of the Spiritualist Societies now existing makes their federal unity desirable and expedient, but that such unity shall not in any sense involve any sacrifice of local self-government or freedom of action." The resolution was carried unanimously, and the National Federation came into being, and for a number of years did excellent work.

A few years later, however, questions arose as to the difficulty of securing the churches and other properties which were being established by Spiritualists, to the movement permanently, and it became evident that a legal body must be set up with a definite trust deed, which should give legal status to a movement which had hitherto been entirely voluntary, and it was THE TWO WORLDS again which took the lead in the movement which caused the National Federation to register itself as a legal body under the Companies' Act, under the style and title of the Spiritualists' National Union Limited.

In 1892 Mrs. Britten retired from the editorship of the paper to devote herself to literary work, and Mr. E. W. Wallis, who had acted as Assistant Editor and Business Manager from the inception of the paper, was appointed in her stead. Under his conductorship the paper rapidly advanced in popularity and increased in circulation. In 1898 THE TWO WORLDS took the lead in the promotion of the Jubilee celebrations in commemoration of the Hydesville rappings of 1848. The then editor advocated a national celebration in commemoration of the event, and this took the form of a national bazaar to raise funds for the National Federation's propaganda work. The two objects were combined, and a series of large meetings were held, including demonstrations by united Lyceums. A sum of upwards of £600 was provided for mission work, and it is safe to say that up to that date the propaganda meetings held had never been equalled either in their attendances or their enthusiasm.

During the editorship of Mr. Wallis there was a demand for a Hymn Book which should supply the wants of the movement, and with the consent of the Nation Federation Mr. Wallis volunteered to compile this. The Directors of THE TWO WORLDS, recognising the need, cordially entered into co-operation, with the result that in 1897 the Hymn Book, consisting of 747 hymns, was adopted by the Federation, and issued for general use. Its compilation was a colossal task, which can only be realised by those who attempt to satisfy the requirements of a body consisting of many temperaments. Its publication reflected the greatest credit upon the compiler, who must have devoted thousands of hours to the work and though there have been two revisions, the bulk of Mr. Wallis's work still stands. So successful has the Hymn Book been that over 170,000 copies have already been sold, and despite the grumbles of conflicting sects and the sneers of superior people, it still holds the field as the National Hymn Book.

Later, in 1898, Mr. Wallis paid a six months visit to America, during which time the paper was edited by Mr. Peter Lee, who discharged the literary duties with eminent satisfaction. The following year, however, Mr. Wallis, who had brought the paper to a

very high pitch of efficiency, accepted an appointment with our contemporary *Light*, taking with him the cordial good wishes of his late employers and his wide circle of friends. The editorship passed into the hands of Mr. Will Phillips, a strong personality who had rebelled against the narrow theological surroundings in which his early years had been spent, and who brought a vigorous pen to the service of the paper. He efficiently conducted the paper until 1906, when Mr. J. J. Morse was appointed Editor.²¹

During the editorship of Mr. Phillips the British Mediums' Union was established. The Britten Memorial scheme was promoted, and the Manchester Central movement which has always endeavoured to maintain a high standard of Spiritualistic teaching, also became established. Mr. Phillips devoted a good deal of time and energy to the promotion of the National Fund of Benevolence, which had previously been set up by Mrs. M. H. Wallis, and which subsequently came under the administration of the Spiritualists' National Union.

Throughout its whole life THE TWO WORLDS has been spirit-guided. There has always been a medium in the editorial chair, and a conscious contact with the spirit world has always been the privilege of those who have occupied that chair. Mr. E. W. Wallis, in a retrospect of the early days, said: "In those early days, when the trials were many and the prospects gloomy, I remember how Mrs. Britten came into the room in the house in Petworth Street, which had just been engaged as an office, and drawing herself up in the wonderful way which she had when influenced strongly from the other side, her eyes flashing with the light of inspiration, she said in most impressive words, 'This means success. I see the paper like a ship in troubled waters, tossed about and weather beaten, but it weathers every storm, and rides safely home. I see the dark clouds lifting; the light begins to shine, and the ship passes through into smoother waters. When those who are now at the helm are gone, it will still go on, for the spirit people are guiding it on to successful work for the cause they love.' These prophetic words were a source of encouragement, and strength in my early trials," said Mr. Wallis, "and their fulfilment came about as prophesied."

The editorial work of Mr. J. J. Morse will be remembered by many, perhaps most, of our readers. He was a widely travelled man. He was a spirit-inspired man, and under the guidance of the spirit world he endeavoured to interpret the teachings of the spirit world into terms which could be easily understood.

There is scarcely a single activity connected with the Spiritualist movement, and especially in the North of England, which has not found either its origin or its chief source of strength in THE TWO WORLDS. During the great war which broke out in 1914, on the suggestion of Mr. W. H. Evans, THE TWO WORLDS raised a fund for the provision of motor ambulances for the front, and thanks to the generosity of our numerous subscribers a fleet of five motor-cars were sent overseas to alleviate the

²¹ *Psypioneer* Volume 8, No 10: October 2012. James Johnson Morse October 1st 1848 – February 19th 1919:—"Morse served the Spiritualist movement for almost fifty years; preparations were in place to celebrate his Golden Anniversary in October 1919, but he was taken ill on February 18th with an attack of influenza. Its effect on his heart was fatal; after noon on the 19th Morse became unconscious and sank rapidly, and at about half past six passed quietly away."

At the time of his death Morse was also Vice President to the SNU President Ernest Oaten, who took up the editorial chair on his death – Oaten was editor from 1919 –1945, followed by Ernest Thompson.

sufferings of the sick and wounded. Mr. Morse had charge of the fund, and the efficiency which was attached to the work done is an effective testimony to the care and exactitude which characterised all his public activities.

In the early days financial stringency was very great, but thanks to the generosity of one gentleman, who has now passed to his great reward and who desired to be anonymous, a sum of £1,200 was placed at the disposal of the Company. £200 of this was used for immediate requirements, and the sum of £1,000 was set aside as a reserve fund to meet various deficiencies entailed in the conduct of the paper. It was this fund alone which enabled THE TWO WORLDS to maintain its position during the trying times of the war, when one fourth of the sum had to be used. Some few years ago, thanks to the generosity of the late Mr. William Jones, of Stourbridge, the sum of £500 was placed at the disposal of the Company, and this, coming as it did soon after the close of the war, placed the finances of the Company once again on a satisfactory basis.

We have thought it due to the reader, supporters and shareholders of “the people’s paper” to place some of these facts before them as an evidence of work already accomplished, and as a tribute to those who have accomplished it. The early years of THE TWO WORLDS covered a period during which our cause attracted general public interest. It was a time of controversy and struggle, when opposition was bitter and fighting was hard, when principles counted for more than names, and when the guidance of the spirit people was perhaps even more apparent than to-day. THE TWO WORLDS has catered for all parties in the state. It has absolutely refused to be cajoled into being made the servant of any section. Its motto has been “freedom with service,” and so it stands to-day. It is a newspaper, and not an official organ. It has striven to represent the opinions of the spirit world, rather than the opinions of men. It is the helper of all; it has refused to be the tool of any. It pleads for purity in our public work, the best thought upon our platforms, and the highest type of life from all who represent us before the world either by tongue or pen.

Looking backwards, we are amazed at the growth and success of the paper. To-day it is a real power in the movement, thanks largely to the earnest devotion of those who have directed its career in the past; to the unseen guidance which has undoubtedly directed the men and women who have carried on the work; and to the loyal support of the friends of the paper throughout the United Kingdom, and in nearly every civilised country on the globe. The end is not yet. We still have great dreams and hopes. We are still conscious of spirit guidance, and still realise that the movement has not attained to the heights to which it can climb. There is still sectarianism to fight and universal peace to establish, and our fervent prayer is that we may be the recipients in as full a measure as our predecessors of that spiritual counsel which has made for success.

Striving for fraternity with all men, and fostering opposition to nothing but falsehood, folly and error, we pursue our path with gratitude to our many friends and inspirers, both seen and unseen.

Paul J. Gaunt.

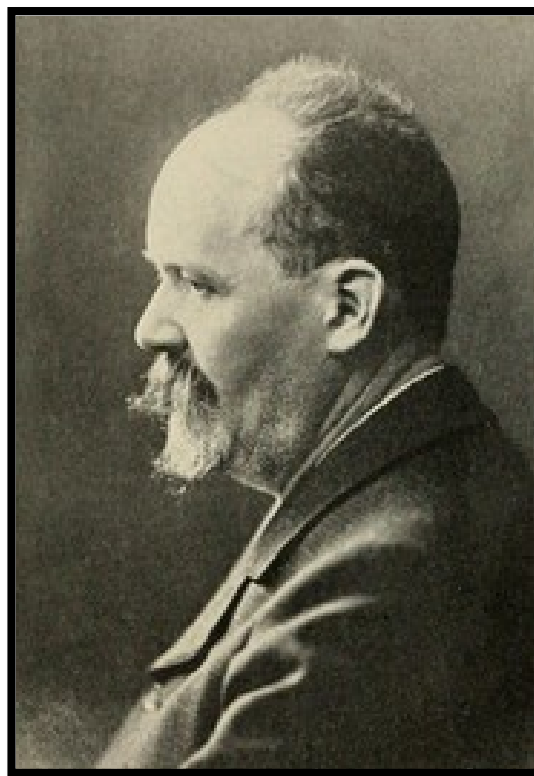
To be continued and summarised in a later issue

Théodore Flournoy on Veridical Hallucinations:

A Reprint and Historical Note

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While Swiss psychologist Théodore Flournoy's (1854-1920) interest in psychical research has received some attention² there is little information about the beginnings of his interest on the subject. In this brief paper I will present a translation of an early example of Flournoy's interest in psychic phenomena that has not been discussed in the above mentioned literature.

According to Édouard Claparède (1873-1940), Flournoy's colleague and cousin, Flournoy had some early brushes with the topic in the early 1890s. One of them was a visit in 1893 to Flournoy's laboratory of a man whose daughter supposedly had thought-transference abilities, but whose performance showed the whole thing depended on verbal cues (Claparède, 1921, p. 68). Another was a lecture Flournoy presented in 1894 about "occult psychology" (p. 36).

Flournoy is generally remembered in psychical research history for his study of medium Hélène Smith (whose real name was Catherine Élise Müller, 1861-1929; see Shamdasani, 1994). This work was reported in his important book *Des Indes à la Planète Mars: Étude sur un Cas de Somnambulisme avec Glossolalie*, also published in English (Flournoy, 1900a, 1900b).³ In addition to this work Flournoy is known to have published earlier discussions of mediumship (Flournoy, 1897, 1899a),⁴ and later papers (e.g., Flournoy, 1901b, 1903, 1909) and a book related to psychical research which, in addition to some new material, had reprints of previously published articles (Flournoy, 1911).

The material translated and reprinted here has escaped mention in most writings about Flournoy's interest in psychical research. This is the case regardless of it been listed in Flournoy's bibliography compiled by Claparède (1921, p. 121). But this omission may be due to the fact that the title of Flournoy's work did not refer to psychic phenomena.

The paper, or more properly, the abstract of a presentation given by Flournoy, was entitled “Sur les Hallucinations à l’État Normal” [On Hallucinations in the Normal State] (1891b). Flournoy presented it to the Société de Physique et d’Histoire Naturelle de Genève, an important scientific and scholarly Swiss institution founded at the end of the eighteenth-century (Société, n.d.). It was read at a session held on December 18, 1890, and the abstract appeared in 1891 in the *Archives des Sciences Physiques et Naturelles*, the journal of the Society.

The abstract is presented here as an example of an early psychical research contribution by Flournoy, and one that reflected the interest the topic of veridical hallucinations generated during the nineteenth-century.

Nineteenth-Century Psychical Research and Veridical Hallucinations

Although veridical hallucinations have been of interest before the founding of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), the topic acquired more prominence and was more widely discussed during the late nineteenth-century thanks to the work of the SPR (Le Maléfan, 2008; on apparitions in general in the British context see McCorristine, 2010). SPR workers discussed veridical hallucinations as “truth-telling” hallucinations. These were observed to “coincide with some crisis in the life of the person whose image is seen, and which, therefore, as we contend, though they are in one sense hallucinations, yet have some reality behind them—some origin exterior to the eyes and brain of the person who sees them” (Barrett, Massey, Moses, Podmore, Gurney & Myers, 1884a, pp. 49-50).⁵

In an early volume of the Society’s *Proceedings* it was stated in reports by their Literary Committee that some veridical apparitions and other experiences were probably explained by telepathy (Barrett et al., 1884b, 1884c). The idea, as well as the collection and analyses of cases, eventually culminated in the publication of the first major SPR project and a nineteenth-century classic of psychical research, the book *Phantasms of the Living* (1886) authored by Edmund Gurney (1847-1888), Frederic W.H. Myers (1843-1901), and Frank Podmore (1856-1910), which was followed by what became known as the Census of Hallucinations (Sidgwick, Johnson, Myers, Podmore, & Sidgwick, 1894).⁶

Discussions of the topic transcended the British context when the Census and veridical hallucinations were discussed in international psychology congresses (e.g., Mariller, 1890; Sidgwick, 1892), and when others wrote and commented about these manifestations. An example were French discussions (e.g., Binet, 1894; Paulhan, 1892), including some by Myers (1886a, 1886b). 1891 was an important year in the French context. An abridged translation of *Phantasms of the Living* was published in 1891 in French under the title *Les Hallucinations Télépathiques* (Gurney, Myers, & Podmore, 1891), and included a preface by Charles Richet (1850-1935), who by that time was well known in psychical research circles.⁷ The same year saw the publication of cases from *Les Hallucinations Télépathiques* in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* (Hallucinations

Télépathiques, 1891; Hallucinations Télépathiques Expérimentales, 1891), and the publication of the abstract of Flournoy's presentation in Switzerland.

Théodore Flournoy

By the time Flournoy presented his paper on veridical hallucinations he had started his career in psychology (Claparède, 1921). He obtained his initial baccalaureate degrees in literature, mathematics and physical and natural sciences between 1872 and 1875, and then studied theology briefly and eventually qualified as a physician. Later he studied philosophy at Leipzig, where he took courses with Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920).

The 1890s were the beginnings of Flournoy career in psychology. In his first major work Flournoy (1890a) called for empirical approaches to psychology and for the abandonment of metaphysical concerns such as speculations about the spirit and its relation to the body. In 1891 he obtained a chair in experimental psychology which, different from other European psychology chairs, was not located within a philosophy faculty, but was instead part of the faculty of sciences. Further developments included a laboratory of psychology founded in 1892 which, according to Flournoy (1896) was not limited to German-type measurement oriented psychology, but included other research approaches.

His paper on veridical hallucinations (Flournoy, 1891b) was presented in a period in which he was very active studying various psychological phenomena. In fact this paper, essentially a psychical research paper, was part of his early development and work as a psychologist. Other examples of his early work about specific psychological phenomena include his publications about synesthesia (Flournoy, 1890b, 1893), reaction time (Flournoy, 1892a, 1892b), and mental activity and physiology (Flournoy, 1891a). As stated before, the paper about veridical hallucinations was published as an abstract in 1891.

Flournoy's "Sur les Hallucinations à l'État Normal" (1891)

We have given the name of *veridical* hallucinations to those which correspond to a real event out of the range of the senses of the subject.⁸ For example, an individual has all of a sudden the apparition of an absent person, and it is learned later that this person died precisely at this time. In their *Phantasms of the living* (London 1887)⁹ Mrs. Gurney, Myers and Podmore published several hundreds of cases of this kind. The strangeness of these facts, and on the other hand the impossibility of treating them as simple coincidences, considering the number and guarantees of authenticity of many of them, have driven the Society for psychical [*sic*] Research, and following its lead the International Congress of Experimental Psychology, to organize, both in Europe as in America, a little understood survey of hallucinations with normal persons awake and healthy.¹⁰ Mr. Flournoy gave an account of some of the observations which he made for this occasion.

With the first hundred persons questioned seventeen were found which had hallucinations (two tactile, four visual, eleven auditory). Only one of them was in the category of hallucinations said to be *veridical*: it was about a nurse who, being awake and occupied with the care of her profession, believed she was called in the middle of the night by the voice of her brother, who she knew was sick at eight miles from there. The following day a dispatch informed her that he had died during the night at the same time that she had heard his voice. It would be pointless to draw any conclusion from this isolated fact. The detailed analysis of six other cases seems to indicate that other people in good health and of sound mind can have hallucinations. Under the influence of various causes (concern, tiredness, perhaps light unperceived drowsiness by the subject), the working of the nervous centers which should not produce images but exceptionally reaches a degree of intensity which corresponds to a real sensation; there is thus a hallucination, immediately rectified by reason or by the control of the other senses. The Christian name of the subject and the voice of loved ones, who died after some time, seems particularly apt to leave from the sphere of a simple memory to sometime acquire the force and the vivacity of external perceptions.

Concluding Remarks

While Flournoy's paper does not add much to the historical study of veridical hallucinations, it provides us with generally neglected information about his early interest in psychical research. Similarly, his paper provides us with another example of discussions on the subject in a scholarly context, in this case the Société de Physique et d'Histoire Naturelle de Genève. This parallels other discussions in forums such as the international congresses of psychology (Alvarado, 2010b), and in mainstream publications (e.g., Alvarado, 2009), something that does not imply general acceptance of the topic.

Finally, the material presented here is yet another example of how some of the pioneers of European psychology were involved with the phenomena and ideas of psychical research, a topic that has received some discussion in recent decades (e.g., Alvarado, 2010a; Plas, 2000; Crabtree, 1993). Like other figures—among them Pierre Janet (1859-1947) and Charles Richet (Plas, 2000)—Flournoy showed interest in psychic phenomena early in his career. This indicates the importance of the topic in nineteenth-century Europe.

These, and other developments, keep reminding us that the study of psychical research and other “rejected” disciplines and ideas have become part of our modern attempts to understand the past.

Notes

1. I wish to thank the Society for Psychical Research for a grant that supported the writing of this paper and Nancy L. Zingrone for useful editorial assistance.
2. See Caratelli (1996), Cifali (2001), Claparède (1921), Goldsmith (1979), and Shamdasani (1994). For studies of other aspects of Flournoy see Alexandre (2011) and Nicolas and Charvillat (1998).
3. Flournoy (1901a) also published another study of this medium reporting later developments that is less known than his book.
4. This includes parts of *Des Indes* presumably appearing before the book was released (Flournoy, 1899b, 1899c).
5. Not all veridical hallucinations referred to crises or to death, as seen in cases of arrival and experimental apparitions (Gurney, Myers, & Podmore, 1886).
6. On these SPR studies see Cerullo (1982), Gauld (1968), and McCorristine (2010).
7. On Richet and psychic phenomena see Alvarado (2008) and Lachapelle (2011).
8. The expression “veridical hallucinations” appears in early issues of the SPR *Proceedings* and *Journal* (Barrett et al., 1884a, p. 48, 1884c, p. 168; General Meeting, 1884, pp. 4, 37).
9. *Phantasms* was first published in 1886.
10. Marillier (1892) reported on surveys in French speaking counties. The full SPR report appeared in their *Proceedings* (Sidgwick et al., 1894).

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