

# PSYPIONEER JOURNAL

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- 146 – Spirit Drawings by Georgiana Houghton – reported by Garth Willey
- 150 – Georgiana Houghton, *Medium and Daybreak* – sourced by Lis Warwood
- 152 – William Crookes and Madame Blavatsky – Notes by the Way – Leslie Price
- 156 – The Russell Connection – Reuniting Parents with their Children in the Spirit World through Physical & Trance Mediumship - Gwen Byrne (Book review by Steve Hume)
- 158 – A Voice from Beyond - Séance Conversation in Icelandic – Sigurdur Arnalds
- 160 – Stainton Moses Returns, Painfully – Katharine Bates
- 163 – Association of Art Historians 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference Session 19: Modernism, Occultism and Evolution – Lynda Harris
- 165 – William Oxley – *The Two Worlds*
- 172 – Paraffin Wax Moulds – Campbell Holms
- 176 – Wax Gloves Procured from Materialized Hands – Hewat McKenzie
- 179 – Wax Spirit Moulds – Reviewed for the SPR by: Tom Ruffles
- 181 – Some books we have reviewed
- 182 – How to obtain this Journal by email

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*Psypioneer is now being published every other month*

# Spirit Drawings by Georgiana Houghton<sup>1</sup>

Featured in an exhibition portraying Spiritualist practices:

**‘BELIEVE NOT EVERY SPIRIT, BUT TRY THE SPIRITS’<sup>2</sup>**

Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne

Report by Garth Willey

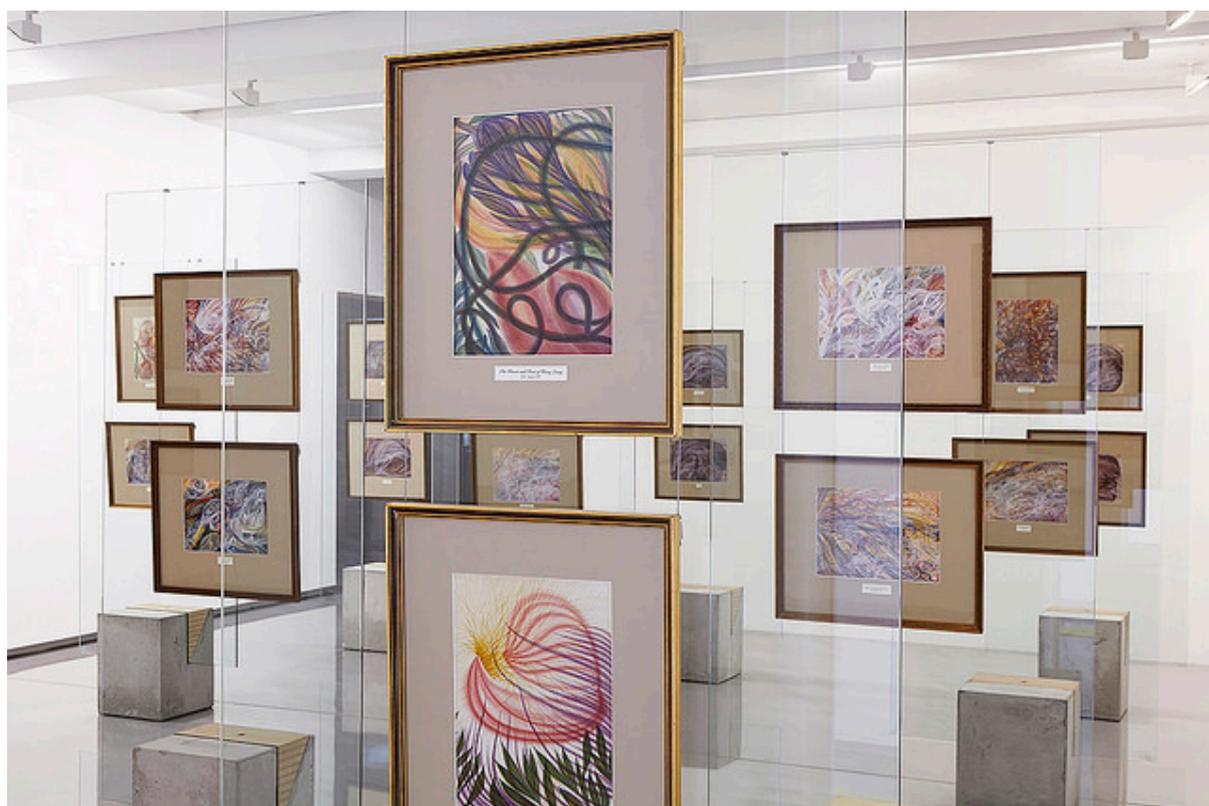


Photo courtesy of Monash University Museum of Art

Various articles on, and references to, have been made regarding Georgiana Houghton and her art in past *Psypioneer Journals* (please use the Search facility on [Woodlandway.org](http://Woodlandway.org) if you wish to check them out).

One of the intriguing things about Houghton’s art was its ownership and dispersal after her death on 24 March, 1884. She had exhibited 155 works at a London art gallery in Bond Street in 1871 and one might safely assume that there were many more fine works produced subsequently. A little research by Lis Warwood has turned up an article in *The Medium and Daybreak*, No. 732 Vol. XV April 11, 1884 and the full transcript follows as a separate item. With reference to Houghton’s estate, it states:

“It is to be regretted that she made no disposition of her effects. Some steps should be taken to have the full collection of her drawings preserved in some public institution. They

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<sup>1</sup> Georgiana Houghton (1814-1884)

<sup>2</sup> Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA), Melbourne, 21 April – 27 June  
<http://monash.edu/muma/exhibitions/2015/believe-not-the-spirits.html>

are well worthy of such care, and as an example of highly artistic work, produced without the usual artistic effort or experience, they are truly wonderful, and a great psychological curiosity... The relatives not knowing her spiritualistic friends, and the most intimate being abroad, but little notice could be given to the Movement of the decease and funeral.”

In 1910, 26 years later, some 35 of her drawings were shipped to Australia. It appears that no significant public exhibition ever occurred and the works were never returned to England. The drawings became the possession/property of the Victorian Spiritualists’ Union (VSU – a 1930 amalgamation of The Victorian Association of Spiritualists and the Melbourne Progressive Spiritualistic Lyceum<sup>3</sup>) but trace of whether they came by them directly or indirectly has not been discovered.

For many years the pencil drawings and watercolours apparently remained in their boxes until the VSU displayed them along the walls of its upstairs chapel sometime after it acquired new city premises in A’Beckett Street around 1960. In 2014 the drawings were boxed up again and sent to Monash University for an exhibition in the shorter term and then safe keeping pending the sale of the VSU’s premises and their eventual relocation.<sup>4</sup>

Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) staff had noted that the drawings had been preserved in amazingly excellent condition – likely due to the thick stone/concrete walls of the upstairs chapel that was left in darkness when not being used.

MUMA Director, Charlotte Day, and her guest curators Lars Bang Larsen and Marco Pasi were also amazed that such work should have been done some 40 years or more ahead of abstract art becoming recognised in the art world. Bang Larsen and Pasi’s interest in Houghton’s drawings was the impetus for an exhibition of “contemporary and historical painting, sculpture, video and photography that both explore and adopt Spiritualist practices.”

Although Leslie Price had paved the way for me to arrange a private tour with Charlotte Day (he’d had a meeting with her at the College of Psychic Studies in May) I went along to inspect the Exhibition on 10th June without an appointment: And rather synchronistically, I walked in the front door to find Charlotte just about to begin a very private and personal tour for a party of 5 people (including her own mother and sister) into which she welcomed me. We were both delighted!

Houghton’s drawings are quite amazing. By far, they outshone most of the supporting exhibits, many of which were not done under spirit control (nor claimed to be). The fine and flawless detail is incredible. And, unknown to me before the sighting, the backs of about half of them are covered in automatic writing by the spirit controls: introducing themselves and describing and interpreting their drawings. The deliberate display of the drawings on plate glass stands (see introductory photo) enabled viewing of both sides – and MUMA is to be congratulated on the presentation.

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://vsu.org.au/history>

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.smh.com.au/business/victorian-spiritualists-union-to-sell-historic-sandstone-building-20150324-1m6gfz.html> and <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/property/vic-office-sale-71-73-abeckett-street-melbourne/story-fnitinnf-1227353068277>

Some of the texts are quite long. The control authors/artists vary – as do the styles – and it is unknown if Houghton was the automatist or, perhaps, the inspirational writer. Inspection and comment by an expert on handwriting may be quite revealing.

The drawings are presented in date order; and the reverse side writings reveal the changes of control over the 20 years or so that she worked with them (1860s onwards).

I'm sorry I did not take any photos, if indeed I were allowed, especially of the automatic writings. But when I enquired if they had all been digitalised, Charlotte said she would be interested to do so if the VSU hadn't, and with their approval. However, a few of the photos are available, courtesy of the VSU, on <http://artguide.com.au/articles-page/show/believe-not-every-spirit-but-try-the-spirits-2> and 2 of them are reproduced hereunder:



The Glory of the Lord (detail), c. 1861–1869



The Eye of the Lord (detail), c. 1861–1869

The experience of seeing these abstract Spirit Drawings once more (I'd seen them before at the VSU but not seen the backs nor pondered the intent) was somewhat of a revelation. To me, now, they portray patterns of energy – frequencies, vibrations, wavelengths – and immediately struck a chord (no pun intended!) with my recently coming to a much better understanding of “post-material science<sup>5</sup>.” That is, sub atomic quantum mechanics/quantum theories, the holographic universe principles, multiple and parallel universes, warped two-dimensional planes even, etc.! Indeed, one is coming to the inescapable view that everything that is, is a ‘web of existence’ overseen by Consciousness and experienced by our personal consciousness – which in turn is capable of self-generating progression... and resulting in generating things like synchronistic experiences!

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<sup>5</sup> See the Scientific and Medical Network's *Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science* at <https://www.scimednet.org/content/manifesto-post-materialist-science>

And having experienced what might well be a truly synchronistical meeting time with Charlotte Day, and then been bold enough to write of it, what do I subsequently read in *The Medium and Daybreak* article but:

In all spiritual affairs Miss Houghton saw coincidents, which were to her mind highly significant. Days, events, times, seasons, forms, &c., were to her the alphabet of a language from which she derived great instruction...

Had Carl Jung preceded her, Georgiana might well have used the word ‘synchronicities’ instead of ‘coincident.’

And I don’t doubt that wherever Georgiana is now, she is chortling over the bonus play on Charlotte’s surname Day, the use of the word ‘Days,’ in the weekly newspaper *Medium and Daybreak* over 130 years ago!

GAW

### **Postscript:**

With this issue of PP about to be finalised, I chanced to read, a little belatedly, in the Society for Psychical Research’s quarterly *Paranormal Review* Issue 74 for Spring, 2015 (pp32,33) an article *Ghosts in the Machines* by Brandon Hodge<sup>6</sup> – a foremost authority on planchettes and automatic writing devices. Lo and behold, in tracing the early origins of planchettes, he refers to Georgiana Houghton’s *Evenings at Home in Spiritual Séance*<sup>7</sup> wherein she wrote of having purchased a planchette in 1861 from a Mr Welton “who was then the only maker [of planchettes]” in March of that year.

Now, one of the supporting exhibits portraying Spiritualist practices in the MUMA exhibition was a jumbled array of the letters of the alphabet and numbers 0 to 9 – beginning with ‘yes’ and ending with ‘no’ and in sizes varying from about 40cms to 80cms and at non-uniform angles – and spread around the corner of one of the rooms. Charlotte Day explained that it portrayed a Ouija board; and I detected she had pronounced it ‘Ouiji.’ So I regaled our little group that it was ‘Ouija’ – being the French ‘oui’ meaning ‘yes’ in English and the German ‘ja’ being ‘oui’ in French. That is: the “Yes, Yes” board – and that it may have been because board ‘communicators’ had a reputation for feeding the enquirers just whatever they wanted to hear. Maybe, also, the French realised the English connotations of calling it a ‘oui oui’ board! Understandably, some participants may wet themselves!

In tracing the origins of the devices Brandon Hodge notes that ‘planchette’ is French for ‘little board’ – and so is a clue that the origins were French; and indeed his trail ends with the Baudin family in Paris in 1853<sup>8</sup>. But unfortunately he does not conjecture as to how the name ‘Ouija’ was a composite of French and German: perhaps he is more discreet than me.



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<sup>6</sup> Brandon Hodge is a collector, historian, and occult researcher residing in Austin, Texas. He curates the world’s largest collection of planchettes and automatic writing devices ([www.mysteriousplanchette.com](http://www.mysteriousplanchette.com)).

<sup>7</sup> Georgiana Houghton’s *Evenings at Home in Spiritual Séance*<sup>7</sup>, London: E W Allen, 1882, p.7.

<sup>8</sup> Alan Kardec, *Spiritualist Philosophy: The Spirits Book*, trans. Anne Bkackwell (Boston, Colby & Rich, 1893), p. x.

## *The Medium and Daybreak* <sup>9</sup>

### ‘Notes and Comments’

The late Miss Georgiana Houghton’s funeral took place at Highgate Cemetery on Monday. Next week we will give a memoir, which space would not permit our doing justice to this week.

## *The Medium and Daybreak* <sup>10</sup> **Georgiana Houghton**

This well-known Spiritualist passed away on the morning of Monday, March 24th, nearly seventy years of age, after having lain for several weeks in a hopeless state of paralysis. For the last six days of her existence in the body she was unconscious and incapable of action. From the first the stroke was regarded as fatal by the medical attendant, but Miss Houghton had such a strong hope in being able to complete her literary task by the publication of another volume, that she would not hear of any such a thing as immediate transition from the body.

It is not necessary that we give a detailed account of her experiences of Spiritualism, as these may be abundantly gleaned from her recent volumes, ‘Evenings at Home in Spiritual Séance,’ and her work on ‘Spirit Photography,’ which we noticed at length at the time of its publication. But Miss Houghton in addition to being a most remarkable medium, was a very public-spirited woman, and her name and influence in the Cause were known far and near. A letter from her pen appeared on the first page of the MEDIUM as a weekly paper, fourteen years ago to-day, so that we have to regard her as one of our very earliest contributors and correspondents. In all other public phases of the Movement she was equally active.

It was as a drawing medium that Miss Houghton was most distinctly known. Her style of drawing has never been exactly attained by any one, though some of her pupils have in a great degree succeeded in the production of similar pictures. They are chiefly monograms, consisting of a labyrinth of involved lines of different colours, producing a remarkable and highly pleasing appearance. Many years ago, she made an exhibition of them in a gallery in Bond Street. The effect of the whole when contemplated was of a very soothing character.

Miss Houghton was in the habit of holding a developing class or circle, for the impartation of this drawing ability to suitable persons. Some of these pupils have attained to great proficiency; they will greatly miss their preceptress.

To the subject of spirit photography through the mediumship of Mr. Hudson, Miss Houghton paid undivided attention all the time that Mr. Hudson was in practice. Her experiences, illustrated with upwards of fifty examples of spirit photographs, are fully given in the volume bearing on the subject.

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<sup>9</sup> No. 731 Vol. XV April 4, 1884 p. 216.

<sup>10</sup> No. 732 Vol. XV April 11, 1884 p. 234.

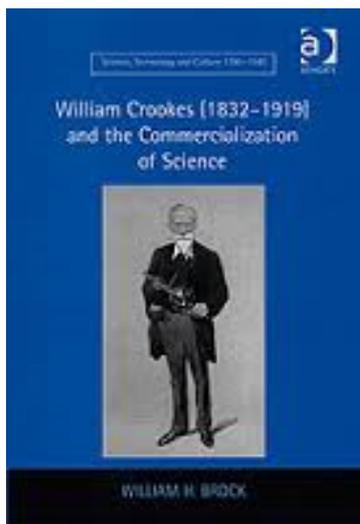
In all spiritual affairs Miss Houghton saw coincidents, which were to her mind highly significant. Days, events, times, seasons, forms, &c., were to her the alphabet of a language from which she derived great instruction, though few could follow her expositions. Her drawings she interpreted in a similar manner, giving them a theological symbolism. It is to be regretted that she made no disposition of her effects. Some steps should be taken to have the full collection of her drawings preserved in some public institution. They are well worthy of such care, and as an example of highly artistic work, produced without the usual artistic effort or experience, they are truly wonderful, and a great psychological curiosity. Her dove, brought to her by the spirits, and which she had stuffed, was placed in the coffin with her, on the top of which was also interred some wreaths of willow and flowers carefully framed, and which are described in her volumes. Her relatives, not knowing her mind on these matters, thought they were better placed thus away, than to become desecrated by passing from hand to hand or into wilful neglect. It was to be regretted that Mrs. Tebb was absent in Algiers, who knew the deceased so well, and who might have gained some of her intentions towards the last.

The relatives not knowing her spiritualistic friends, and the most intimate being abroad, but little notice could be given to the Movement of the decease and funeral. It was announced at Neumeyer Hall, on the previous Sunday, and Mr. Burns, on the part of the Movement, was invited to the funeral, which took place at Highgate Cemetery, on Monday, March 31, 1884.”



## WILLIAM CROOKES AND MADAME BLAVATSKY

William Crookes, readers of this journal will acknowledge, was an eminent pioneer of both physics and psychical research. He also joined the Theosophical Society in 1883 and is believed to have remained a member until his death.



In 2008, William Brock published a weighty biography *William Crookes and the Commercialization of Science*. This was reviewed at length in JSPR by Andreas Sommer in January 2010. I wrote a note for *Theosophical History* Jan/April 2008 (double issue) “A Theosophical Scientist” correcting some inaccuracies in Brock, making a misprint of my own (saying the former British T.S. passed under the control of Crookes, when I meant of Sinnett), and asserting in the first paragraph “True, we do not know of any meeting between H.P.B. and Crookes, even when they both lived in London...”

In reality, we (the theosophical history community, excepting me) were well aware of at least one private meeting, and another private meeting was also on record, as noted below. Embarrassingly, I had overlooked basic sources.

Josephine Ransom’s *A Short History of the Theosophical Society* appeared in 1938, and is still in print. The author used the archives at the Theosophical headquarters in Adyar, India, and despite her strong admiration for its leaders, including Mr Leadbeater, gives a valuable framework. Speaking of HPB’s visit to London in 1884, she writes “One day she went to Professor William Crookes’ laboratory to see his experiments.” (p.198).<sup>11</sup> The Ransom reference was also given by Boris De Zirkoff, in the appropriate HPB *Collected Writings* volume for 1884. Jean Overton Fuller mentioned the visit in her biography *Blavatsky and Her Teachers*, and doubtless there are other authors who allude to it.

Another visit was recalled by Bertram Keightley in his paper “Reminiscences of HPB” which appeared in *The Theosophist* September 1931. This time Crookes came to her, after her return to London in 1887. Keightley writes:

“She never at any time “did” phenomena, except once, when I recall her producing the “astral bell” sound for Mr Crookes, the eminent scientist, and even passed the “current” through his hand and made a finger-bowl ring and the water in it to “shiver”.”(P.715-6)

Brock notes that Crookes and his wife were present on 21 July 1884 at the farewell reception in Piccadilly, London for Olcott and Blavatsky who were leaving England. This event for 500 guests marked the high water mark for fashionable Theosophy, and for Sinnett.

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<sup>11</sup> Crookes was not a professor nor any kind of academic, but a jobbing scientist of genius, who had to work for a living, without security of tenure.

After Crookes died, many of his papers were destroyed, and they may well have included references to other visits. Crookes does not seem to have been affected by the SPR Hodgson report which had pronounced adversely on Theosophical phenomena.

When a Theosophist passes, the obits will often identify their lodge. George Arundale, paying tribute to Crookes 'On the Watch-Tower' in *The Theosophist* June 1919, noted that he was a member of London Lodge, which was the former B.T.S. This however was no ordinary lodge, being chiefly a vehicle for A.P. Sinnett. It was for a time affiliated direct to Theosophical headquarters at Adyar, India, and there was even a spell when Sinnett and friends broke away and formed the Eleusinian Society. Did Crookes follow him, one wonders. I must confess I had not fully appreciated how much Crookes' membership was bound up with Sinnett, from the time when Sinnett brought him into the T.S. Sinnett sat with various mediums, an interest he shared with Crookes. Crookes was a very great scientist, and Mr Sinnett did well to retain his friendship. Their cooperation deserves further exploration. Professor Brock's biography of Crookes is a good place to start.

Was Crookes a Spiritualist? He was certainly convinced of survival in his later years, after Lady Crookes died, but seems never to have made Spiritualism his religion. He was an Anglican churchwarden but his outlook was also influenced by Eliphas Levi and occultism. Here is an extract from the indispensable Medhurst and Goldney paper in PSPR vol. 54 (1964) about Crookes and the Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism. Unless stated, the footnotes are theirs. They write (p.130-1):

Crookes's belief in the existence of 'invisible intelligent beings, who profess to be spirits of deceased people' but fail to prove their identity, is consistent with his interest in Theosophy. He joined the Theosophical Society in 1883 and remained a member until his death. It will be worth quoting, in this connection, a very interesting passage in a letter<sup>12</sup> from C. C. Massey (an S.P.R. Council member at the Society's inception) to Colonel Olcott, dated December 17, 1875. Massey writes:

"I sat next to Crookes at dinner the other night and had a very interesting conversation with him. Indeed neither of us spoke a word to any one else all the time. He is an Occultist, and a pupil of Eliphas Levi, whom he met in Paris. He has himself produced results, but told me that like all profound Occultists there were secrets which he was not permitted to reveal. Is he an initiate in Madame's lodge? Probably not, for he does not appear to believe in human spirits and says that Magic is almost altogether bad and dangerous. He asked me much about you and Mme. B. and Felt, to whose work he wishes to subscribe. He is going to write to you, being more interested in finding the similarity of results at which you have both arrived. He excused himself as well as he could for not having written to you earlier and personally acknowledged your book.<sup>13</sup> I did not conceal from him that you were offended, nor that in my opinion you were rightly so. He told me a good deal about the scandals, but only as regards Miss Showers and himself.

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<sup>12</sup> Preserved in the Theosophical Archives at Adyar, Madras.

<sup>13</sup> Presumably *People from the Other World*, American Publishing Company, Hartford, Conn, 1875.

“The compromising letters I understood him to assert or suggest were forgeries by a fiend who had escaped temporarily from his control.<sup>14</sup> He says that Katie King at her last appearance offered to submit to his embraces<sup>15</sup> but begged him to take no advantage of her which a gentleman should not do — a somewhat ambiguous or inconsistent request which he appears to have construed and complied with, with self-restraint in the interests of morality.”

Massey’s description of Crookes as a ‘pupil of Eliphas Levi’ is of considerable interest; if it has any basis of truth it would go far to explain Crookes’s apparent readiness to accept non-human forces and entities in the séance room. Levi’s own attitude is made clear in his *La Clef des Grandes Mystères*, Baillière, Paris, 1861.<sup>16</sup> He discusses D. D. Home’s phenomena at some length, and while believing them to be paranormal, he takes a familiar Occultist’s attitude when he insists that they do not originate from deceased human beings.

In his obituary for LIGHT April 12 1919 it is significant that Crookes was not said to be a member of the London Spiritualist Alliance, though Miss Scatterd who helped him in his final investigations was very active in the LSA. But it happened that the funeral of Sir William took place on the day of a scheduled social gathering at the LSA, and the LSA leader Henry Withall (he always disclaimed the title of president) took the opportunity there to pay tribute to him (LIGHT April 26 1919 p.130) whom he had first met 50 years ago when Crookes was investigating Miss Cook. He had met Crookes again 10-15 years ago:

“by becoming a member of a little society with which he was connected. He then had a personal opportunity of discovering what a lovable man Sir William was, so simple-minded, so ready to do kind actions and help inquirers. One day they were talking about how far he had been helped in his researches and Sir William said. “There have been occasions when just before awaking in the morning I have seen before my eyes some perfected instrument, and I have known no rest till I have made an instrument like it. I have experienced this help in many of my researches.”

The society in question may be The Ghost Club. Dr Molly Youngkin, who has been studying Ghost Club records at CPS and the British Library told me:

I have notes about Crookes’s presence at the Ghost Club from 1899 to 1917 and Withall’s presence at meetings from 1916 to 1919. Here are my notes about a meeting on Oct. 3, 1917, which is recorded in the Club’s minutes in Add MS 52264 at the British Library and which you might find especially helpful.

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<sup>14</sup> Massey is surely in error here! The ‘compromising letters’ are evidently those which, in his letter to Home, Crookes asserted to be forged by Mrs Showers. Possibly Massey is confusing two stories, that of the forged letters and that of the ‘fiend’ whom Crookes believed to have manifested through Florence Cook (see p. 68).

<sup>15</sup> This, no doubt, refers to the celebrated episode described by Crookes in his *Researches*, 1st edn, p. 106. He says: ‘Feeling, however, that if I had not a spirit, I had at all events a lady close to me, I asked her permission to clasp her in my arms, so as to be able to verify the interesting observations which a bold experimentalist has recently somewhat verbosely recorded. Permission was graciously given, and I accordingly did — well, as any gentleman would do under the circumstances.’ This was not, as Massey says, at her last appearance, but two months earlier.

<sup>16</sup> Translated by Aleister Crowley as *The Key of the Mysteries*, Rider, London, 1959

P. 264 Oct. 3, 1917 meeting. Yeats not at this meeting. But, Withall (the current secretary) talks about SM's presence at last meeting:

“he had been in communication he believed with W Stainton Moses who told him that at our last meeting he and the Ghosts who had passed on were able to get in closer touch with us than was usually the case as the spiritual and psychic atmosphere of our president's [Crookes's] home was less difficult to penetrate than that of a public restaurant. He and the passed on members of the Club attended our meetings and it was pleasant to them to feel that we remembered them when their names on the roll were called.”

On a related matter, Brock claims that Crookes joined Golden Dawn. I consulted Dr Robert Gilbert, who kindly explained.

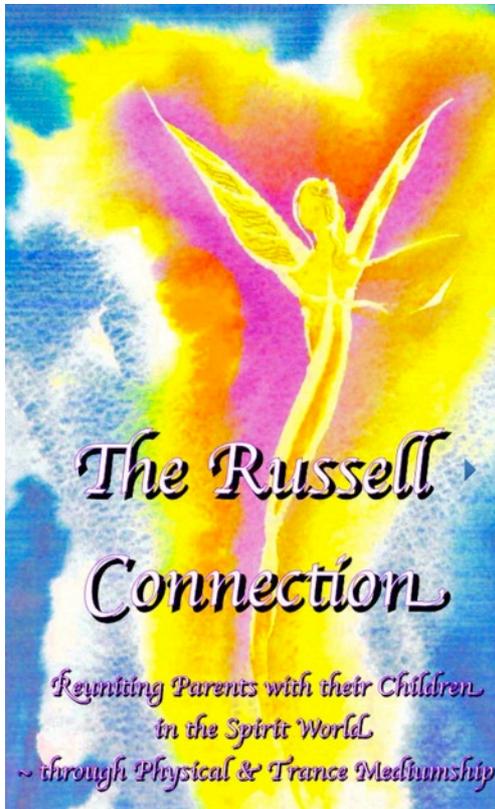
“Yes. Crookes was briefly a member of Isis-Urania Temple. He joined in June 1890 but never went beyond the 0=0 Grade of Neophyte. He is No. 81 on the Order Roll, with the motto ‘Ubi crux, ibi lux’. The address book gives his address as '7 Kensington Park Gardens, London W.' and records him simply as 'demitted', but gives no date. I imagine that he simply found that the GD had no appeal for him.”

LP.



# The Russell Connection

Reuniting Parents with their Children in the Spirit World through Physical & Trance Mediumship – review by Steve Hume



This is the second book by Gwen Byrne.<sup>17</sup> Her first, *Russell*, told the story of how she and her late husband, Alf, became convinced of the post-mortem survival of their nine-year old son following his tragic death in 1963. This volume may be regarded as a continuation of that story, but it also contains lengthy accounts from other bereaved parents who became similarly convinced of the survival of their own offspring by virtue of a mixture of ostensible spontaneous psi events and various modes of mediumship.

I have to confess here that, not being familiar with the author's previous book, I find myself at a disadvantage because it (doubtless) contains most of the details of the survival evidence by which the Byrnes reached the conclusion that Russell had, indeed, survived death. As related in the present volume, though, this appears to have happened after a series of odd coincidences and evidential information gleaned via mental mediumship, over a lengthy period, eventually led the couple to sit with the physical medium Rita Goold for a number of years

during the 1980's. Byrne appears to credit Goold with having supplied the final proof of Russell's survival, starting with her first séance in 1982.

Readers may, or may not, be aware that Goold's mediumship has attracted a great deal of criticism from researchers and Spiritualists alike. Byrne refers to this in the book when she tells of how, following a demonstration by the medium at Stansted Hall, and ensuing negative comments, she (Byrne) decided to stop referring to herself as a Spiritualist. She also alleges that the late Maurice Grosse (a sympathetic researcher, if ever there was one), at a séance at which Byrne was not present, shouted to Russell '*cut out the big act! Why are you talking in such a silly voice?*'

It would be beyond the scope of this brief review to delve into Goold's mediumship in any depth. But a few respected commentators, including a noted physical medium, have provided (not *entirely* negative) critiques of séances with a medium that match in every respect (location, names of alleged communicators etc.) the particulars of Goold's mediumship, albeit without actually naming her (e.g. Wilson,<sup>18</sup> 1987; Cornell<sup>19</sup> 2002; Alexander,<sup>20</sup> 2010).

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<sup>17</sup> Published by Psychic Book Club Publishing ISBN: 978-0-9575007-2-3 £11.99. Available from Amazon: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Russell-Connection-Reuniting-Mediumship/dp/0957500726>

<sup>18</sup> *Afterlife*, by Colin Wilson: London, Grafton Books (1987). Pp. 267-273.

<sup>19</sup> *Investigating the Paranormal*, by Tony Cornell: New York, Helix Press (2002). Pp. 347-352.

That said, taking the author's account of how she became connected with Goold at face value (that Russell dictated the Byrne's phone number at a séance, when no one present knew the couple, and asked that she be contacted), then I think that she could be forgiven for giving Goold more than a little leeway. But I still found it a shame that Byrne's defence of Goold in this book, in my opinion, lacks substance. Although, it should be noted that, according to her account, Russell's survival does not rest solely on evidence provided by Goold, I still found myself struggling to disentangle Byrne's entirely positive endorsement from the observations of others. Not for the first time in my career as a commentator on these matters I found the perplexing subjects of mixed mediumship, and other irksome factors nagging at me throughout.

Nevertheless, the aspect of this book that I found most interesting (and readable) were the accounts given by the other bereaved parents. These are interspersed throughout the general narrative, which tends to meander around further descriptions of Russell's communications to the author by various means – both by spontaneous phenomena (e.g. the well known phenomenon of spontaneously sensing the presence of the deceased) and also via the mediumship (largely trance) of mediums other than Goold.

Byrne relates how, following the publication of *Russell*, she was contacted by other grieving parents, mostly mothers, and was encouraged by Russell to form a support group called 'Russell's Pink Panther Society' (RPPS), after a Pink Panther toy was apported into a Goold séance.

The accounts given by members of the RPPS are valuable in that they provide an insight into how ordinary people, i.e. not from the research community, approach the subject of mediumship and judge survival evidence from the unenviable position of having lost a child – surely one of the worst fates that can befall any human being. These accounts speak of people who, with the guidance of Byrne, do not appear to have allowed grief to *completely* cloud their critical acumen, and who have obviously gained a great deal of strength and hope from the exercise.

In sum, this book should be read by anyone seeking an insight into how mediumship, and survival evidence of varying quality, can provide what is obviously genuine emotional support to the bereaved. Inevitably, questions will be raised by some as to the means by which individuals in such a position may be apt to misinterpret 'evidence'. But I feel that it would be inappropriate and unfair to judge the results of mediumship in its most natural social context, as demonstrated here, against the highest standards of academic parapsychology which, let's face it, have often produced challenging veridicality mixed with obvious error themselves.



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<sup>20</sup> *An Extraordinary Journey*, by Stewart Alexander: Beaconsfield, Saturday Night Press Publications (2010). Pp. 208-211.

# A VOICE FROM BEYOND

## SÉANCE CONVERSATION IN ICELANDIC

By SIGURDUR ARNALDS

**Note by LP:** One of our readers, Erlendur Haraldsson, was in London recently and I drew his attention to this incident from LIGHT. He told me. “A translation of this Light article from 1933 was published in MORGUNN”, [the Icelandic Spiritualist publication] It appeared also that Sigurdur Arnalds had reported on this incident at one of the meetings of the Icelandic SPR.”

The medium Hazel Ridley had a mixed reputation. Dennis Bradley, for example, wrote a negative chapter about her in his book *And After* (1931). We include the incident in *Psypioneer* because of the rarity of Icelandic messages.

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Below is taken from LIGHT, March 17th 1933, page 166:

I COME from the smallest and most isolated nation in Europe, a nation which has its own independent language—a language which is not taught in this country or in any other. I have never during my four years’ stay abroad come across any foreigner who could say a single sentence in my native tongue. I come from Iceland.

In Glasgow, I became acquainted with a Scotsman, Mr. Alexander Cumming, who invited me to a séance with the American Medium, Miss Hazel Ridley. We arrived rather late for the sitting—the Medium was going into a trance—consequently I was not introduced to Miss Ridley or to any of the sixteen people present. The spirits came through and addressed the sitters one after the other till I was the only one left.

Then there was a pause which I thought indicated the end and I felt disappointed. Suddenly, I was addressed by my first name, Sigurdur, and then again my pet name, Siggí. The following conversation took place between the voice and myself in *Icelandic*:

*Voice:* Do you hear me, Siggí?

*Myself:* Yes, can you tell me your name?

*Voice:* I am Gisl-o-o.

*Myself:* Is your name Gislina? (An Icelandic woman’s name).

*Voice:* I am a man very recently passed over.

*Myself:* Perhaps it is easier for you to tell me in English who you are.

*Voice:* I do not speak English.

*Myself:* Are you a relative of mine?

*Voice:* No; Helga, Helga! (An Icelandic woman’s name).

*Myself:* Is your name Helga?

*Voice:* No, I am a man.

*Voice:* Polly, Polly!

At last it struck me who it might be, but until he mentioned the name “Polly,” this person had not come into my mind at all during the sitting and I said: “And now you can tell me your name.” The ice was broken and the right name came: “Gishi Olafson.” “At last I could say it, Siggi,” he added.

This Mr. Olafson had died two months before; he was a friend of my family, had a daughter whose name was Helga and his widow’s pet name was “Polly.”

I asked him if there was anything I could do for him, to which he replied: “Tell Helga that she must not be so sad.” I promised to write that very evening and he thanked me. Then he asked me to use every opportunity to attend sittings as there was so much he wanted to tell me and ask me to do for him. Then he thanked me again and said “vertu bless,” which is an Icelandic slang expression for “good -bye,” and the conversation was over.

The first words were said with difficulty and with a strong foreign accent; but, after he had succeeded in bringing through his name, the conversation proceeded more easily and the last sentences were pronounced nearly as if they had been spoken through Icelandic lips.

Was it the individual, Miss Ridley, who happened to be the first foreigner to talk to me in Icelandic? Or, was it the spirit of Mr. Olafson? Personally, I am convinced that it was the latter—that two Icelanders in two different worlds had spoken together in their own language through a foreign Medium.



# STANTON MOSES RETURNS, PAINFULLY

**Note by LP:** Katharine Bates was a Christian Spiritualist who claimed the friendship of F. W. H. Myers, Archdeacon Basil Wilberforce and Stainton Moses. In her books she has some interesting material, though normally without corroboration. By the time of the 1920 book from which the extracts below are taken, she had some unusual ideas about a new kind of children, to which we will return in a later edition of *Psypioneer*.<sup>21</sup>

## Pages 105/6:

I belonged once to an occult society, and went through several degrees in it, wasting a good deal of time over purely mechanical knowledge which burdened the memory without illuminating the understanding. When I complained that I could see no advantage likely to arise from passing Class II. to Class III. as the result of spending hours in mere feats of memory, I was told that this was only discipline. "My next move would certainly give me some key to the situation." So I spent more time and went, by degrees, to Classes IV., V. and VI., but that key was never forthcoming, though it was hinted that if I persevered I might at last rise high enough to gain some power over elementals! Now as my only desire is to give elementals a very wide berth, I thought it was time to resign, and asked to be "read out" of that "galère." There were some pleasant and kindly people in it, and if their desire was "elemental" I hope they have succeeded by this time and are none the worse for the experience.

Robert Gilbert kindly explained this to me. "Yes, she was in the Golden Dawn, a member of the Isis Urania Temple. She joined in May 1891 but left in 1894. What she means by 'class 6' I don't know; she reached the Grade of Philosophus (4=7) which is the fifth in the sequence. It looks as though she balked at the prospect of taking the Portal Grade and proceeding to the Second Order."<sup>22</sup>

## Pages 122/26:

Some years ago and within a year of the transition of Mr. Stainton Moses (whose name will be recognised by all psychical researchers), I was dining in the house of some very old friends of his. Two young American wives and their husbands were also dining there, and when the ladies had left the men to their wine, one of these ladies was most eager that we should try to hold some communication through a table. I did my best to veto this, feeling afraid that Mr. Moses might take advantage of the opportunity—which I knew would be painful to my friend and hostess. However, the American lady gained the point, and when I whispered to the hostess "would you not rather give this up?" she said quietly, "No, it had better go on now. It is the *discussion* I dislike most."

As I feared, Mr. Stainton Moses came almost at once, and said I was the medium of this occasion.

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<sup>21</sup> *Children of the Dawn* by E. Katharine Bates published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd, 1920.

<sup>22</sup> Readers will note in this same issue, that Crookes was also a member briefly of the GD.

He gave a very appropriate message about the improved opportunities he had from his present Home for helping on the movement to which he had devoted his life and he was giving up the control when I began to feel the most excruciating pains all over my body. I never thought of associating these with Mr. Stainton Moses. I knew he had not been very strong for a year or two before his death, but had no idea that his illness was associated with such severe physical pain. The other three ladies were so absorbed by a new control that no one took any notice of my condition, so I joined the hands of my neighbours on either side and escaped to a Chesterfield couch where I lay groaning and in very severe pain for about half-an-hour when, by degrees, the pains lessened and I became normal. My hostess said afterwards, "How brutal they had been to take no notice of my sufferings," and I gathered that they had not altogether realized these at the time. We asked for no explanation of it because no one connected it in any way with psychic conditions.

Moreover, some rather amusing, but very pertinent advice, had been given to one of the young married women, whose husband was in the dining room, on the subject of taking a new house, which she desired and certainly had every right to possess, as the money was on her side. An old great-uncle—evidently a shrewd business man was being consulted as to whether she should "try to persuade" Louis (a pseudonym) to purchase the house. Hitherto they had inspected many houses, but all those in desirable quarters were condemned at once by Louis as insanitary! The inspectors seemed to have been most unanimous in their verdicts on this head; judging by the husband's account. "Great-Uncle Richard" gave *his* advice with no uncertain sound!

"Don't try to persuade tyrants—rather use your own judgment and see the inspectors yourself." I think he hinted that the latter would be greatly surprised on hearing how many proposed houses they had declared unhealthy.

It was two years later before I found for the first time a solution of my "Problem of Pain." When my hostess had asked me *where* I felt the pain I had answered at once "*all over. There is not a bone in my body that is not racked by pain.*"

Two years later, I met at a quiet dinner in Sussex Gardens the lady who was Mr. Stainton Moses' masseuse during the last two years of his life. She was telling a doctor who sat next to her, and opposite to me, about Mr. Moses' illness. We were a small party and I heard all she said. Curiously enough, she used the exact words I had used in trying to describe my sensations two years earlier. She said: "Well Doctor, I was with him constantly for two years, and I have no hesitation in saying that during my acquaintance with him and speaking from the point of view of an expert masseuse, *there was not a bone in his body that was not racked with pain.*"

Those who have not studied psychical phenomena deeply will doubtless say: "How horrible to think he should still be suffering in that way." Of course, we know that this is not the case. It was not a very harmonious circle—two of us were intensely eager "to see the table do something." The Other two—my hostess and myself—were rather resenting this view of things, *i.e.*, the sort of parlour game atmosphere, induced always by investigators more eager for amusement than instruction. No doubt these were factors in the earthly atmosphere which Mr. Moses, as a Sensitive, would feel keenly in taking on a rather uncongenial *milieu*. His great wish to console his friend on earth would, nevertheless, induce him to take control with this object in view. I am sure he never

supposed that he would unconsciously transmit his earthly sufferings to the most sensitive person in the room and a former friend of his own.

There is no reason to suppose that he was actually suffering those pains at the time. In fact, we have good reason to think the contrary. As an inhabitant of the Ethereal sphere *he* would be in a different rate of vibrations; but I, still on earth and conditioned by earth vibrations and very sensitive to them, happened to be the victim on this occasion.



**William Stainton Moses**

November 5th 1839 – September 5th 1892

# Association of Art Historians 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference Session 19: Modernism, Occultism and Evolution.

**Note by LP: We are very grateful for art historian Lynda Harris for providing a report on this conference session. There is no area of psychic studies today which is attracting such interest as art:**

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This conference, held in Norwich 9-11 April 2015, was probably the first in 41 years to include a session on esoteric art of the late 19th and early 20th century. Presumably it won't be the last, as art historians are now increasingly appreciating the numbers of artists who were involved during this time with occultism and esotericism. New scientific discoveries of the period, including x-rays, radioactivity and radio waves, appeared to support the existence of invisible worlds and energies. The relevance of these scientific concepts to the modernist movement in art was discussed by LINDA DALRYMPLE HENDERSON (University of Texas). As she pointed out, occultism in fin-de-siècle art can no longer be dismissed by art historians as a 'fringe' topic.

In addition to the new physics, Theosophists such as Blavatsky, Besant and Leadbeater were influenced by Darwinian and Lamarckian concepts of evolution. Syncretic religions from the Far East and elsewhere were also important in Theosophy. The synthesis of these various ideas in fin-de-siècle Paris was discussed by FAE BRAUER (Universities of East London and New South Wales). Two of the painters involved in this Parisian world, and influenced by Theosophy along with other occultist ideas, were František Kupka and Hélène Dufau. Both were especially interested in the trajectory of human evolution, which they believed could lead to almost magical changes in the physical and psychological characteristics of future humanity.

In Sweden, the individualistic Spiritualist painter Hilma Af Klint took her own approach to what TESSEL M. BAUDUIN (Radboud University, Netherlands) described as 'these various occulted scientific concepts'. Believing, for example, that the true essence of atoms is on the astral plane she painted the atomic structure of flowers in both their astral and physical forms. Klint was also deeply impressed by C.W. Leadbeater's *Man Visible and Invisible*, which discussed and illustrated Theosophical concepts of spiritual evolution and the ascending planes of nature. She diverged from Leadbeater, however, in that she thought that consciousness could travel up, down, and in and out of the planes. Her spiritual works expressed these ideas through a series of abstract shapes, including triangles which pointed up and down. Colours were also significant in expressing the darkness and light through which we pass, with yellow also representing the masculine and blue the feminine.

SERENA KESHAVJEE (University of Winnipeg) discussed the attempts of experimenters to understand and capture what the science populariser Flammarion called the 'Mysterious Psychic Forces'. These included thought forms, magnetic energy, and the 'unknown forces' used by mediums to levitate tables and move objects. Experimenters, including Karl van Reichenbach, Hippolyte Baraduc, Albert de Rochas and Yakov Narkevich-Iodko developed processes which would make the 'odic' or 'vital' forces visible. While spirit extras and ectoplasm were usually photographed with traditional cameras, experimental camera-free systems were used to capture phenomena such as thought forms and the aura. The new

systems included images made by objects placed directly on photosensitive paper, 'Rayograms', which were projected onto gelatinous plates, and electro-graphic images projected directly onto the photographic plate by means of an electrical discharge. The early results tended to be misty, but the later images were much clearer, with some (in my view) resembling present day Kirlean photographs. Concepts of the vital force appealed to fin-de-siècle Symbolist painters and writers as well as scientists, and influenced their works. The moving and entwining strands of hair in Munch's paintings, for example, are likely to be affected by these ideas.

Munch's friend August Strindberg, best known today as a playwright, was also active as a painter and photographer. MARJA LAHELMA (Universities of Helsinki and Edinburgh) discussed the influences of Swedenborg, alchemy and occultism on his ideas. Sharing the current interest in invisible energies, he photographed the aura, and even tried to prove the existence of the soul by taking pictures of it. He used further experimental techniques in his 'celestographs', or long-exposure photographs of the night sky. The mystical themes of Strindberg's photographs were paralleled in his paintings, which explored the poetry, depth and changeability of the natural world.

Other talks in the session included a look by PASCAL ROUSSEAU (Université de Paris) at ways in which concepts of non-sensory, mind-to-mind communication influenced the development of abstract painting. TANJA POPPELREUTER (Ulster University) discussed the modernist belief that old traditions can be altered, and changes in housing can lead to changes in the ways people behave. These ideas were applied by Mies van der Rohe to plans for affordable housing. NEIL MATHESON (University of Westminster) then looked at occultism in the Surrealist movement before and after World War II. André Breton, who was the most attracted to these subjects, took a particular interest in Tarot cards and magic. Max Ernst, Kurt Seligman and Maurice Baskin all produced works on Alchemical themes, and the darker subject of diabolism also appealed to several members of the movement. Finally, in the last talk, MARK BARTLETT (independent scholar) discussed Paul DeMarinis, a contemporary American electronic composer. Some of his sculptures and installations are influenced by occult concepts of the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including certain Theosophical ideas. His approach to these subjects is generally ironic and humorous.

Though some artists have continued to be influenced by occult ideas up to the present day, the heyday of the modernist movement came to an end during the 1920s. Why was this? Some would suggest the shock of the World War I, but this is probably only a partial explanation. Another important cause, suggested by DALRYMPLE HENDERSON, was Einstein's Theory of Relativity. During the modernist period, occultists believed in the existence of an all-permeating substance known as the ether of space, which acted as a medium for the transmission of thought, light and other vibrations. The discrediting of this apparently essential component of occultist science by the new Theory of Relativity had a disillusioning influence on occultist thinkers and artists. Nevertheless, it is clear (as I see it) that Flammarion's 'Mysterious Psychic Forces' have not vanished along with the ether. They are still unexplained, but this does not mean they do not exist.



**Note by LP:** The Manchester businessman William Oxley was a significant investigator of physical mediumship, not least in relation to wax moulds made by spirits.<sup>23</sup> He was interested in becoming a disciple of the Theosophical Mahatmas, but was turned down as described in “The Mahatma Letters.”<sup>24</sup>

He founded however another group, the Angelic Order of Life, based on teachings received by a medium, whose last known member left the records to the Theosophical Society in London about 1990. On July 2 2012, Marc Demarest posted on his blog “Chasing down Emma” some valuable research into Oxley’s family, which links to Oxley’s own account of his life.<sup>25</sup>

The first article below was written when Oxley was still alive,<sup>26</sup> and the second is an obituary.

## Mr. Oxley



*The following sketch has been written for us by a friend who has intimately known Mr. Oxley for a great number of years. Mr. Oxley is not in any way responsible for what we have published.*

IN BRINGING our thoughts in touch with the personality whose portrait ornaments the front page of this magazine is a pleasant and profitable experience for the mind, and our memory is refreshed by many incidents in which his face and voice helped to cheer and carry us through the mists which enveloped the mind in the early days of our investigation into the mysteries of the spiritual philosophy; so that, in writing this sketch, it is something of the nature of a letter to a friend, and must embody the heartfelt utterances of the soul, along with the characteristic features of the noble and fearless life of this spiritual scientist.

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<sup>23</sup> See Michael Coleman, M. H. (1994) Wax moulds of ‘spirit’ limbs. JSPR 59, 340 - 346, and Psypioneer editor’s remarks below.

<sup>24</sup> William Oxley: [http://www.theosophy.wiki/mywiki/index.php?title=William\\_Oxley](http://www.theosophy.wiki/mywiki/index.php?title=William_Oxley)

<sup>25</sup> Chasing Down Emma – William Oxley: <http://ehbritten.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/william-oxley-1823-1905.html>

<sup>26</sup> *The Two Worlds* December 16th 1898, front page & page 830.

Mr. William Oxley was born at Doncaster in Yorkshire on May 1, 1823, and his father's ancestral line extends back for several generations, some of them filling important positions, manifesting strong mentality and useful business habits.

In these modern times it requires the sharpest wit, along with good calculating powers, to stand the same ground which in the good old days was easily and comfortably occupied. The firm with which his name is associated, and is so well known in the city of Manchester, has executed in its time large contracts, in the production of small machinery for the manufacture of flax, cotton, and other textile industries; also fitting up gasworks, and tackling the execution of large Government orders, so that one paying a visit to the works at the Parsonage, Manchester, was at once struck with the complicated nature of what was going on, as it appeared to be a perfect hive of industry, and every corner animated with workmen carrying out the several details of the manufacturing process.

Mr. Oxley has virtually retired from business, which has been consigned to his son, who for many years was the representative of the firm in India, and who has now removed the works to larger and more commodious premises, called the Tudor Works, Pendleton, where there still goes on the throbbing industrious centre, which for so many years was inspired by the mind of our friend, whose dearly loved personality is now deeply enshrined in our own spiritual consciousness.

His visits on business matters led him regularly to visit Scotland, and while making one of these journeys as far back as 1877, a mill proprietor in the district where we resided told him that some people of his persuasion (as he always dropped a seed of truth when he considered it suitable) had been carrying on meetings to hold communion with spirits, and on this information he sought out the little group and brought with him the experience he had gathered himself, and gave out freely what he then possessed of the knowledge of the truth.

Mr. Oxley has been prominently successful as an investigator of spiritualistic phenomena from the fact of his entering the field with scholarly attainments, as he had a fairly good education, and being deeply religious, as well as scientific in his natural organisation, there was all the physical and natural conditions for a patient and candid survey of the facts then presented for his mental acceptance. It might be only a coincidence that he was led, previous to his touching the vital ground of Spiritualism, to join the obscure sect of Swedenborgians, as he was brought up in the teachings of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and no doubt this fact gave depth and colour to the whole aspect of his future work in regard to spiritual manifestations.

For 25 years a close alliance in thought, sympathy and action with the spiritual movement has existed, and during that period he has been a stalwart champion of the facts, and also a zealous exponent of the principles as far as his own mind leads him to perceive, and a really earnest sympathy led him actively to provide the benefits of mediumship at much expense to himself for those living in different towns where he was visiting, and we have known him bring physical mediums from remote parts of England to Dundee in Scotland, and then bring together a company of representative men of the city to witness the phenomena, and so there, and many other places, laid down a knowledge of Spiritualism which has gone on generating a liberal influence on the minds of the people. And although time claims its right of ascendancy over every structure, including the earthly temple of the soul, it is truly wonderful how this veteran in the ranks of the reforming army holds possession of his mental sharpness and acumen in knowledge, as we can judge from those articles recently published in this

magazine on mediumship and materialization of the spirit form. It is evident his hand has not lost its cunning, although his physical energies have somewhat abated.

We have always recognised a deep underlying principle of being in the constitutional elements of this one's life and movements since we came in contact with him. Outwardly in action he is kind, generous, and obliging, refined in manner, and commanding respect, so that no one, in meeting with him, is not the better for it, but it is that power which has brought him to the front and given him originality, and a representative character in all that he does. It is this power in the constitution of his mentality that has led him into fields of thought and inquiry quite fresh and original, as, for instance, the publishing of that volume, 'The Philosophy of Spirit,' where he renders the old sacred poem of India, the 'Bhagavat Gita' into the English language in a new dress, which really makes the language speak the spiritual aspirations of the student of spiritual philosophy in our own day, and a zest was given to the study of Aryan literature, which has grown into a strong thirst and inclination, and born fruit, say, as manifested in the growth and development of the Theosophical Society.'

Again his attention was drawn to the study of Egyptian antiquities and literary stores of knowledge to sustain the influx of light which from time to time entered the region of thought. He was led at this period, along with a literary friend, to take a journey to the land of the Nile, and during that sojourn in Egypt he was deeply imbued with the knowledge attached to these ancient memorials of past greatness, and the sculptured faces of the tombs revealed to him a vast library of knowledge about to be opened up for the good of mankind, and would give practical demonstration of the falsity of those literary and religious gods which the civilised-nations are actually worshipping at the present day. A volume published in 1885 by Mr. Oxley, entitled 'Egypt, and the Wonders of the Land of the Pharaohs,' and those who are in possession of this volume have a key to many puzzling and knotty questions which have vexed both Church and State. For publishing this book, and in recognition of its worth, a literary and scientific society of London presented him with the gold medal of the Society. Since that time the light of Egypt has streamed in upon his soul; and I feel sure no one living has a more perfect understanding of the esoteric nature of the religion and social life of the ancient Egyptians, and how interwoven their peculiar type of thought is with the religious expression and experience of this country.

Besides the publication of other works on the fundamental principles of spiritual thought, he was the Editor of the matter given at a private circle in Manchester, and these alone comprise five large octavo volumes. There is so much in these books, entitled, 'Angelic Revelations,' to awaken the conscious life of the readers, suggesting serious and thoughtful enquiry into boundless regions of investigations, which can only be grasped by the studious and contemplative. In fact, these volumes are a biblical encyclopedia, manifesting the involution and evolution of the spiritual being of man. The language is chaste and beautiful, and the imagery and symbolism conveying these profound truths are really sublime. These books are not given in the style of a popular treatise to command a large circulation, but as the gift of a devout and earnest spiritual circle, who came in contact with great thinkers and revelators on the spiritual plane of existence, who by methods original and unique, conveyed the great fact of human existence on the physical, psychical, and spiritual planes by the inspirational breathings of disembodied beings on these several planes of beings. The idea of the representative character of manifesting spirits is clearly defined in the pages of these books.

The true value and fitness of these volumes in the domain of spiritual thoughts will be better understood in the incoming age of growth and spiritual development, and the patient work of the circle and sacrificing efforts to put the communications into book-form will yet come to be duly appreciated as well as the position of the Editor, who must have spent many weary hours to bring into light and existence this mass of literature, altogether new and original in the English language. It was no feeling of curiosity, but allegiance to truth and devotion to the highest wellbeing of his fellow-men, which prompted these actions and conquered the insuperable difficulties which stood in their way.

I remember the late editor of a Spiritualist paper saying to me after he had got one of the volumes to print, that although he did not fully understand the nature of the communications, he inwardly knew that they were all true, and this sense is a general estimate of the position of the reader, because, truly, the facts are the embodied utterances of truth on the spiritual plane, and have a power and force to lift the mind into contemplative regions of spiritual life and light.

The circle which met for seven years to receive the *Angelic Revelations* (now out of print) was dissolved, and after the lapse of seven years a new circle was formed to enter on a more pronounced and objective series of communication. And as the outcome of this new organisation there has been issued two large volumes, entitled 'Life, and its Manifestations,' and matter for two other volumes await the time for further publication. These books form a sequel to the former series, and deal with the same truths in a more objective and illustrative form, and to our mind they make manifest the clearer organisation and divine order of the guiding intelligences on the spiritual disembodied plane, and there is a distinct intention in making clear those points on which controversies and disputations might arise in regard to the ultimatum, growth, and destiny of the human ego, and to the plain sailing Spiritualist he could find no better interpretation of these knotty points than is laid down in the *communications*, which are not published for general circulation.

We cannot enter into the details of this stupendous spiritual outbirth and intellectual life-force, further than record the close affinity of Mr. Oxley's mind with all that has been evolved; and we can in no better language condense the meaning from all that remarkable literature than in his own words: 'What the Christian sects regard as God—viz., a perfect human being in one personal form,—must henceforth be regarded as the central life in every human being, and consequently that universal personality, or the totality of all persons, is the most external manifestation of God, and the same is true of all spheres of being. This, and vastly more, is summed up in our philosophy, thus: There is only one life and one substance by which the one life is manifested in an infinitude of forms, inhabiting an infinitude of worlds, spheres, and suns.'

From this field of philosophical enquiry into which our friend naturally leads us, we wish to take a glance of our friend at his home, and one feature is his abiding dwelling-place as a quarter of a century has always found him in the same place a comfortable home, which was a while ago in the suburbs of the city of Manchester, but is now a point where miles of buildings stretch beyond, yet he finds conditions for the highest and fullest evidence of spiritual intercourse, and within his own sanctum or study the true picture of this modern apostle of spiritual thought is found; and from his writing-table to look around the apartment you at once perceive the genius and source of inspiration which has fed those fires of enthusiastic ardour for so many years past.

The spiritualism of the man is not like that of many who pose as leaders, for in many instances you cannot find a trace of their allegiance to the truth; it is actually hidden away in their own home, not so that of this earnest and truthful man, for there is disclosed to your view books, pictures, object lessons from séances, moulds of the feet and hands, and carefully preserved bits of the garments of materialised spirits, and samples of spirit writing, making you feel in very close proximity to the denizens of the vast beyond. Then, again, you observe the memorials of his Egyptian tour, and these spiritual symbols in bronze of Osiris, Isis, and Horns, the Egyptian trinity, and many carved amulets or charms which have played a part in the life drama of that ancient nation. There hangs a chart portraying his earthly descent, and parentage as well, showing that the individuality of the man is a known factor, and his position amid the myriad forms of life is well defined to himself, and the representative character of his teaching a well understood principle. A photograph of that study would be an object lesson not easily forgotten, and would convey a meaning of the man's life and work. It is not merely a hobby all this with him, but well-connected experience and living part of the living whole.

After what we have said, it will be seen that he is not inaccessible, and no one who desires to meet with something good and true but will love to hear this story, and feel their own life made better in knowing that Spiritualism has such a truthful representative, who is sound in faith as well as the embodiment of many sterling virtues, for during these many years he has been as true to his convictions as the needle is to the pole; and more than that, he is social, kind, and hospitable, so that all this mysticism is based upon a stratum of good human nature. One point we omitted, which shows his desire for his fellows around him, that in which he sought election and got it to the Corporation of Salford, sitting for three years, and by that means obtained an insight into the working methods of the civic system, so that Mr. Oxley is an all round man, and holds the facts of the spiritual philosophy in a well-balanced brain, a kind and genial heart, and altogether, a clean and unimpeachable life.

A. D.

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Obituary published below is taken from *The Two Worlds* July 14th 1905, page 355:

## WILLIAM OXLEY

WILLIAM OXLEY was born on May 1st, 1823, at Doncaster, with which town his ancestors had been associated from the year 1561. His parents, Thomas and Jane Oxley, and his grandparents were staunch Methodists, being among the earliest adherents of the Wesleys (about 1780). Thomas Oxley, his father, was a lay preacher for the Wesleyan body during the greater part of a long life, and known far and wide as an earnest, zealous, indefatigable worker, faithful to his convictions and loyal to his church, in spite of the constant indignities and petty persecutions to which the Wesleyans were subjected in the early days of the movement. His son, William, who seems to have inherited an untiring energy and staunch devotion from his worthy father, was 'converted' in his twentieth year, and flung himself heart and soul into the 'work of the Lord,' teaching, 'leading' classes, and discharging a great number of official duties.

About 1864 he became acquainted with the doctrines of the Swedenborgian Church, which made such an impression upon him that he forthwith relinquished his connection with Wesleyanism, and attached himself to the followers of Swedenborg, the New Jerusalem Church as they styled themselves. Eight years passed—years of diligent study of his newly-adopted religion, and enthusiastic work amongst his new co-religionists.

In 1872 an old friend whom he had not seen for many years introduced him to the phenomenal phase of Spiritualism, and although the manifestations he first witnessed were crude enough, he felt satisfied that there was 'something in it' which was likely to prove worthy of investigation. Fortified with the enlightenment derived from Swedenborg's teachings, whose system of philosophy, based upon the science of correspondences, he considered to be 'the only key to unlock all the mysteries pertaining to spirit and matter,' he boldly entered upon this new field of research at a time when to be known as a Spiritualist was to be an object of ridicule, and cheerfully devoted time, money, and energy in the pursuit of truth.

Patiently, persistently, undaunted by a great variety of obstacles which were encountered from time to time, Mr. Oxley made himself acquainted with nearly every form of phenomenal Spiritualism. Mrs. Firman, Dr. Monck, Miss Cook (Mrs. Corner), Miss Fairlamb (Mrs. Mellon), Mrs. Esperance, Mr. Hopcroft, Mr. David Duguid, and Messrs. Sadler (the brothers by means of whose mediumship he introduced Spiritualism to Dundee) may be cited as the best known of the mediums with whom he had sittings. Bringing to bear upon his research keen intelligence, careful observation, unremitting patience and honesty of purpose he acquired a personal acquaintance with Spiritualistic phenomena and deep insight into the underlying causes of them such as were possessed by few, very few of his contemporaries. It was the philosophy of Spiritualism that had the greatest attraction for him, and it was in the study thereof that the most important part of his life's work lay.

At the outset of his career of investigation Mr. Oxley became connected with a circle of friends who met regularly with a medium named Mrs. Lighfoot, whose utterances while in deep trances seemed of such vital import, albeit couched in symbolic phraseology, that he took it upon himself to record them. From time to time the records were collected and published under the title of 'Angelic Revelations, concerning the Origin, Ultimatum, and

Destiny of the Human Spirit,' forming five large-volumes.<sup>27</sup> For this work Mr. Oxley only claimed to be the amanuensis, but it by no means marked the limit of his active pen. Even while it was in progress, he translated the well-known 'Bhagavat Gita,' and published the translation, which was accompanied by his own interpretation of the spiritual teachings of that beautiful poem, under the title of "Philosophy of Spirit." Later he visited Egypt, studied the ancient history and religious systems of that remarkable land, and embodied his acquisition in a work entitled, 'Egypt, and the Wonders of the Land of the Pharaohs.'

Regarding the peculiar manifestations of those remarkable personalities who have claimed or had claimed for them the position of 'Messiah' as the result of powerful spiritual influence, he naturally included them amongst the objects of his attention, and in 1899 published a most instructive little volume, entitled, 'Modern Messiahs and Wonder Workers,' giving faithful accounts of Emanuel Swedenborg, Ann Lee, Johanna Southcott, Joseph Smith, Edward Irving, Thomas Lake Harris, Mary Ann Girling, James White, 'The Mother, the Woman Clothed with the Sun,' Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, and Keshub Chunder Sen. Two booklets, 'The Rise and Development of Religious Beliefs and Systems' and "Materialisations and Their Alleged Exposures," were also from his pen, as well as numerous articles in the current spiritualistic press.

Thus he maintained a constant activity, while avoiding the publicity and personal prominence which might easily have been accorded to so zealous a labourer in the cause of truth. Referring to this in the *Medium and Daybreak* of Jan. 9th, 1885, he says: 'I have taken no active part in public work because that was not my forte; for however well meant the efforts of others to form societies and establish places of meeting for worship, etc., yet, to my view, they savoured too much of the old style, of which I had had enough; and I therefore thought I could be more useful in doing my own work in the way which seemed pointed out.' How well that work has been done, how faithfully he has discharged his trust is apparent to all who have had the privilege of knowing him.

During the last few years of his sojourn here the inevitable weakening of old age gradually prepared him for the change, and on the morning of June 29th he passed peacefully out of the frail tenement of the flesh into that beyond which had engaged his earnest attention throughout a long well-spent life.

The interment took place on Monday afternoon, July 3rd, at Bowdon Parish Churchyard.

On Sunday evening, the 2nd inst, special reference was made to Mr. Oxley's passing on at the Central Association by the speaker for the evening, Mr. Walter Howell. A special programme of music was also performed, including the first movement, Mozart's 'Jupiter' symphony and Haydn's 'Surprise' symphony. The orchestra consisted of the following gentlemen friends of Mr. J. H. Bury: Piano, Mr. Varley; principal violin, Mr. Harmer; violins, Messrs. Kelsall, Shaw, and Bury; viola, Mr. F. Seymour; 'cello, Mr. Truman; bass, Mr. Hine. The violin solo so beautifully rendered by Mr. F. Harmer was composed by Mr. Arthur Varley, F.C.M., specially for the occasion, Mr. Varley feeling that the 'Dead March' was not in keeping with Spiritualist sentiment. This solo is a work of the highest merit, and the Central Association is to be congratulated on having obtained the services of such an accomplished musician as Mr. Varley.



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<sup>27</sup> The whole of his work, numbering several thousand books, was published by Mr. Oxley and his friends at their own charge, and distributed to the public entirely free of cost.

# Paraffin Wax Moulds

Paraffin Wax Moulds were a rare form of physical mediumship; a detailed report was published in *Psypioneer* February 2012 issue with the medium Catherine (Kate) Wood.<sup>28</sup> In the December 2014 issue Garth Willey turned attention to Arthur Conan Doyle and Harry Houdini. *The Facts of Psychic Science* by Campbell Holms published in 1925, later reprinted by 1965 by University Books, New York gave a brief referenced history on pages 444/447 of the phenomena, published below:

A very beautiful manifestation that spirits have frequently given is the formation of paraffin-wax moulds of their materialised hands, feet and face, and even the head. If we dip a hand or foot in melted paraffin and withdraw it, it will be clothed with a thin waxen glove, the thickness of which may be increased by repeated dippings in the paraffin and alternate immersions in cold water. If, now, the hand or foot could be withdrawn from the glove, the latter would form a very perfect mould, which, if filled with liquid plaster of Paris, would result—when the plaster solidified and the paraffin melted off—in an exact replica in plaster of the hand or foot, on which the fine texture of the skin would be reproduced. A human hand or foot cannot, however, be withdrawn from an adhesive wax mould without distorting and rupturing it (and more particularly if the fingers are crossed and the wax glove is thin), but that of a materialised spirit can be, merely by dematerialising it. Moulds so obtained form a permanent and convincing proof of the actuality of the materialised spirit, for no human being could produce the same sort of thing.

Paraffin moulds have been produced by many mediums; they appear to have been first obtained through W. Eglinton in London, in Jan., 1876,<sup>29</sup> and in the same year by Mrs. M. M. Hardy, of Boston.<sup>30</sup> Mr. Robert Cooper of Eastbourne describes Mrs. Hardy's procedure in *Light* (1897, p. 459). On the occasion he saw her she sat in a public hall in Boston, before four or five hundred spectators. There was a table on the platform, the cloth on which reached the ground. Under it there were placed two vessels, one containing melted paraffin and the other cold water. Two well-known Bostonians supervised the proceedings on the platform. Mrs. Hardy sat at the table, the lights were turned down, but there was sufficient for the spectators to see the medium sitting motionless. After waiting a quarter of an hour raps were heard, and on the vessels being examined a paraffin mould of a hand was found in the water. The dish of paraffin had been weighed as a preliminary, and when weighed again its weight was found to be reduced by exactly the weight of the mould. The performance was then repeated. Mr. Cooper saw beautiful plaster casts of hands made from the moulds.

On other occasions, in 1896, moulds of spirit hands were produced in Mrs. Hardy's presence under peculiarly rigid test conditions. For the pails of liquid paraffin and cold water were placed in a securely-locked box, made with wood and wire netting, which precluded the medium, who sat near them, from herself touching the contents. The light was lowered, but

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<sup>28</sup> Update: See Volume 10. No. 11. November 2014 – Catherine Elizabeth Wood & Annie Fairlamb – Correcting the record – Lis Warwood: <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP10.11November2014.pdf>  
Also: Volume 11. No.2. February 2015 – Catharine Elizabeth Wood (1852-1884): The final two years – Lis Warwood: <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP11.2February2015.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> *Twixt Two Worlds*, p. 5

<sup>30</sup> Sargent, *Proof Palpable*, 2nd ed., p. 220.

there was sufficient to see the time by a watch and the medium sitting motionless near the box. After forty minutes' wait a wax mould was found floating in the pail of water. An account of a séance conducted in this way is given in *The Spiritualist*, for 1878, p. 168, and the names of seven of the sitters who signed it are appended, one being Epes Sargent.

Some excellent moulds of spirit hands and feet were obtained through the mediumship of Dr. Monck, and a detailed description by Mr. W. Oxley, of a séance held on April 11, 1876, is recorded in *The Spiritualist* (for May 24, and July 26, 1878), in which illustrations are given of a plaster cast of a hand and foot made from the moulds.<sup>31</sup> Both of these were evidently remarkably perfect casts; for the fingers are stretched asunder; the toes are of peculiarly bulbous shape and one is elevated above the others. Mr. Oxley says that on examining the plaster casts with a magnifying glass the pores of the skin and tortuous skin markings were clearly visible.

In Paris, in 1877, many moulds were obtained of spirit heads. Descriptions of the séances were published by Mr. J. L. O'Sullivan, who was one of the sitters, in *The Spiritualist*, for June and July, 1877. The other sitters were the Count and Countess de Bullet, M. Levoff, a well-known Russian gentleman; Mr. A. H. Firman, the medium, and Mrs. Firman. They were all experienced investigators, and as their séances were entirely private and methodically conducted, they obtained fine results (218).

The controlling spirit was the well-known "John King." He often showed his materialised form to the sitters and spoke audibly at all times. In his capacity as controlling spirit he did little beyond directing the proceedings and assisting other spirits to materialise. The modus operandi at each séance was arranged with John King at the previous séance. A galvanised-iron bucket, eighteen inches in diameter, by twenty-four deep, was filled with melted paraffin and ten per cent. of wax, heated to a temperature of 158 degrees Fahr. Also another large vessel was filled with iced water. These were placed together just outside the cabinet curtains. The medium having been entranced within the cabinet, the lights were extinguished and soon John King walked out, showing himself by his well-known lamp, which illuminated only himself.<sup>32</sup>

Soon the materialised spirit who intended to make the moulds was heard splashing with the hot wax and cold water. From five to seven immersions in each were usually needed to make a substantial mould. The Count de Bullet was then asked to take hold of the spirit head encased in the wax mould, whereupon it was evacuated from the mould, which remained empty in his hands and was at once immersed in the iced water, where it floated. One of the moulds was estimated to weigh about four pounds.

Two or three spirits, male and female, gave their services for the production of these moulds. One purported to be "Alexandrine," the sister of M. Levoff, who died thirty years previously. At first, only moulds of the face were obtained, and there were many failures due to distortion through the use of unsuitable paraffin at too high a temperature. It is stated that in the successful plaster casts the plaits of hair were beautifully reproduced. In some the eyes were closed, in others, open. In some the mouth was shut, in others there was a smile, showing the teeth. From the descriptions given by O'Sullivan the heads appear to have been

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<sup>31</sup> Reproduced in *Light* for 1882, p. 225.

<sup>32</sup> See Volume 7. No. 06. June 2014 – The Beginnings of Full Form Materialisations in England: <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP7.6June2011.pdf>

beautiful and life-like. In 1879, similar wax models were obtained through Firman in London (see article by Mr. W. Oxley, in *Medium and Daybreak*, 1879, p. 709, which illustrates the plaster casts of the heads).

An account by W. P. Adshead of the formation of moulds of spirit feet through the mediumship of Miss C. E. Wood, at Belper, is given in the *Medium and Daybreak*, for March 30th, 1877, and also in Smedley's *Some Reminiscences*, p. 121. The séance was one of a series held in February, 1877. The whole operation was seen in good light, for the two pails containing hot paraffin and cold water were placed outside the cabinet. The medium was enclosed in a wire cage within the cabinet. First a male spirit, "Bennie," came out and sat on a chair in full view of about thirty sitters. Talking humorously, he lifted up his white robe and dipped his left foot about ten times alternately in the pail containing melted wax and that containing cold water; he then put his left leg across his right knee, tapped the mould all round, took it off and handed it to Mr. Smedley. Then a female spirit, "Maggie," came out, bowed gracefully and, proceeding in the same way, made a wax mould of her left foot and handed it to Mr. Adshead. She then began to do the same thing with her right foot, but after two or three dips the power failed, and she rose, bowed and disappeared into the cabinet. The two moulds, which are illustrated in Smedley's book [as shown], were quite different, one was 9 inches by 4, and the other 8 by 2¼. They were preserved in a glass case for some years and then plaster casts were made.

In *The Spiritualist*, for March 1877, Mr. Thomas Ashton published an article describing a séance held on the 2nd of the same month in Newcastle-on-Tyne with Miss Annie Fairlamb, as medium. The medium sat outside the cabinet in good light, Mr. Ashton holding both her hands. Almost immediately, the medium's spirit guide "Minnie" was heard splashing within the cabinet with the paraffin and water; and finally, on the signal being given, the cabinet was entered and found to be empty, but on the floor lay two paraffin moulds, representing the spirit's right and left hands.

Similar experiments were made in 1920 and 1922 in Paris and Warsaw by Dr. Geley, Prof. Richet and others, with the Polish medium, M. Franek Klusky. Accounts of these are given in the *Revue Métapsychique*, No. 5, for 1921, and Nos. 1 and 5 for 1922, with reproductions of photographs of the moulds and plaster casts. A bath of hot water with melted paraffin floating on it was placed on a table close to the medium; no cold water bath was provided. The room was darkened but not completely, both the medium's hands were held, and then the usual splashing was heard. A large number of moulds have been obtained through M. Klusky; of hands, feet and parts of the face. After a séance he was found well smeared with the wax, just as Crawford's medium was found to be smeared with clay. On one occasion, the paraffin was specially coloured and the chemical cholesterine secretly added by Dr. Geley, and the substance of the moulds was seen to be similarly coloured and was proved by chemical reaction to contain cholesterine.<sup>33</sup> The moulds, unlike those obtained by earlier investigators, were very thin and fragile, less than one-tenth of an inch thick, which, of course, is a good guarantee of their transcendental origin. Plaster casts representing hands of adults are usually of diminutive size, some being only five inches long. A number are preserved in the International Metapsychic Institute in Paris. The wrist is not well represented, but in some the

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<sup>33</sup> A similar test was made in February, 1876, by T. P. Barkas with the medium Miss Fairlamb. He mixed magenta dye with the paraffin, unknown to anyone, and obtained three moulds of hands and feet all tinged with magenta (*Light*, 1886, p. 29).

fingers are in various attitudes and some represent two hands clasped together or with the fingers crossed.



FIG. 79.—CAST FROM A WAX MOULD WHICH HAD SUBSIDED AND FLATTENED WHILE STILL WARM.  
Walls thin and defective. Accidentally marked across the middle.

It is interesting to note that the presence of spirit operators during these experiments was often indicated otherwise than by the production of moulds, for Dr. Geley records that an illuminated hand was actually seen to plunge itself in the liquid paraffin; also that raps were heard, objects were moved about without contact, and the bath of hot water and paraffin, weighing about eighteen pounds, was lifted from the table, carried over the heads of the medium and sitters, and deposited gently on the floor beyond, the medium's hands being held continuously.<sup>34</sup>

Accounts of a séance held by Mr. and Mrs. Hewat McKenzie with M. Klusky are published in *Psychic Science, the Quarterly Review of the British College of Psychic Science*, No. 1, for 1922. It took place in Warsaw in May, 1922, and within five minutes of extinguishing the light five paraffin moulds were made and were found lying on the table still warm. The medium was stripped before the séance, his clothes were searched, and both his hands were held during the phenomena. The five moulds are illustrated in *Psychic Science*. Like most moulds, unfortunately, they are rather curtailed and expanded at the wrist, but the pose of the fingers is such that no mere withdrawal of the materialised hand could have occurred, i.e., the evacuation of the moulds must have been accompanied by dematerialisation of the hand.



Photograph shown Dr. Geley records in his book "Clairvoyance and Materialisation" 1927 pages 232-233 re: Fig 79-

This is a cast from a flattened mould, which was obtained under the conditions now to be described. It was formed at the same sitting as the seventh and eighth, and was placed on the back of my left hand, which was holding the medium's (Kluski) hand.<sup>35</sup> It was very warm and still soft. I did not move, and at the end of the sitting I saw that it had subsided.

<sup>34</sup> *Revue Métapsychique*, No. 6, for 1921, p. 300.

<sup>35</sup> Note the different spelling Kluski – Campbell Holms incorrectly calls him Klusky.

Evidently this placing on my hand was *intentional*. This would be a fresh proof (if such were required) that it had been made then and there.

From this point of view it has a special interest. By reason of the flattening the anatomical details are less distinct, though visible. The cast was unfortunately cracked across by an accident.

Below is the James Hewat McKenzie *Psychic Science* report referred to; readers will note the more usual spelling of “Kluski.”

## **WAX GLOVES PROCURED FROM MATERIALIZED HANDS**

By the Principal.<sup>36</sup>

HERE we have indisputable evidence of the corporeal reality of ghosts in solid form. These wax gloves, or moulds, have been produced by the insertion of ectoplastic [sic] hands into a bowl of molten paraffin wax, through the mediumship of M. Franck Kluski, of Warsaw, Poland, at an experiment conducted by myself in May, 1922.<sup>37</sup>

The medium's right hand was held by Mrs. McKenzie's left, and the medium's left hand was held by another sitter. The five wax gloves illustrated were produced within about five minutes of the time when the first was laid lightly upon my hand and coat sleeve, and while still in the hot molten state. As it was laid upon my hand several drops of hot wax splashed from it upon my clothes. The remaining four were placed upon the table in close succession, at about one minute interval between each.

The medium, previous to the experiment, was stripped naked and examined by me, in the presence of my interpreter, a gentleman who had never before sat with M. Kluski. The medium then put on another suit of clothes after same had been carefully examined. After the medium and six friends were seated, I was requested to lock the door. A 60-candle power electric lamp illuminated the room for some minutes after the séance began. Soon after this was extinguished, splashing was heard in the molten wax, which was contained in a basin upon the table immediately in front of me, creating a sound similar to what one might expect if a hand or hands were being actively moved amongst the liquid paraffin.

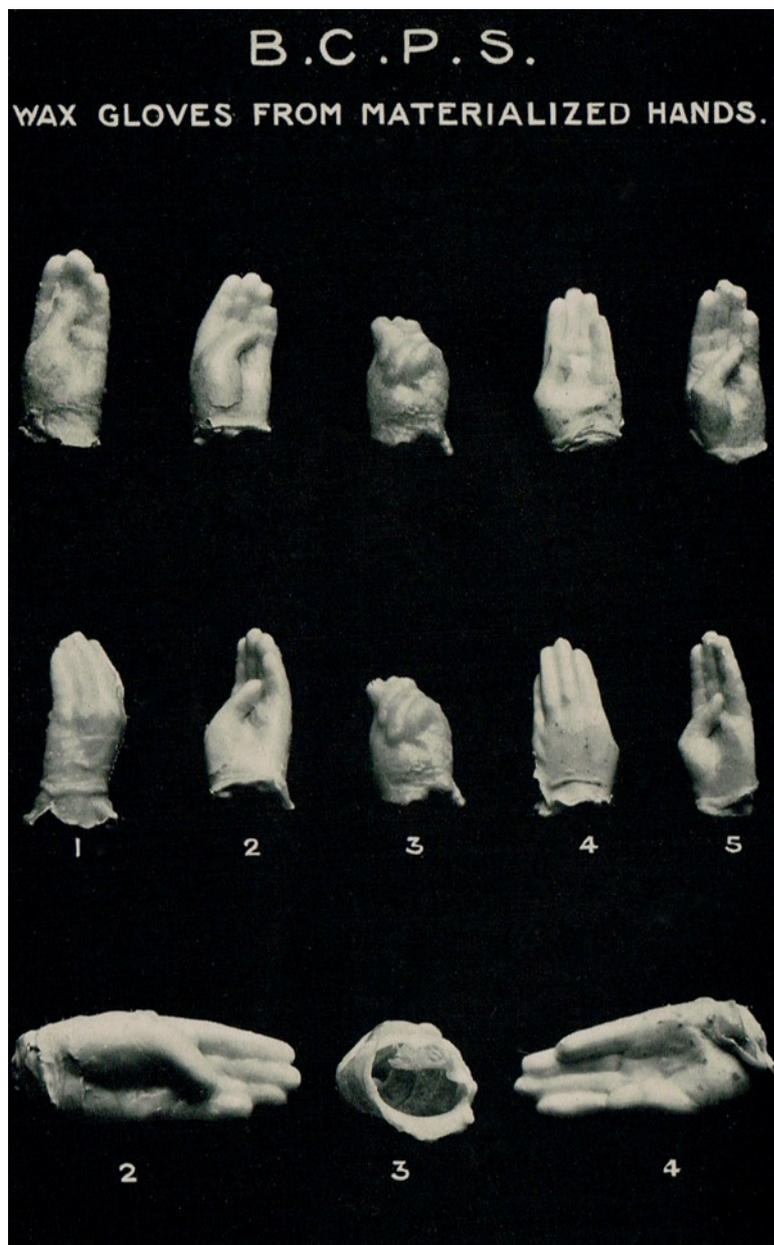
These gloves were without doubt freshly constructed, being soft to the touch when the first one was laid on my arm. Professor Geley, of the Institut Métapsychique of Paris, has carried out several experiments with Kluski, particulars of which can be found in the “Revue Métapsychique” of January and February, 1922, which conclusively prove the ability of this medium to produce these wax moulds by abnormal means.

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<sup>36</sup> See Volume 3. No. 08. August 2007 – A Knight Errant of Psychic Science James Hewat McKenzie: <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.8August07..pdf>

<sup>37</sup> Franek Kluski was born in Warsaw in 1873; his profession was in banking, journalism and also a poet. His mediumship was active 1918-1925, taking a break due the Polish / Russian war in 1920. He gave up mediumship due to poor health, and had a heart condition after being shot in the chest apparently in a duel around 1900. Kluski was a married family man; he was not a professional medium and accepted no fee. He died in January 1943 of Tuberculosis and was buried in Warsaw.

The moulds are now on view at the College to members and their friends, and it will be seen on examination that they are one piece throughout.<sup>38</sup>



Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5 have been filled with plaster of Paris to protect them from damage, No. 3 alone being left in its virgin state, to show the interior structure, which is a fine example of the exceedingly intricate webbed walls that surround the finger extremities where they touch the palm of the hand within, and while the ectoplasmic hand was in solid form. No ordinary human hand could possibly escape from such a fragile shell without shattering it completely, and no known substance could have produced the anatomical structure of these gloves except ectoplasm, which has the peculiar quality of rapidly solidifying exactly in the form of human flesh and as quickly melting into a gaseous fluid.

Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5 show the front view of the hands, the upper row showing the same hands, some reversed and others at a slightly different angle.

The lower mould, marked 3, has the wrist end showing the interior structure of No. 3 mould, which is a closed fist.

The interior cells of these gloves show the minute anatomical structure in all their detail, exactly similar to the human hand, with skin, pores, palm lines and finger nails. Manufacturers of wax moulds have been asked if they would undertake to construct duplicate wax gloves by any process known to them; but all have failed to produce such objects and have expressed themselves as completely mystified as to how these were constructed, although they declare that they could only have been produced by living hands, as signs of muscular contraction are clearly shown.

<sup>38</sup> Glossy Photographic prints of the moulds, showing fuller details, can be obtained from the College; 1/- each or 2/6 for set of three. Postage 1½d.

Each of these gloves is taken from an entirely different hand, both as to size and anatomical structure, three of them being in all probability masculine hands, and the other two feminine.

Anyone interested to try the experiment of producing such moulds may do so easily by procuring ten lb. of paraffin wax from an oil and colour merchant. Place this in a basin with about a gallon of boiling water, and allow the wax to melt until the whole becomes liquid, with a temperature of about 120 degrees Fahr. Dip the hand into this liquid up to the wrist, and then withdraw it and allow the wax to congeal. In a few minutes the wax will solidify exactly like a glove. You will find the impossibility of withdrawing the hand from this wax glove without completely destroying it, as the centre of the hand is larger than the wrist through which it must pass.

It is important to note that these moulds are quite dissimilar from the hands of the medium.

Many of the moulds that have been constructed during the past year through the mediumship of M. Kluski are moulds of two hands clasped together, with the fingers intertwined in various ways, and particulars of these may be given in a later number of this magazine.

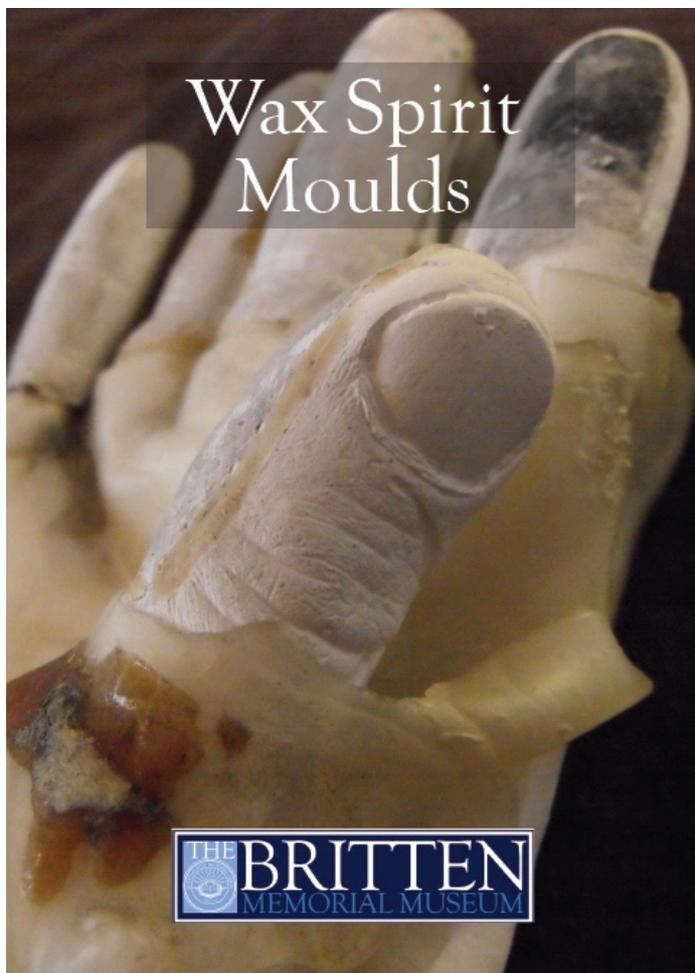
I am proud to be the custodian of such remarkable articles, and trust it may be the good fortune of the College to one day have a visit from this famous medium.



Gustave Geley was born in 1868 at Montceau-les-Mines and died as a result of an air crash leaving Warsaw for Paris on the 15th, July 1924. He had been conducting more experiments with Franek Kluski, at Warsaw his last two sittings were on July 3rd, and 11th, (published in *Revue Métapsychique* Jan-Feb 1925) prior to these more séances were conducted, the quote that follows applies to a seance held on June 20th, 1924; *Psychic Science*, notes: “*This glove and all those obtained during the séances were in a little bag which Dr. Geley was holding in his hand at the moment of this death. The aeroplane’s crash broke the moulds into tiny bits*”.

Finally the Society for Psychical Research has recently reviewed the Spiritualists' National Union, Britten Memorial Museum booklet on Wax Moulds.<sup>39</sup>

**Reviewed for the SPR by: Tom Ruffles.**<sup>40</sup>



The Britten Memorial Museum, named after Emma Hardinge Britten, is housed in the Arthur Findlay College at Stansted Hall, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex. The College is administered by the Spiritualists' National Union, and the museum contains a wide range of exhibits relating to Spiritualism. Among these are a number of casts made from wax moulds, artefacts said to demonstrate the reality of spirits. The museum's curator, Paul Gaunt (also editor of both the *Psypioneer* and *The Pioneer* electronic journals) has compiled this informative booklet which discusses the museum's collection of casts, other instances of them in the literature, and the debate that took place within the Society for Psychical Research over the evidential value they provide.

The theory behind the moulds is that a spirit would be able to produce one by materialising a portion of itself, usually a hand but also part of a foot

or even its face, and pushing it into a bowl of warm paraffin wax. The resulting wax sleeve could be set in cold water, leaving a mould that would be undamaged upon the limb's dematerialisation. Repeated immersions, building up layers, would serve to increase the thickness and strength of the mould. As wax is so fragile, it can be filled with plaster of Paris which upon setting retains (leaving aside distortions and damage from handling) the shape and detail of the materialised body part in a more permanent form.

Wax moulds date from as early as the 1870s, but those at Stansted Hall were donated by Sutton-in-Ashfield Spiritualist church in Nottinghamshire, where they had been on display since 1938. These, Gaunt suggests, may well have been the last done by mediums (as opposed to researchers). An article in the 16 December issue of *Two Worlds*, which is reprinted, describes their production through the mediumship of William and George Finney, uncle and nephew, at Sutton-in-Ashfield.

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<sup>39</sup> The booklet is available from the SNU online shop: <http://www.shop.snu.org.uk/new.html>

<sup>40</sup> Society for Psychical Research: <http://www.spr.ac.uk/publication/wax-spirit-moulds> . Reprinted by permission.

According to the Two Worlds article, the moulds were created by the pair in informal conditions, not during a séance but sitting in the dark in a cupboard under the stairs with buckets of melted wax and cold water. The booklet contains three colour photographs of the museum's casts, wax still adhering, showing them in all their strange beauty. One is of a pair of hands with interlinked fingers presented in a way that, it has been argued, would be more difficult to fake than it would a single hand.

The article is followed by an outline history of wax moulds, placing them in the context of the development of Spiritualist phenomena. Wax moulds were preceded by impressions left in putty and flour, but paraffin offered a more suitable material, and the technique was used by a number of mediums. Gaunt gives a short overview of some of them, but notes that each generally only tried the procedure for a brief period, and after becoming fashionable in the 1870s it went into abeyance until revived by the remarkable Franek Kluski, subject of a recent book by Zofia Weaver.<sup>41</sup> Weaver and Gaunt both mention that at least in Kluski's case it was a messy business, with splashes of wax everywhere, which perhaps made it unappealing for sitters even though the results were startling.

Gaunt includes sections on experiments with Kluski at the Institut Métapsychique International in Paris and in Warsaw conducted by Gustave Geley (three photographs, two of hands and one of a foot, from Geley's 1927 *Clairvoyance and Materialisation* are shown, the hands revealing remarkable skin features), and on the rather fractious debate that took place in the pages of the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* in the early 1990s over whether it was possible to reproduce moulds like Kluski's by normal means.

Gaunt's conclusion from the debate is that a living hand can be removed from a wax mould IF the wax is of a reasonable thickness caused by repeated immersion; but the thinness that Kluski is reported to have achieved through a single immersion, and without setting in cold water, should make the operation impossible as the mould would be too fragile for withdrawal without its destruction. His verdict is that, pending further research which adheres to Geley's precise method (which recreations so far have failed to do), Kluski's moulds can be considered good evidence for the return of spirits.



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<sup>41</sup> *Other Realities?: The Enigma of Franek Kluski's Mediumship* by Zofia Weaver:  
<http://www.spr.ac.uk/publication/other-realities-enigma-franek-kluski%E2%80%99s-mediumship>

## BOOKS WE HAVE REVIEWED

*If you have any problems locating a copy we can contact the author*

**An Extraordinary Journey:—The Memoirs of a Physical Medium**, by Stewart Alexander, published by Saturday Night Press Publications, England, 2010. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9557050-6-9, available at Amazon. Psypioneer review, by Leslie Price pages 294-296:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP6.11November2010.pdf>

**Helen Duncan the Mystery Show Trial**, by Robert Hartley published by H Pr (Publishing), London 2007. Paperback ISBN:—978-0-9553420-8-0. Psypioneer review, by Paul J. Gaunt pages 244-247:—<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP3.11November07..pdf>

**Aquarian Evangelist: The Age of Aquarius as It Dawned in the Mind of Levi Dowling**, by John Benedict Buescher Theosophical History Volume XI available at:—then—Occasional Papers. Psypioneer references by Leslie Price page 7:—<http://woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.1January08.pdf>

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