

# PSYPIONEER

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## REMEMBERING EILEEN J. GARRETT

By William V. Rauscher

*Each night one closes one's eyes with a degree of thankfulness for the day well lived. It is with this thought that I drop to sleep. It is enough that I have lived. The ordered evolutionary process of the fixed law and order of the universe will continue. A breath that will have been "I" will be contained with that energy - limitless, but ordered.*

- Eileen J. Garrett, in *Many Voices* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968).

Through the work of the Parapsychology Foundation which she created in 1952 to "support impartial scientific inquiry into the total nature and working of the human mind, and to make available the results of such inquiry," Mrs. Eileen Garrett became possibly the most famous medium of her time. It was through the agencies of the Foundation that she brought scientists, educators, and research workers from every field of human knowledge into an exploration of the paranormal, and so touched the lives of the intellectual community all over the world. Her name and that of J. B. Rhine have become synonymous with the word "parapsychology," but meeting her for the first time rather gave one the feeling of having found a four-leaf clover - under an elf.

I first met her in 1962 in New York City. Occupying the building which had once housed the Aeolian Hall, and which the Foundation then owned, the offices took up the entire seventh floor. The offices were decorated in a fastidious pale gray, with large areas done in antiseptic white - they were a far cry from the velvet-draped

Victorian seance rooms, with languishing ladies sighing in pools of shadows. In the library where I waited for admission to Mrs. Garrett's office there was only a potted sunflower in the window. Around the board room table were stationed straight-backed, green-upholstered chairs. I sat in one of them and looked at the thousands of books around me.

This gave me a sense of inadequacy as I realized how little I knew at that time about psychical research. Overall, the effect was somewhat carefully staged to give arriving skeptics the soothing impression of a hospital where everything possible was being done to take care of the phenomena in which they didn't believe.

When I was ushered into her office she was seated behind an imposing, tooled-walnut desk going over some papers. A small, stocky woman, whose smartly coiffed hair and stylish clothes seemed oddly meaningless on her blunt peasant body, Mrs. Garrett looked me over with commanding detachment as I lowered myself onto some white leather upholstery seated to her left. There was an elegance and authority about her that you felt at once, yet an Irish charm and pixieness that would bring you to her until she choose to withdraw herself through some tone or gesture and stopped you in your tracks.

She regarded me drowsily for a moment (she later explained that she had been "checking your aura") then she brightened - but in these mercurial changes, Mrs. Garrett didn't so much alter her mood toward you as replace her identity. Often these different personalities did seize control of her, but she was also a consummate actress, and enjoyed changing her roles the way most women enjoy changing their hats. One of her favorite roles was that of the intelligently wearied woman-of-the-world, always going on forty, who would tell you with rueful gaiety of all the frauds, fools and punters she had met in her years of psychical research. But it would not be long before this disenchanted lady faded out and the brisk, no-nonsense businesswoman faded in. She would say:

*What I want to do is analyze and define. I hope to separate the wheat from the chaff so definitely and thoroughly that never again will a total stranger extend a grubby palm to me and ask, 'Do you see a rich marriage?' and never again will the efficient research laboratories of leading American and European Universities be mistaken for the ouija board sessions in Bloomsbury, Baltimore, or Brooklyn living rooms.*

Abruptly she tossed her head back, a smile of depraved innocence crept idly across her face, her eyes focused softly. No longer was she the world-weary executrix, but was now the mischievous colleen, earthy and coquettish, who had run barefoot through the Meath hills with the wind in her hair. "But, really, all we ask," she said, "is what survives, when every breath we take survives? Death is only change, and there is perpetual change, perpetual death, from the moment we are born. This pattern we call 'psychic' is simply the language of the soul, our archaic language, and it comes to the surface in moments of stress, when for a moment we forget our overlay of facts and realize we aren't spirits of some future time but creatures of divinity here and now..."

Speaking with this fascinating, complex and often difficult woman was an emotionally exhausting experience, but it never failed to be a richly stimulating one. In later years I often remembered the words of an unsuspecting journalist who had once interviewed her: "I was in the condition of a groggy python being restored to its box when Mrs. Garrett let me go."

I speak of Mrs. Garrett as possibly the most famous medium of her day, but it would perhaps be more accurate to speak of her during the years of the Foundation as the world's ranking retired medium, for by then age had withered her psychic powers, making them fitful and uncertain. Nevertheless she remained a compelling personality, magnetic in quality, the high priestess of the paranormal, a strange and wonderful woman who ruled with an iron hand and a velvet glove. Unpredictable and full of surprises, she seemed to have her hand on the pulse of all that was happening in the psychic world.

Through the Foundation Mrs. Garrett was a major provider not only for the psi projects conducted within the auspices of the American Society for Psychical Research, but also for similar undertakings in Italy's Centro Studi Parapsicologici, Denmark's Selskabet for Psykisk Forskning, the Netherland's Parapsychologisch Institute der Rijksuniversiteit in Utrecht, Societies for Psychical Research in England, India and South Africa, and so on, covering all of the world's principal nations and peoples. When the phone rang in her office the call could be from anywhere in the world. The extent of her influence in the field of parapsychology was in itself as incredible as her mediumistic powers had once been, and she rose to such prominence and position in her later years because of her life-long effort to explore the "within" of her own mind:

*One lives a fuller life when one comprehends the world of dreams, psychic impulses, urges, and even conscience itself. The gift of faith and a state of grace become at once one's own religious experience, where one is truly in tune with the cosmic order of goodness and harmony. To mediumship and its pursuits below the level of consciousness, through these many years, I owe the gifts of the heart. Without those who have helped me pursue the light within, I would still be knocking on the outer doors of insight that lead to the untapped sources of energy which have given me a relationship to the world of the unconscious - a world which I regard with both awe and veneration. ("Many Voices "p.41)*

Over the years her editors, and the psychical researchers who investigated her, were heard to complain that one had to be psychic in order to work with Mrs. Garrett. Indeed, she was one of the more fascinating psychical phenomena of our times.

Eileen Garrett was born in County Meath, Ireland, on March 15, 1893. Shortly after her birth both of her parents died tragically, and she grew up in the care of an elderly uncle and a very strict aunt. She was a lonely child, and as she remembered with glee, always getting into trouble. Her gift of second sight was the main cause of her troubles, for she was severely punished in an effort to "cure" her. She saw shimmering auras enveloping people, a gift which remained with her to the end, and which

enabled her to "read" the physical and mental health of those she met. She very early developed the related faculty for psychometry, "reading" the history of an object by touching it, and was able to see the apparitions of dying relatives.

It is not generally known, however, that Mrs. Garrett did not begin developing her talents as a medium until she was past thirty, a rather late period in life for a psychic to begin using her gifts. A run-away to England, Mrs. Garrett married for the first time when she was sixteen. She bore four children. The first three, all boys, died in infancy, one of them in her arms. The fourth child, Eileen Coly, survives and with her daughter, Lisette, carries on her mother's work at the Parapsychology Foundation.

Preoccupied as she was with her three marriages and the deaths of her husbands and children, her equally ill-fated business ventures and her illnesses, Mrs. Garrett did not begin to develop her disconcerting gifts until 1925. In that year Mrs. Kelway Bamber, an acquaintance, persuaded her to join the British College of Psychic Science. Although she had in 1921 acted as a sitter for the Stella C. (Cranshaw) experiments at the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, in later years Mrs. Garrett rarely spoke of these experiments because she had no belief in materializations. And so it was not until she came under the tutelage of J. Hewat McKenzie, the BCPS Founder (which was a school for mediums, among other roles), that Mrs. Garrett began to make serious use of her extrasensory ability. McKenzie was a serious man and a martinet, but perhaps only such a man could have stabilized and trained the gifts of a medium like Eileen Garrett who was even more tempestuous and impulsive than mediums usually are. It was during these years that Mrs. Garrett did the bulk of her private sittings (accepting fees), but also began to take part in investigations of alleged haunted houses and poltergeist cases, submitting to the rules of evidence which McKenzie required.

Unfortunately the records of the College were either lost or destroyed when the College joined with another society, so that we have few reports of Mrs. Garrett's early psychic work. The fullest report of those years is contained in the book *J. Hewat McKenzie* (1963) by Muriel Hankey, formerly his secretary at BCPS. After McKenzie's death in 1929 Mrs. Garrett continued to work at the College, but extended her sittings to include experimental work under even more stringent test conditions. It was during these years at the College that her most famous "controls," two garrulous Orientals named Uvani and Abdul Latif, first emerged. Perhaps it was because of her controls that her personality became so severely disassociated that everything in her mind remained a question, or more accurately gave her conflicting answers to the same question (depending upon when she happened to be answering it). She rarely expressed a positive belief in survival, but she never ceased in her search for an answer.

Declaring herself as dubious as the next person about the independence of her controls, Mrs. Garrett came to America at the invitation of the American Society for Psychical Research, and put herself and her "controls" at the disposal of psychiatrists at John Hopkins and the New York Psychiatric Institute. The psychiatric and psycho-analytic experiments of Dr. Adolph Meyer and other eminent scientists went a long way to establish the independent personalities of Uvani and Abdul, a result which a later investigator, Hereward Carrington, confirmed through the use of a lie detector

and word-association tests. However, a sounder researcher - a Carington with the first name of Whately - made substantially the same tests and concluded that the "entities" were, in fact, aspects of a split personality. For an additional investigation of the problem, the reader should consult Dr. Ira Progoff's work, *The Image Of An Oracle* (1964), bearing in mind that the experiments and the publication were sponsored by the Foundation. ( **To be continued** )

.....

## **Peddler News**

Dr Michael Coleman has pointed out to us that the name " Charles Rayn" used for the peddler by Henry Spicer in 1853, is also found in a book " Spirit rapping in England and America: its origins and history" London, Henry Vizetelly, 1853, the printer possibly being also the author. This book cites Spicer and may have derived the name from that source.

Paul Gaunt referred in his article in PP9 to the difficulty of Arthur Conan Doyle in obtaining a copy of *Mysterious Noises*, as mentioned in his book HOS vol. 1. Page 70. Arno N.Y. 1975. Page 67. Psychic Press Ltd. 1989.

*The author has in vain attempted to get an original copy of the pamphlet, " A Report of the Mysterious Noises heard in the House of Mr. John D. Fox," published at Canandaigua, New York, but he has been presented with a facsimile of the original, and it is his considered opinion that the fact of human survival and power of communication was definitely proved to any mind capable of weighing evidence from the day of the appearance of that document.*

Dr Coleman notes that a copy of " *Mysterious Noises*" was sold as part of Lot 62 at the auction of ACD material at Christie's on May 19 2004. **Did ACD later acquire a copy?** In view of the importance of the Lewis document for any study of the Fox case, it is surely time that it was reprinted.

Capron ( 1855) reported that in Rochester:

*At an early day the family were visited by a Methodist minister, who proposed to exorcise the spirits. He said that, if the family would allow him to perform his incantations, they would hear no more of the disturbance, which he, of course, attributed to the devil. They gladly allowed him to make the attempt. He walked around the room, used certain formula supposed to be potently orthodox for the casting out of unclean spirits ; but, to his astonishment, all his mummerly availed nothing, and the spirits did not obey his commands. He was much disappointed at the failure of his power over unseen intelligences.*

This may be the first overt Christian response to Modern Spiritualism! We hope to identify this minister (see Weisberg p.68).

(Note by Psypioneer News. We are reprinting in two parts this appendix to " *Memoranda of Persons.*" by A.J. Davis, a book published in 1868 but later reissued by him under the title " *Events.*" Note that this particular appendix is not mentioned on the title page. Mary F. Davis the author believed herself to be the second wife of Davis, as did he at the time. )

## HISTORY OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY INTO GERMANY.

compiled by Mary F. Davis.

WHILE the truths of the New Dispensation were making rapid strides in America, thoughtful and receptive minds in the Old World also felt the throbbings of "the electric chain," and awoke to action. Two noble-spirited Germans undertook the work of translating American publications of a progressive character --chiefly works on the Harmonial Philosophy--into the German language. One of them, the distinguished Botanist and Philosopher, Professor Christian G. Nees von Esenbeck, devoted the closing years of his life to the philanthropic labor, which was continued by his friend and pupil, Gregor Constantin Wittig, of Breslau. The following are extracts from the first letter received by the author from the translator:

MR WITTIG TO A.J. DAVIS

BRESLAU, June 28, 1860

.....  
*Your Revelations reached me at Breslau, through a dear friend and patron whom I can never forget--the President of the Imperial Leopold Academy of Physicists, at Berlin--the celebrated botanist and natural philosopher, Christian G. N. Esenbeck - having been sent to him, in the latter part of the year 1856, by the hand of some unknown friend in Bremen.*

*It was destined to solace the last days of his laborious life with the fulfillment of his anticipations and hopes for the progress of natural science and the free religion of Humanity. The profound importance of Magnetism, and its flower, Clairvoyance, for the future advance of the mind--an importance which he had long before anticipated and proclaimed--was in this work disclosed to him in all its fullness. Moreover, as a physician he was acquainted with your Physician; as an instructor he prized your Teacher; as a prophet of a fairer future for the German people, through political and religious unity, he appreciated your Seer; and his daily increasing enthusiasm he shared with me, who enjoyed the confiding intimacy of his last remaining days, and was his true disciple in philosophy and religion...*

*In the advanced years of this gray-headed man of science, it had become impossible for him to execute alone so great a work as the German translation of the three volumes of your Great Harmonia, and he therefore chose me for his assistant, and, dying, confided to me the completion of the enterprise.*

*Until the day when he retired to the couch of his last sickness, with eyes dimmed with age, he labored upon his portion of the sublime philosophy of God--when the Angel of Death bore him to the higher vision of the Deity, on the sixteenth of March, 1858. In this last period of his life, in consequence of political persecution for my intercourse with the leaders of the Free religions movement in Breslau, I lived in banishment in the town of Striegau, seven German miles from that city....*

*There I finished the manuscript left to my care by my friend, as well as my own translations, when, near the end of the year 1853, by marriage with a lady who is a*

*free citizen of Breslau, I regained my privilege of residence there. In my present situation, as secretary of a judicial functionary, I still find leisure for the performance of my favorite and self-imposed task of translating all your remaining writings, of which I may be able to become the possessor.....*

*With feelings of unchangeable regard, I remain henceforth, Your true and most devoted,*

GREGOR CONSTANTIN WITTIG.

Among the friends of Spiritual Progress in New York was a cultivated German, Heinrich Schlarbaum, who felt a deep interest in the work of Mr. Wittig. Mr. Schlarbaum corresponded directly with the translator, offering his sympathy and aid, and in due time received a reply from that earnest friend of truth.

MR WITTIG'S LETTER TO H. SCHARBAUM  
BRESLAU, August 16, 1862.

ESTEEMED FRIEND AND BROTHER:-

*.....Your friendly letter has the old charm for me, as it brings me news of the person who has for five years so deeply interested me, for whom I have so strong a sympathy, and whose spiritual rays are destined to bless all nations with light and knowledge. You are fortunate that you are so near him. Do not imagine that the regard I feel for him is a transient excitement, and therefore exaggerated in expression. His Philosophy is that golden treasure of the enchanted land of which I was wont to dream with such yearning, when a boy, among the hills of my native village, and with which I longed to gladden the hearts of my poor parents. At last I have found it. But I long to dispense it with full hands to my friends and acquaintances and the German people.*

*Of the "Divine Revelations" I have translated sections, which I have styled "Cosmology" and "Geology," and its "Principles." "The Physician," "The Teacher," "The Seer," and "The Reformer," are translated and ready for the press. The smaller works are nearly so, viz.: "The Philosophy of Special Providences," and "Free Thoughts on Religion; or Nature Versus Theology." The "Chart of the Approaching Destiny of the Human Race" is sketched out, and the "Magic Staff" begun. Do you not think here is wealth to make the lasting happiness of our German world? But, alas! I am in want of the gold and silver in which to set my sparkling gems, and without such setting I can not intrust them to the hands of others. Is it not hard to think that the "Harmonial Philosophy" has been compelled to go begging among German publishers for two years? But I have adopted a plan which will, perhaps, meet with success. I intend to prepare a Prospectus, at my own expense, of all of Mr. Davis's works which I have translated, and to circulate it among all the principal establishments, through a dealer here. I may thus obtain a publisher.*

*I have also some faint hopes of making a loan, that will enable me to publish them myself. This would be the best plan, but it would, at the same time, be for me the most difficult. Where can the generous heart be found that would voluntarily tender*

*thousands of dollars for so useful and noble an enterprise! Such hearts there are, but how can they be found? I would gladly renounce all reward for myself, if I might but obtain a wide dissemination for these glorious truths.*

*September 4, 1862*

*I had written thus far, August 16, when I was prevented from bringing my letter to a conclusion. I am still alone in my enterprise for the publication of my translations. But the printed Prospectus dispatched to you with this letter, will show you the exertions I am making. The time has come when I must find a publisher at any cost. If I possessed the means, I would myself have the teachings of the Harmonial Philosophy, printed in golden letters upon silken sheets. My views on this point I have set forth at greater length in my Prospectus, and also in an article for the Herald of Progress, sent with this letter to Mr. Davis. It is full two years since I have written him. During this period ten of his works have been translated, and the manuscript is ready for the printer. "The Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse" has already been taken in hand for the new series; and will be ready in October. Thus I continue to labor at my great and beautiful task, striving after my glorious ideal, though I may never reach it.*

*Your valuable letter of September 3, 1860, contains so many interesting particulars, that I can not but desire to hear further from you. You say: "To see the works of Davis, Edmonds, Tuttle, and others, translated into German is my ardent desire; should your future labors take that direction, you may rely upon my sympathy and assistance." I accept this friendly offer, and would thank you, in your next, to give me such information in regard to the works mentioned as will enable me to obtain them. Beside Davis's works, I have taken up the excellent treatise of Mr. Partridge on "Spiritualism," and am not disinclined to translate other good works into German, after completing those of Mr. Davis. Every thing from the Beyond seems to me as homelike as a greeting from some fairer German Fatherland.*

*And yet how much that is mournful has occurred within these two years in your now dis-United States! I await with trembling and fearful expectation the final issue. Now, for the first time, the disasters of war seem really to have fallen upon the armies of the North. May the spirit of Freedom grant them the courage and the power for a most glorious victory! It is for your country to deal the death-blow to Slavery, and brutality, and the old order of things generally. France has not sent her legions to Mexico without a purpose, and if the Union fall, the new French Emperor would in Europe tread us, too, beneath his feet. Yet I know that the Redeemer for the people of Freedom is already born, and that he will rule over all nations!*

*Wisdom, the flower of Reason, by means of this terrible struggle of human passions, will prescribe the laws of her eternal state to the purified Union. Unity is the fundamental principle of all natural and political life, and this unity is the Divine law of movement for all struggling forces. The thought of unity with us in Germany, too, is again awakened, and finds expression in the Schiller and Fichte Festivals, and the Rifle and Turner Unions. Who knows what may happen here among us, even in the*

course of one short year?.....  
friend,

Your

G. C. WITTIG

In another letter of the same date, addressed to A. J. Davis, Mr. Wittig said that he had sent his Prospectus to the publishing house of F. F. Weber, Leipsic, and that he should continue his efforts to find a publisher. He had even taken some steps toward undertaking the publication of the Harmonial works on his own account, in the event of being disappointed in all his expectations. He had sent a letter, with the Prospectus, to Weber, giving a brief survey of the tendency and bearings of the Harmonial Philosophy. Comparing it with German speculation, he wrote ;

*A new Philosophy opens its victorious career in the writings of Mr. A. J. Davis, which, in the consciousness of its own harmony, does by no means seek to exalt itself by pride and contempt over the philosophic systems of other nations, but seeks to render them all fruitful, falling upon their closed calices like the pollen of flowers. That this is true, that this Philosophy really possesses the sublime quality of universality shown by its severe and beautiful simplicity, and its endeavor to give to Nature, Reason, and Intuition their highest scientific value, thus securing to itself the stamp of the standard system for all time.*

*In order, however, to reveal this character of spiritual perfection, it was necessary that its expounder should bring to bear more improved means and instruments of thought than had hitherto been within the reach of philosophic minds. With the German mind, speculation had already won its highest triumphs in Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. The power of the merely logical faculty had in the last-mentioned philosopher attained its most varied culture, and the materialism of the senses had thus reached its highest development. German speculation also had already reached the limits of the profoundest problems, and the search for the interior essence of things-the so-called things in themselves-had been pushed to the utmost in their investigations. But the speculation of logic and the senses could not pass its own sensuous limit; it was like the unarmed eye, to which the wonders of the universe, of great and little magnitudes, that are unveiled(sic-PP) only by the telescope and microscope, remained concealed from deficiency of vision and a lack of the power of discrimination.*

*This philosophic telescope and microscope of a faculty that penetrates the innermost being, deeper than the senses, is now found in the gift of magnetic clairvoyance, and in that spiritually perfect rational intuition and illumination which have raised the author of the works named to be the philosophical Gallileo of our day. . . These books form, as it were, a new Gospel of Wisdom, the teachings of which will be seized upon with avidity, and even with transport; for they are addressed to the most interior and secret thoughts and emotions of the human mind, and stir with quiet power that endless yearning for knowledge, which we see so gloriously embodied in Goethe's "Faust."*

Responsive to the enthusiasm of his gifted countryman, and inspired with like ardor in the service of Truth, Mr. Schlarbaum wrote the following timely appeal, which was published in the Herald of Progress:

MR. SCHLARBAUM'S LETTER TO A. J. DAVIS. NEW YORK,

September 26, 1862.

*DEAR SIR:-I have translated for you the letters of Mr. Wittig. He is full of energy for a good cause. Our duty, it seems to me, would be to take hold of the facts as they present themselves, and make the best out of them for the good of our German brethren. Wittig is thoroughly imbued with the importance of your writings. And the opposition he everywhere meets has made him earnest and anxious.*

*Two years ago, when I got the first letter from Wittig, the thought struck me that the dissemination of works like yours should not be made to depend on the motives of mere tradesmen; the society of generous Americans should lend a helping hand, and bless the rising and future generations with them. Humanity needs it. I think your Herald should lay the matter before American men of Progress.*

*Let an "European Publishing Association" for these works be formed; let its committee regulate and prepare matters; let a call for means- \$1,000 to \$1,500 is enough to begin with- go through the world; let us do our best; then the poor, hard-working Wittig can be assisted just in such a way as will serve best for a happy issue.*

*It is admitted that one-quarter of our army is of German descent! Much hard, bloody work, is done by the immigrated people; let us, therefore, make a glorious gift to that freedom-loving nation - the people of Germany.*

*Truly yours,*

*H. SCHLARBAUM*

In accordance with the suggestion an informal meeting was held in New York, and a committee was chosen, of which the members were William Green, Eliza W. Farnham, Mary F. Davis, H. Schlarbaum, and C. M. Plumb. A Circular was issued, asking contributions to "The European Harmonial Publishing Fund," which, in addition to the appeals of the Herald, was circulated far and wide among American Spiritualists. Tidings of the movement brought responsive words from progressive Germans in our midst; and, among others, the following communication found way to the editorial sanctum:

LETTER FROM DR. PHILIP SCHULHOF  
NEW YORK, March 30, 1863.

A. J. DAVIS, DEAR SIR :-

*My heart leaps for joy, for I see in the Herald of Progress, of March 28, an article headed: " The European Harmonial Publishing Fund." My soul responds in*

*anticipation of the diffusion of light and happiness by means of publishing a translation of the works of Mr. A. J. Davis, and other Spiritual writings, by Herr G. C. Wittig, of Breslau, Germany, a gentleman of enthusiasm, love, and knowledge.*

*I see already not only the millions of inhabitants of Germany, but also the German population of our beloved United States, and of every inhabited part of this globe, imbibing the principles of the Harmonial Philosophy, through the simple medium of laying before them these very principles in their native tongue, and such teachings will obtain an easy entrance into their hearts, as they are mostly prepared for the reception of truth.*

*I am able to testify from my experience that Germans, as a whole, are industrious, sober, honest, charitable, free from bigotry, cheerful, and art and science-loving. See their May-feasts, Sangerbunds, Turner Societies, and Operas. Song, music, gymnastics, and order prevail there. They not only practice (sic-PP), but love science, art, music, and, above all, liberty and full freedom of thought. They will and do fight for it. They showed their appreciation of human rights in emancipating the women- their mothers, wives, and daughters- from the thralldom of slavery, at a time of barbaric darkness. At a time when the most enlightened nations of the world lived in bigamy, the followers of Herman would not countenance the multiplicity of wives.*

*Volumes could be written on this subject, but I can not trespass on your time and patience to indulge in further elucidations in respect to the German nation, since all of this is known to you as well.*

*But of one thing I am certain, and that is, the great monumental benefit such a publication will be to the progress of the people of America; for there are multitudes of Germans living in this country who will, with open hearts, accept any thing good coming from the beloved Fatherland. Why? It is recognized by German scientific men and published by celebrated book-selling houses there; wherefore they will put more trust in it, and consequently read it. And how vastly will our dear country gain by the awakening of such an increase of Spiritual elements, which at present lie hidden and latent, scarcely perceived or supposed, in those hearts, an inheritance from their ancestors. But you can see its manifestations in their tenderness of feeling, hospitality, and kind friendship. Oh! ! what a foundation for Harmonial development! Therefore, I do wish you God speed. Go on; arouse our friends and brother in Progress; have them contribute their material aid; it requires but a little money to effect such a great and sublime end. I, for one, do pledge my hearty co-operation as far as my means will allow, and when we unitedly put our shoulders to the wheel success will crown the effort, and happiness be diffused over the world at large.*

*I see by intuition how this New Dispensation spreads like wildfire over the continent of Europe, from plain to hill, from hill to mountain, there to shine as a beacon to the world. It spreads from the Hartz to the Alps- over the Giant Mountain to the Carpats- and a host of warriors for the truth it will awaken from their slumbers, and rouse laborers in the vineyard of Harmony by thousands and hundreds of thousands. Wherefore my heart rejoices, and I thank you for the taking in hand of such an important enterprise as the support and aid of publishing Spiritual writings in the German tongue.*

*Yours, for Progress,*

*Dr. PH. SCHULHOF*

- This spiritual-minded and steadfast friend of the Harmonial Philosophy, passed on to his home in the Summer Land, in June, 1867. He was a cordial supporter of, and leader in, the Children's Progressive Lyceum of New York.

Encouraging words came also from many warm and earnest American hearts, accompanied, in some instances, by contributions for the work. Hudson Tuttle, who had done noble service in the production and dissemination of spiritual literature, and whose "Arcana" was already translated into German, wrote a letter to the Banner of Light, urging Spiritualists to give their aid and influence to the good cause.

#### EXTRACTS FROM HUDSON TUTTLE'S LETTER

WALNUT-GROVE FARM, April 12, 1863.

*The German world is as yet almost ignorant of the blessed literature of Spiritualism. They are only acquainted with the physical phenomena, and but partially even with them. The first volume of the Arcana was the first ray of light they received. It was not, however, published ostensibly as a spiritual work, but as a new and scientific exposition of the system of Nature, and was in this manner, and by the high standing of its translator, borne into favor.*

*It is now proposed to raise a fund by which the glorious writings of Davis and others can be at once presented to the thinkers of Germany. The Germans are proverbial for their belief in spiritual mysteries, and for a century have been laying the foundations of Spiritualism. There is no doubt if the new philosophy is presented to them, they will seize it with avidity, and the greatest good will grow out of it.*

*The directors of the movement are men noble and generous, who have their whole hearts in the glorious work, and will at once receive the entire confidence of the friends of the cause. Than H. Schlarbaum, a more devoted Spiritualist, a more generous and noble-souled man, does not exist. A German, he has the deep spiritual nature of the Teuton, sharpened and Americanized by a long residence in our country. He has not, however, forgotten Germany and the millions of brothers lie has left, and with an energy and devotion worthy of the object, he has determined to send light into their darkness.*

*The eminent scholar, Herr Wittig, with indefatigable industry, has translated all of Davis's works, and is now going on translating other works on Spiritualism. Patiently he awaits the response of the New World, asking no other pay for his labor but the diffusion of the truths he so dearly loves.*

*Personally, I have no interest at stake; but as a believer in the Divine Philosophy of spiritual intercourse, I can but feel deeply anxious for the success of this movement, which I consider of more consequence than all the tracts and bibles distributed to the heathen for the last hundred years-of more consequence, because a great and enlightened nation are to be convinced and brought to the knowledge of the light. It is*

*not savages whom we wish to enlighten, savages who are not as well off with a book as a fishing-net, but a nation of the deepest thinkers, the most scientific and spiritual of the Old World.*

HUDSON TUTTLE.

*(It was this at this point, when the difficulty of raising money for German translations was clear, that there came an intervention from Russia, as described next month- PP.).*

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**THE HAKIM**

At the end of the First World War around 250,000 people in Persia came under the administrative influence of a young British Officer, who acquired the nickname the Hakim or Doctor. During his involvement with urgent medical treatment, he had become credited with healing abilities which drew the sick from miles around. There were indeed some remarkable recoveries. After his return to Britain he developed mediumship, and in the trance of his guide Reuben was able for many years to give paranormal guidance to his healing centre, even to write books. As you may have realised Acting Major Henry James Edwards had become known as the Spiritualist healer Harry Edwards (1893-1976). His life story was told in Ramus Branch " Harry Edwards" (Burrows Lea, 1982)

To the historian, Harry Edwards must be an important figure, worthy of further research. During the twentieth century, the mainstream churches in Britain changed their attitude to the healing ministry. So did mainstream medicine. But in the lifetime of Harry Edwards, both opposed psychic healing vigorously. Edwards was deeply involved in two controversial reports by church and medicine into healing. He was also a prime mover in the development of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers, which features, though only in a minor way, in this official biography. (There is no index entry for Gordon Turner.)

It could be argued that he was the most influential Spiritualist in the country, far exceeding, say, Lord Dowding. He was successful in moving most healers away from trance healing. Other ways in which he affected the psychic field are yet to be assessed. Why was there little contact with official psychical research? Edwards interpreted his healing work as in some sense Christian, but like the founder of the religion received contempt from Sadducees.

Some people who saw Harry Edwards at work will never forget it, and some use the term miracle. We want to affirm here that among the psychic pioneers in whose work we are interested are the healers. As with other pioneers, our attitude towards them is historical - we are not here to promote them or reject them, but to understand them historically. We hope readers will share in this research.

(revised from defunct [www.psypioneer.com](http://www.psypioneer.com))  
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## **BESSIE DUNLOP IS COMPUTERISED**

In his book “The Rock of Truth or Spiritualism The Coming World Religion “ Arthur Findlay writes (in the 1976 reprint, but originally August 1933):

*In the year 1576, Bessie Dunlop, of Lyne in Ayrshire, was burnt as a witch because in her presence voices were heard which claimed to be those of people who had passed into the beyond. In other words she was a Direct Voice medium, of whom we have a number in our midst today, one of the most developed being John C. Sloan, to whom much reference is made in my book On the Edge of the Etheric. Many instances similar to the above could be given, but here we can only touch on the subject of witchcraft and pass on. (see Findlay p.18-22)*

As readers of his newsletter will know, modern scholars do not believe that the victims of the witch persecutions were generally mediums, but in this unusual case, it is quite possible that Bessie was a clairvoyant and that the man Thom who provided her with information which she used for medicinal purposes was a spirit guide. Bessie is today remembered in the calendars of several pagan organisations. She may have been in effect a white witch, even if the twelve people to whom she said Thom introduced her, were not members of a coven as Margaret Murray had suggested. She was also supposedly in touch with the realm of Fairie (Elfame) part of Scottish folk belief at the time, and her experiences may be compared with other fairy reports, such as those reported by Lyceum pioneer Alfred Kitson. (see this issue.)

An important step forward in understanding Scottish witchcraft is the creation of an on line database of cases, under a grant from the British Academy, called.” Survey of Scottish Witchcraft Database.

<http://webdb.ucs.ed.ac.uk/witches>

One can enter a name, like Bessie Dunlop, and quickly check the basic sources and data. It may be possible to identify common factors in cases, such as accusations of healing or references to fairies or familiars.

Findlay also remarks:

*In England, within two hundred years, 30,000 so-called witches were burned to death, and these witches are what we today call mediums. Witch burning also took place in what is now called the United States, founded by the Puritans who could not get liberty in England to worship as they pleased.*

However, by 1980, archival studies had suggested 500 witch executions in England, but 1000 in Scotland where torture was commonly used. However, English witches convicted of capital offences were normally hung and not burnt. There may have been 70 executions in what we now call the United States (the persons convicted at Salem were hung not burnt.)

**In trying to understand European witch accusations, we should take note of such events today.** In the month of June 2001 nearly 800 asserted witches were killed in

the Aru region in the Congo. Information from the Tanzanian Minister of Family Affairs shows that between 1994 and 1998 nearly 5000 people died because of witch-hunts. Eighty percent of the victims were elderly women and most of their killers were young men between 16 and 35 years of age. Between 1992-8, 1403 suspected witches were murdered on Indian tea plantations. On 9 November 2004, 27 were dead in a witch verification exercise by a Nigerian herbalist. On 11 January 2005, 180 people were evicted from a Ugandan refugee camp accused of witchcraft and cannibalism a charge that could be right out of the seventeenth century – see Lyndal Roper “ Witch Craze- terror and fantasy in Baroque Germany” Yale U.P. 2004, ch. 3 “ Cannibalism.”

**Does any one really suppose that these tragic contemporary cases, which could be augmented by a dozen other countries, are caused by the Church trying to kill mediums?**

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### **ALFRED KITSON AND PROGRESSIVE LYCEUMS**

By 1900, Britain had been heavily influenced by the Sunday school movement, leading incidentally (in the opinion of some historians) to a low level of crime. Spiritualism’s equivalent to Sunday schools was the Progressive Lyceums inspired by a revelation of A.J. Davis, and gathered in the British Spiritualists Lyceum Union (originally the Lyceum Union) of which Alfred Kitson (15 February 1855 – 16 January 1934) was general secretary. His “ Autobiography” (1920, and reprints) is a detailed account not only of the growth of Lyceums, but also of Spiritualist expansion in Northern England. Because of its origins, this remarkable life story has never received the attention it deserves as a historical document written by a modest, calm and precise witness to the events he describes.

In his youth in a Yorkshire coal-mining village, Kitson’s family were Primitive Methodists and he was traumatised by fear of hell. Then the family discovered Spiritualism and were freed from fear. But Kitson retained a deep interest in what he called Biblical Spiritualism, that is the reports of paranormal phenomena in the Bible. Local Christians attacked Spiritualists (sometimes literally with sticks and stones) and this encouraged Kitson to acquire and read books which popularised the essentials of critical scholarship on the Bible. In books and articles, he then made this available for the education of Lyceumists and others.

Formally Kitson was opposed to Christianity, but given his background, there were inevitably similarities with the traditional role of radical critic of complacent religion. A typical example arose in 1888.

*I learned at our Home Circle of the evil effects indulging the tobacco habit had on our progress in the spirit world, even though we had lived a morally good life. This is owing to the craving or appetite for the narcotic we have cultivated, the effects of which we take with us into the spirit world and where it demands to be satisfied, causing us to seek the company of those who smoke and attach ourselves to a smoker, in order to imbibe the narcotic essence of the tobacco, until our craving is satisfied... (p.88).*

Similar considerations applied to alcohol. Kitson's solution was a four fold pledge, not all clauses needing to be signed, "The Lyceum Temperance and Moral Reform Pledge" published in "The Medium and Daybreak" on 24 August 1888.

The four evils specified for abstention were intoxicating liquors, tobacco, profane language and gambling. Kitson wrote "By having one evening devoted to this reformation, the children can work with their companions and induce them to come and join....Brothers and sisters, Leaders, will enter the Spiritual Vineyard, and become one of the world's true Reformers?"

These four evils still appear today in the rules of some educational bodies, and need have no theological connection, but opposition to them was very much a feature of evangelical religion. The spiritual vineyard, familiar in Spiritualist writing, is a variant of the vineyard of which the Bible speaks.

However Kitson was keen to dissociate Lyceum students from mainstream Christian influences. In a collection "Bible Studies in relation to Spirit Communion" (BSLU 1927) he noted:

*The ranks of Spiritualists are being continually augmented by those who have been trained in the Christian faith, who naturally retain, with a feeling of reverential awe, their early impressions of phrases and terms used in the Christian Sunday schools and churches. Thus they have naturally a bias or leaning to their use in the services of the Spiritualists' churches, and often are shocked at their absence from the addresses, and articles that appear in the Spiritualistic press.(p.79).*

To this end, Kitson would try to reduce the authority of the Bible in their eyes, by pointing out (for example) the scholarly view that there are two creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2, and two combined Flood Stories in Genesis 6 and 7. He argued that YHVH who spoke to Moses was a spirit guide of Egyptian origin, perhaps a former Egyptian priest.

It is instructive to compare Kitson with Maurice Elliott who took a similar view of YHVH, and who also devoted much time to analysing biblical words for supernatural phenomena. Elliott remained a fairly orthodox Christian, adding insights from Spiritualism. Kitson's reaction against the church of his youth was, in contrast, life long.

In 1895, Kitson read a paper in London on "The Duty of Spiritualists to the Young" at a general conference of Spiritualists presided over by W.T. Stead. As a prominent though ecumenical Congregationalist, Stead was in strong disagreement and attacked it both then and subsequently. Kitson's important paper was an apologia for the Lyceum movement, which he wished to replace the Christian Sunday schools. The paper was published also in LIGHT June 22 1895. (Kitson Autobiography, p.130 ff.)

On one point, spirit communications led Kitson to go beyond the usual beliefs of radical Spiritualism, and to accept the views of his Lyceum colleague Emma Hardinge Britten.

*I was also opposed to the theory of elementals belonging to the earth, fire and water as taught in Ghostland” edited and published by my esteemed friend and colleague Mrs Emma Hardinge Britten. and in some other books which I had put one side as being the result of imagination and on a par with “fairy tales” written to amuse children. Mr William Johnson, of Hyde, and some others had assured me that there were lower orders of beings called Elementals. But I was too sceptical to believe their testimony, so I resolved to enquire of spirit Zela, as she was well versed in psychic problems.” (p.188ff).*

Zela assured him of the reality of elementals, and he then asked around his medium friends, finding that several had witnessed them, including his own sister. Some of these experiences were of fairies as popularly understood. (This is clearly relevant to the case of Bessie Dunlop, elsewhere in this issue.)

The BSLU’s efforts did not go unnoticed by the Church. In one response, George Langridge C.R. devoted several pages to the Lyceum Manual and to “Outlines of Spiritualism for the Young” He asked:

*Are those Church people who clam they can be spiritualists and communicants at the same time at all aware of the kind of religious teaching which the so-called spiritualist Churches are giving – or are they making any protest against it? (“Spiritualism and Christianity “ New and revised edition, London, Mowbray.1926, p.87-8.)*

Because of the richness of the material we shall return to Kitson’s “ Autobiography “ soon.

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*(In 2003 was celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Churches’ Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies (originally the Churches’ Fellowship for Psychical Study). Previous attempts to form such bodies floundered, and it is an important historical question why the others failed, and this one succeeded. To help answer it, we are presenting a regular series of reports on the prehistory of the Fellowship)*

## **MAURICE ELLIOTT AND THE SEARCH FOR FAITH**

G. Maurice Elliott was well known in 1930s psychical studies as a parson sympathetic to Spiritualism. He wrote many articles for “Psychic News” about biblical phenomena, and campaigned on the platform through bodies like the Confraternity. He even resigned his living in protest against the Church’s attitude to mediumship and to the Prayer Book.

Yet in 1948 he published an apologetic work “ In Search of Faith” (London, John Murray) which reasserted the gospel in no uncertain terms. It is the only book mentioned in his final Crockfords clerical directory entry, and avoids psychic matters. Though aimed at the man in the street, it would have made clear to orthodox Spiritualists how great a gulf there was between them and him.

Apologetic books tend to follow well-trodden paths. There is likely to be something about the reasons for believing in God, the reliability of the Bible, the nature and work of Christ, and the patchy historical record of the Church. Elliott asserted:

*“ Nothing is more important than that men should “read, mark, learn and inwardly digest” their New Testaments. That great and God-humbled seer, Peter Taylor Forsyth, has, in his inimitable way, told us what happens when they do. He says:” Christ breaks forth on us from the record....” (p.34)*

But it is Elliott’s attitude to Jesus Christ that is most striking. One by one he takes views which minimise His significance, and which were popular among Spiritualists and (as we would say nowadays) New Agers, and rejects them.

*What was the Atonement? It was the most important deed in all history. (p.78)*

*Paul did not make the Christian faith: he was made by it. And he founded the Churches on the Christ who had sought and found him. (p.79.)*

What had happened to Maurice Elliott? When he left parish work, he hoped that the Movement would support him through lectures etc, but the disasters of 1939 and the wartime contraction of Spiritualist activity perhaps exposed this error. Meanwhile, his well-publicised psychic activity had made him persona non grata in London diocese and in many others. Perhaps the failure of the no-war prophecies also made him reconsider.

P.T. Forsyth had been principal of Hackney College, where Elliott had trained for the ministry. His cross-centred gospel may have been received inspirationally, but Forsyth had no sympathy for mediumship. In his book “ This life and the next “ (1918) Forsyth made an eloquent plea for prayers for the dead, and for progress after death, but had no time for “ West End mediums” (p.27) or “ some Bond street medium” (p.41).

One might guess that Elliott wrote his new book during the war. Despite the paper shortage, parts of it were published in pamphlet form as early as 1945. (“ Did Jesus really live?” The Realist Press, 1945).

Canon R.J. Campbell, Chancellor of Chichester Cathedral who introduced that booklet, had personal experience of rehabilitation, having been once notorious for the New Theology of Edwardian England. Campbell was also sympathetic to psychical research. Assisted by this book, Campbell may well have helped get Elliott a licence to officiate in Chichester diocese in 1948 which eased Elliott back into parish work. This helped stabilise Elliott’s life as the dawning of CFPS approached.

Possibly only one person survives today who knew Maurice Elliott at that time- Edwin Butler. Elliott invited him to meet at Chichester Cathedral and told him of his hopes that a group might yet be formed to bring psychic truths to the Church, despite the failure of the Confraternity. But who could form it?

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## **The exclusion of mediumship from the Church**

Living mainly in Christian societies, it was natural that quite soon after 1848, Spiritualists looked for mediumship in the Bible. The woman of Endor was an obvious example, while Jesus spoke with Moses and Elijah during the Transfiguration. So far as the early church was concerned, there was much in Acts and the letters of the apostles about the gifts of the Spirit. This was interpreted in a Spiritualist manner, even claiming “The Identity of Primitive Christianity and Modern Spiritualism” (the title of a classic work by Eugene Crowell, 1875 still in print).

Then about 1900 Pentecostalism emerged on the religious scene in America and around the world, to be followed in 1960 by Neo-Pentecostalism, the charismatic renewal within the mainstream churches. Often Pentecostalists used the same scriptural narratives as Spiritualists, claiming the gifts of the Spirit, but strongly rejecting contact with the dead. They regarded Paul, the Montanists and other spiritual movements in Christian history as their pioneers, and denounced the psychic realm.

There was some excuse for the problems of interpretation facing Spiritualists. Few had ever heard glossolalia (speaking in tongues), though some had witnessed in seances xenoglossy (the supposed speaking of foreign languages). Pentecostal prophets offering a word of knowledge, or saying the Lord is telling me (even “I the Lord say unto you.”) were unfamiliar to most Spiritualists. So accounts of spiritual activity in church history were naturally explained by Spiritualists as mediumship or allied phenomena even when they were not

If the early Christians had been Spiritualists, the question arose - when did they change? Arthur Findlay, the most influential English Spiritualist of the twentieth century, pointed to the biblical scholar Jerome about 380.

*He it was, who influenced Pope Damasus whose secretary he was, to abolish mediumship in the Churches. Jerome had been to Seances when he was criticised by people on the Other Side for his inaccurate translation of the gospels, he having added much that was Pagan to the original simple Jewish story. If that got about the unity of the Church was threatened and, consequently, mediums, from being called oracles of God, were from now onwards termed Servants of the Devil.*

This is from an SNU booklet “The effect of religion on history”(1997 edition).

But closer investigation suggests:

- 1) Jerome did not attend seances, although his translation, like all biblical translations, was criticised.
- 2) He did not influence Damasus on the subject of mediums.
- 3) Damasus did not take any steps about mediums in the churches.
- 4) There were in general no mediums in the churches at that date, although undoubtedly, scattered around the Christian world, there were believers who had psychic experiences.

How then had Findlay come to offer this fictitious narrative? Not by ever reading a life of Jerome or a volume of his Letters (which are now on line incidentally). He does quote in his longer works, part of a famous remark by Jerome which earlier Spiritualist writers employed.

*we tell them that we do not so much reject prophecy – for this is attested by the passion of the Lord – as refuse to receive prophets whose utterances fail to accord with the Scriptures old and new.*

What Jerome is saying here is that, as the passion (that is, the suffering) of Jesus showed (it had been prophesied by ancient Israelite prophets) prophecy had some validity, but it must not contradict what the Bible says.

But

- 1) this was not in a letter to the Pope, but to a female ascetic called Marcella. (Letter 41 of Jerome).
- 2) the “them”, who get told, are the Montanists, an early Christian pentecostal movement of fundamentalist belief, who had prophets.
- 3) although the Montanists were accused of many things, not least by Jerome, they were not accused of communicating with the dead. They were not Spiritualists.

So this quotation from Jerome is not really relevant to the question of mediums in the Church. Unless some other evidence is found, the story of Jerome getting mediums banned ought to be dropped from Spiritualist teaching. It is a myth.

Ironically the SNU web site has a different account.

*“ However, the 4<sup>th</sup> Century Council of Nicaea brought to an end the use of mediums and held that divine guidance, through the Holy Spirit, should be sought only from the priesthood....”*

This too is fictitious. In no way was mediumship on the agenda at the Council of Nicaea 325. As well as the work on the creed, and the condemnation of Arius, the Council ruled on the date of Easter, the role of deacons and a variety of other matters, but not mediumship.

A story elsewhere used by Findlay to suggest that there had been mediums in the Church is of a prophetess known to Tertullian, about whom he writes in his book “ De Anima”. (On the Soul, circa 210). She had visions during the Sunday services, spoke with angels, could read men’s hearts and distributed remedies.

She was however a Montanist prophetess, and there is no suggestion in the text that she passed on messages from the dead. She was a visionary of a kind not uncommon in charismatic churches today. If we read on in Tertullian’s book (which is now on line) we find that Tertullian believed that when we die we go to Hades and we stay there until Judgement Day, unless we have the good fortune to be martyred and thence get to Paradise without delay. Either way, there is no communication with

those on earth. It was not Samuel who returned to King Saul at Endor, but a deceiving demon, according to Tertullian.

Recently an Arthur Findlay Society has been formed in England, to present his non-religious progressive views, in contrast to the religious approach of the SNU. ([www.arthur-findlay.co.uk](http://www.arthur-findlay.co.uk))

It will be interesting to see whether in studying the legacy of their inspirer, they are open to the suggestion that he may, on occasion, have made errors.

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## MELBOURNE SPIRIT ART MYSTERY

At the headquarters of the Victorian Spiritualists Union in Australia are 35 small abstract paintings by London psychic artist and author, Georgiana Houghton (1814-1884). It is not remembered how they came there, though one might guess that past volumes of “Harbinger of Light” newspaper could give an answer. Georgiana is currently enjoying more attention than in life, not only as a pioneer of abstract art, but also as a historian of psychic photography.

In 1871, 155 of her spirit drawings in water colours were exhibited at the New British Gallery in Old Bond Street, London. The catalogue is perhaps the rarest of her publications; the exhibition was alluded to in a footnote by H.P. Blavatsky (Isis Unveiled I 601.) Georgiana was a fervent Christian, expecting the Third Dispensation (of the Holy Spirit), the Millennium, and giving symbolical meaning to many different colours.

In his paper” British abstract painting of the 1860s – the spirit drawings of Georgiana Houghton “ (Modern Painters Vo.1 No 2. Summer 1988.) Tom Gibbons concluded:

*Georgiana Houghton’s work strongly supports the argument that occultist doctrines are central to the development of early modernist abstraction. More importantly, it also makes clear that this occult-based abstraction is consciously intended to express millenarian and utopian convictions about the imminent transformation and regeneration of contemporary art and society, both of which it implicitly condemns as ‘materialist’ and therefore ‘decadent’. (p.37)*

The VSU paintings have recently been reframed and arranged in an excellent display with descriptions. ([www.vsu.org.au](http://www.vsu.org.au))

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