

PSYPIONEER

Founded by Leslie Price

Editor Paul J. Gaunt

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PSYPIONEER MATERIAL USED BY NEW TV SERIES

Filming is in progress for three historical documentaries on famous cases to be shown on Channel four this summer and made by Flashback Television.

See: - http://www.flashbacktelevision.com/productions/index_unexplained.htm

One deals with Bligh Bond and features Dr Tim Hopkinson-Ball, author of the new Bond biography already noted in Psypioneer. Another concerns Helen Duncan and was researched with the help of our back issues. The third examines the case of Dr Arthur Guirdham, and has made considerable use of an investigation published by Psypioneer as a booklet in 2000.

The 2000 re-examination of the case in which French Cathars allegedly reincarnated in modern England suggested it may derive partly from bogus phone calls received by the psychiatrist.

The Cathars were a medieval heretical group, largely exterminated by the Papacy. Dr Arthur Guirdham of Bath encountered a patient, Mrs Smith in 1962 who

“remembered” this time. Later he became friendly with another lady, Miss Mills who also had memories, and whose friends and relations were part of the same circle.

Art historian Lynda Harris, is a specialist on the Cathars - she is the author of “The Secret History of Hieronymus Bosch (1995), a painter who was influenced by them. In the Pioneer booklet “The Cathars and Arthur Guirdham” (51 pages) she considers how true were the descriptions of Cathars, and the source of the data.

Harris noted that Guirdham never met any of the friends and relations of Miss Mills who featured in the saga. He received phone calls from five of them, and their voice sounded just like Miss Mills.

Psypioneer has republished this investigation - you can obtain it for £4.50 + pp please see second last page of this issue.

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL SPIRITUALIST

An outstanding new biography of editor and campaigner William Thomas Stead (1849-1912) presents strong evidence that he was the most influential Spiritualist ever in Britain. It can be obtained from: - <http://www.steadbyeckley.com/book.htm>

Literary scholar, Dr Grace Eckley edited the ground breaking journal NewsStead. Now she has used the fruits of new research and archival material to give a dynamic portrait of a leading social reformer, in “Maiden Tribute; a life of W.T. Stead” (Philadelphia, Xlibris, 2007.)

In 1884, for example, his series of articles “The Truth about the Navy” for the Pall Mall Gazette led to the contemporary description of him as “a man who has done more for the British Navy than any Englishman since the days of Lord Nelson.” (p.45)

In contrast, his opposition to the Boer War (the Iraq War of his day) made him (as his son Henry put it) “perhaps the most execrated man in England.”

Stead’s influence gave him access not merely to leading figures in Britain for over thirty years, but abroad as well. He enjoyed repeated meetings with the Tsar of Russia.

Although sympathetic reference is made to Stead’s psychic interests at various points in the book, chapter 7 is exclusively devoted to these. It is clear that Stead was a great populariser of the fruits of psychical research, not least the new term “telepathy” (p.158). His quarterly “Borderland” (1893-97) is still being studied today.

But by 1903, Stead tired of the SPR when they proved less impressed than he with a prediction of royal assassination in Serbia by a psychometrist Mrs Burchell. SPR

members can read online the SPR response to Stead in JSPR October 1903; it would be useful if the material on the case could be republished.

Dr Eckley includes a discussion of the supposed post-Titanic communications attributed to Stead. Even today, he still features as a communicator.

The general impression of the multitude of good causes championed by Stead, many of them (like votes for women) part of our social fabric, is that there has seldom been so energetic a campaigner. His relative neglect in Spiritualist discussion doubtless owes something to the absence of a recent biography - now rectified. But his Christian affiliations are also noteworthy.

ALFRED VOUT PETERS

1867 – 1934

In the February issue of *Psypioneer*¹ the first part of Alfred Vout Peters was presented. This was followed with ‘*An English Medium in the Celtic twilight*’ by Wendy E. Cousins.² Following, is the concluding piece for the present.

In the first part, attention was drawn to Peters being controlled by another *living medium*³; at this period (1899⁴) Peters would not have been so widely known. There are numerous reports throughout the history of Modern Spiritualism of Live Communicators. Probably the first reported was recorded by Judge J. W. Edmonds in a letter to a Dr. C. Robbins, Charlestown, Mass on October 24th 1857:⁵

One day while I was at west Roxbury, there came to me, through Laura as the medium, the Spirit of one with whom I had once been well acquainted, but from whom I had been separated some fifteen years. His was a very peculiar character - one unlike that of any other man whom I ever knew, and so strongly marked that, it was not easy to mistake his identity.

I had not seen him for several years; he was not at all in my mind at, the time, and he was unknown to the medium. Yet he identified himself

¹ <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.2February08..pdf>

² <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.3March08..pdf>

³ The *Psychic News* article 2nd July 1932 by Maurice Barbanell “Medium Who was Controlled by a Living Being

⁴ I note on the original article the incorrect date (1898) was recorded; it should read 1899.

⁵ Taken from Tracts and Letters on Spiritualism (no 7) by Judge Edmonds; these were sold as individual small booklets.

unmistakably, not only by his peculiar characteristics, but by referring to matters known only to him and me.

I took it for granted he was dead, and was surprised afterward to learn that he was not. He is yet living..... I was certain there was no delusion about it, and as certain that it was just as much a Spirit-manifestation as any I ever witnessed or heard of. Yet how could it be? Was the question that was long agitating my mind. I have known since then many similar manifestations, so that I can no longer doubt the fact that at times our communications are from the Spirits of the living as well as the dead.

About two years ago I had quite a marked exemplification of this. A circle was formed at Boston and another here, and they met at the same moment of time in the two cities, and through their respective mediums conversed with each other. The Boston circle would, through their medium, get a communication from the Spirit of the New York medium, and the New York circle would receive one through their medium from the Spirit of the Boston medium.

This continued for several months, and records of the circles were carefully kept.....

The American medium Mrs. J. H. Conant (1831-1875) was reported to operate through other mediums while in a trance state, in more recent times Geraldine Cummings (1890 – 1968) and Leslie Flint (1911 – 1994) had received through their organism, communications from live communicators who were either in a coma or deep sleep. Interestingly it is stated by Ivan Cooke⁶ while speaking of his wife's mediumship and her famous spirit guide 'White Eagle' that *maybe* he was in the body: -

White Eagle's contact with his medium is always by a process of projection. He lives, we have learned, in the mountains of the East, and he can project either himself or his influence half across the world to her, by functioning, like other initiates, in the ethereal body. So while he lives in a physical body, as do other initiates, he is able (as are they) to function in the ethereal world which pervades this physical globe, of which the latter is the replica.

Living communicators have been reported in both mental and physical mediumship⁷ - printed below is the incident with Vout Peters referred to. It was published in *Light* September 2, 1899 page 420: -

⁶ Taken from 'The Return of Arthur Conan Doyle', edited by Ivan Cooke, Published by The White Eagle Publishing Trust 1956 page 15. See: - Leslie Price 'The Final Conan Doyle Mystery page 33 http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/Leslie_Price_PP5.pdf

⁷ See: - Nandor Fodor Encyclopaedia of Psychic Science – Control by the Living <http://www.spiritwritings.com/fodorc.html>

A STRANGE EXPERIENCE

We have had an opportunity of witnessing a spiritualistic manifestation which may be of interest to your readers, being, as we believe, an experience of a very uncommon character. Some little time ago, in 'LIGHT' of December 10th, 1898, we wrote of the observations our small circle has been able to make in its investigations of Spiritualism. Since then we have continued regular sittings, and witnessed much which gave us food for thought and often wonderment. On one occasion, when in Paris, we barely commenced our Sitting when 'Phygia,' our medium, became entranced, and controlled to repeat, with all the mannerisms of speech, intonation and action, the words of an address which, we heard a week afterwards, was at that moment being given before an audience in London by a London medium. She ended abruptly, and, still in the trance, appeared to become in a sense herself, and carried on a conversation with someone invisible to us, asking why certain expressions were used by the medium, and expostulating that she should be made to deliver the same as though it were he speaking through her organism. Apparently she was calmed; then after a few more questions of her invisible friend, during which it seemed as though she were in another world, she became controlled by the spirit who guides and directs our sittings, and to whom we owe more than we can say.

A little later, a member of our circle having occasion to visit London, 'Phygia' in Paris was frequently able to follow consciously her movements, and upon two occasions when the friend attended a séance of Mr. Peters', in London, she was able to follow her to the séance room, enumerate the people present, and hear some of the spirits who controlled. This led us to try the experiment which is our excuse for this communication. Our circle had occasion to visit London, 'Phygia' remaining there for a few weeks. When returning to Paris, she promised, if it were possible, to come to us through the medium, Mr. Peters, when we sat in séance with him; he, of course, being unaware of the promise. A certain sentence was agreed upon, of which only two of our circle knew, and which 'Phygia' was to utter through Mr. Peters as a sign of her control. Within a week after 'Phygia's return to Paris, the promise was accomplished, and since then, on four separate occasions, Mr. Peters has been controlled by her: and all who know her have been unanimous in declaring it was 'Phygia's' own self speaking; her mannerisms were there; things were said of which only she had cognisance, and when tests were agreed upon beforehand in the shape of certain phrases to be uttered, they were invariably used. At the fourth seance, being our last for some time in London, following the wishes of the presiding spirits of Mr. Peters we told him of this control, which has been unknown to him. It is not only an uncommon experience that an incarnate spirit should control another body, but at the same time a test of great value to the medium through whom it was done, as proving the genuineness of his control by an entity other than his own, even if it taught no other lesson. This should refute the idea that control is an act of one's own organism. If any of the members of the Psychological Research Society should care to question us concerning this occurrence, we should be very

happy to answer them, and write more fully than we are justified in doing in this article.

AGNES C. MORGAN.
MARY LONGLANDS.

Alfred Vout Peters died at 8.00am on Saturday 31st March 1934 at Longton, Staffordshire at the age of 67, where he had gone to conduct Easter services. (31st March is significant date on the Spiritualist calendar- Hydesville 1848!) Giving 39 years service to the Spiritualist movement, Peters had worked in seventeen different countries, from Iceland to South Africa.

All the chief Spiritualist organisations were represented at the funeral, which took place at Golder's Green Crematorium, London, on Thursday, April 5th. The service was conducted by Mr. Glover Botham.

PORTRAIT OF VOUT PETERS

A continuing reminder of Alfred Vout Peters' services to the Spiritualist movement still graces the College of Psychic Studies⁸

The portrait of Alfred Vout Peters hangs outside the lecture hall, just up the stairs, to the right of Etta Wriedt.

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*Shortly after Easter<sup>9</sup>, Miss Phillimore, Secretary of the L.S.A., drew the attention of an appreciative audience to the interesting collection of "Psychic Treasures" in the possession of the Society, and now on view in the Lecture Room at 16, Queensberry Place. A valuable addition to these "Treasures" has been made by Mrs. Vout Peters who has presented the Alliance with a portrait of her husband, the late Alfred Vout Peters, by the well-known artist, Mr. Fred Stratton. A name-plate has been affixed to the picture which now hangs in a favourable position in the Lecture Room, where any of the many friends and admirers of this famous Medium and indefatigable worker in our cause may come and view it. All who knew Mr. Peters in life will agree that it is indeed a living likeness of this well-known speaker, a man of many friends, and that it is well worth a visit of inspection. Excellent photographic*

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<sup>8</sup> The name was changed from The London Spiritualist Alliance (LSA) to The College of Psychic Science on 31 January 1955 and then to The College of Psychic Studies (CPS) in 1970. See: - <http://www.collegeofpsychicstudies.co.uk/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> Good Friday of that year was 30<sup>th</sup> March.

*reproductions of the picture in postcard size can be obtained in the L.S.A. Library, price 6d.*<sup>10</sup>

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## SWEDENBORG EXPLAINED?

A suggested explanation for Swedenborg’s revelations is likely to cause controversy. It is made by Gary Lachman who has written books about Swedenborg and Steiner. Lachman contributes an essay to the new volume “The arms of Morpheus - essays on Swedenborg and Mysticism.” edited by Stephen McNeilly This is volume five, 2007, of the Journal of the Swedenborg Society, London

Lachman draws attention to the hypnagogic state, through which we pass on entering and leaving sleep. Wilson Van Dusen had already pointed that Swedenborg was an early explorer of that state. Swedenborg reported on it in his “Journal of Dreams” and “The Spiritual Diary”. Elsewhere Swedenborg wrote “Another vision is that between the time of sleep and the time of wakefulness, when the man is waking up, and has not yet shaken off sleep from his eyes. This is the sweetest of all, for heaven then operates into his rational mind in the utmost tranquillity.”

Similarly Lachman (in this essay “Swedenborg, Rudolph Steiner and the Hypnagogic state” suggests “that in some way Steiner, like Swedenborg had developed a method of achieving hypnagogic states more or less at will.”(p.83) Hypnagogia would correspond to the Old Moon stage of consciousness about which Steiner writes. The modern development would be the capacity to reflect upon the hypnagogic visions.

Needless to say, Steiner claimed a superiority to Swedenborg, whom he asserted had seen only real reflections of a spiritual reality. Modern sceptics, however, would question the validity of any material received through hypnagogia.

LP.

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<sup>10</sup> Light 10<sup>th</sup> August 1934 page 484.

[**Note by Psypioneer:** - The following paper is the third part of a four part series presented by Dr. Carlos S. Alvarado. The final paper in the next issue will be: - Mental Mediumship and Telepathy.]

## **Further Notes on Historical Ideas of Human Radiations:**

### **III. The Perispirit and Mediumistic Forces (1)**

**Carlos S. Alvarado**

#### **The Perispirit**

In the past there have been many ideas about intermediary subtle bodies or fluids between the physical body and the spirit. Allan Kardec's ideas about the perispirit, basically a reformulation of previous concepts (e.g., Chardel, 1818; for older ideas see Poortman, 1954/1978), postulated that this agent was capable of conducting the effects of thought and will on the body, and was involved in the creation of visible apparitions, and physical phenomena. Using mediumistic communications as his source of information Kardec described the process by which he believed the fluid or the perispirit could move objects. He wrote:

When an object is set in motion, carried away, or raised into the air, the spirit does not seize it, push it, or lift it, as we do with our hands; the spirit, so to say, *saturates* it with *his own* fluid combined with that of the medium, and the object, being thus vivified for the moment, acts as a living being would act . . . [and] it follows the impulsion communicated to it by the will of the spirit (Kardec, 1876, pp. 76-77).

Followers of Kardec continued the speculations. Writing in the Italian journal *Annali dello Spiritismo in Italia*, Niceforo Filalete (1864, p. 292) argued that the perispirit was modeled after the physical body, but that when liberated from the body it was transformed by the spirit's will. The French engineer Gabriel Delanne discussed further the role of the perispirit in human affairs and in the production of psychic phenomena. In *L'evolution animique* Delanne (1897) described the perispirit as a vital and directing principle that served as a model for the physical body's development. Delanne wrote:

The perispirit is the directing idea, the imponderable plan for the structure of beings. It is it which stores, registers, and conserves all perceptions, all the volitions, all the ideas of the soul: not only does it embed in its substance all the states of the soul determined by the exterior world, but it is . . . the unfailing receiver of the most fugitive thoughts . . .

In its incorruptible substance are fixed the laws of our development; it is the keeper par excellence of our personality, recollections reside on it (p. 72).

The perispirit, Delanne believed, was the principle behind what some referred to as the subconscious, as seen in amnesia and changes of personality. He furthered assured us that the state of the perispirit could be modified through external means such as anaesthetics, hypnotic procedures and other agents capable of affecting the nervous system. This could produce secondary states of consciousness, “sort of an exaltation of the vital movement” (p. 227). Furthermore, it handled the automatic and reflex actions.

In later years Delanne continued to speculate along similar lines, while assuring us these were facts, as seen in his book *Le spiritisme devant la science* (Delanne, 1923; see also Geley, n.d., pp. 49-50). In his view the perispirit was formed of fluids of different degrees of condensation. The more material fluids were associated to the brain, while the more spiritual ones were closer to the soul. In addition, Delanne argued that the perispirit was capable of separating from the body with the soul, but keeping its connection to the body through a “fluidic cord.”

Other writers also discussed the perispirit and its functions (Fedi, 1937; Geley, n.d.; Kudriavteff, 1909). Some argued that previous life memories were imprinted on this perispirit (Geley, n.d., pp. 49, 54). Others related the perispirit to health. In one view published in the English spiritualist periodical *Light*:

The perispirit . . . radiates a complex of rays and if it is in perfect harmony with the physical body, they find a free outlet beyond its limits; but if the physical body is unable to transmit the rays, they accumulate round the perispirit, producing a series of disturbances in both the psychical [the perispirit] and physical bodies, which may end in serious illnesses, such as neurasthenia, nervous swellings, &c. (Kudriavtzeff, 1909, p. 175).

While De Rochas did not use the term perispirit, he discussed similar concepts. In several other publications he argued that the nervous force of the body was spread through the nerves responsible for sensations and motor functions and that it took the form of the physical body, becoming a fluidic double (De Rochas, 1895a, 1895b, 1895c, 1896). In De Rochas’ words:

1. There is in man a spiritual and fluidic body destined to serve as intermediary between the soul and the material body . . .
2. This fluidic body, which, during life is the mold of the material body, can under some circumstances momentarily abandon the material body, and be perceived, even at a distance, by some of the human senses.
3. Some persons enjoy the property of secreting the substance that forms the fluidic body in fairly great quantity and with

enough density for this substance to be perceived in the form of a luminous cloud . . . . (1895c, p. 125).

Following these thoughts, and echoing De Rochas and others, Flammarion mentioned the concept of a double in relation to mediums. “A fluidic and condensable double has . . . the power of gliding momentarily out from the body of the medium . . . . How can this double, this fluidic body have the consistency of flesh and of muscles? We do not understand it” (Flammarion, 1907, pp. 424-425).

From the above, it is clear that some of the ideas discussed here intersect with several concepts of subtle bodies or doubles. While I will not discuss this literature here, I refer readers to the studies of Mead (1919) and Poortman (1954/1978).

### **Physical Mediumship**

Many theoreticians explained physical mediumship through nervous forces coming from the body of the mediums. One of the best-known and more influential of these in the early days of spiritualism was Edward C. Rogers, as seen in his book *Philosophy of Mysterious Agents* (1853). Rogers summarized as follows some of his conclusions:

It is evident . . . that the force which, emanating from such persons, produces these phenomena, is in some way intimately related to the nervous force, and the nerve-centres . . . . In some instances, the regular periodical recurrence of these phenomena is precisely of the character of certain forms of intermittent fever, and nervous derangement . . . . In all instances, when the normal tone of the nervous system is perfectly restored, the nervous symptoms have ceased, together with the phenomena in question . . . . It follows, therefore, that the latter depend in all cases upon an abnormal condition of the nervous system . . . . The Will and the Reason have no control of this force in its action from the nerve-centres in their abnormal condition, and it acts from the person without cognizance of the consciousness. (The reverse is the case in normal conditions.) . . . . The physical agent belongs to the nerve-centres and the outer world, relating the one to the other (pp. 60-61).

Samuel Guppy discussed in his book *Mary Jane, or Spiritualism Chemically Explained* (1863) the action of “vapors” emanating from the human body. The emanations “under certain conditions . . . possess a living, acting, and thinking vitality; a vitality, in some cases, superior to the being they emanate from” (p. 332). The intellectual content of manifestations, such as table phenomena, was believed to reflect the mental content of the sitters.

He further speculated: “That this material vapour may have also the power of taking the shape of hands, &c., is credible, though I have not seen it; and that it may take the shape given it by the imagination of the medium, or of some person the

medium is in communication with, is not absolutely deniable with the facts before us; and it is also conceivable that a phosphoric vapour, though invisible by day to the human eye, may affect a photographic plate, and so produce a spirit picture . . . .” (p. 336).

The beginning of the previous quote was a reference to the phenomena of materialization. “Unseen intelligences, versed in spirit chemistry,” was stated in a column in the March 1876 issue of the *American Spiritual Magazine*, “have the power to collect and use the aura of mediums, the emanations of individuals and the elements of the atmosphere, manipulating and molding the same into shapes, forms, and garments of immortals, in which spirits appear” (Southern Notes, 1876, pp. 81-82). One observer of phenomena produced during the nineteenth-century referred to a “rapidly-moving luminous vapor, which quickly consolidates into a separate individualized form, complete in its organization, and capable, for the time, of physical and mental action” (Brackett, 1908, p. 126).

In France, Alphonse Chevallard discussed a variant of the nervous force idea in a pamphlet entitled *Études expérimentales sur le fluide nerveux et solution définitive du problème spirite* (1869). Table phenomena in seances were seen as the action of the medium’s fluid, which could be aided by nervous force of the sitters. In cases in which the tables expressed messages, the medium’s “interior diction is instantaneously translated” (p. 19) into outside action, producing the illusion of discarnate agency. But the idea that spirits of the dead influenced these forces was also discussed by many (e.g., Ballou, 1853; Hare, 1855; Kardec, 1876).

Another writer explaining mediumship in terms of vital forces was physician Robert H. Collyer. As he wrote: “If there is sufficient nervo-vital fluid at the command of the medium, he is enabled to produce an embodiment, which will for the time being, under the direction of the will power, manifest all the conditions of an independent existence . . . .” (Collyer, 1871, p. 106). This included a variety of physical phenomena.

An early British psychical researcher, lawyer Edward William Cox, developed ideas about “psychic force” that influenced William Crookes (1874). While I mentioned some of his ideas in my previous paper (Alvarado, 2006, p. 142), much more could be said about Cox. In his book *The Mechanism of Man* (1879), Cox summarized what he believed was known about this force capable of performing physical effects. In addition to the fact that the force seemed to be guided by intelligence, it depended on the presence of a “Psychic,” a term Cox defined as “a person possessing some peculiarity of constitution by reason of which the Psychic Force, that is in all of us, in him is either in excess or subject to abnormal development” (p. 377).

Cox also argued that the force: (1) Could be generated using surrounding people as a source; (2) was conducted better by wood than by metal; (3) could be impeded in its action by the presence of some individuals; (3) acted independently of beliefs and skepticism; (4) was diminished by the presence of many individuals, “instead of increasing the force” (p. 378); (5) depended on the state of being and health of the psychic, such as depression and sickness; (6) could be restored by drinking wine or coffee; (7) was enhanced by music; (8) developed slowly, as

opposed of starting strong; (9) moved objects towards the psychic; and (10) was limited in action to twelve feet from the psychic, its effects being rarely seen beyond six or seven feet.

Another interesting theoretician, and one virtually unknown in the English-speaking world, was Spanish astronomer José Comas Solá. In his book, *El Espiritismo Ante la Ciencia*, Comas Solá (1908) expressed skepticism about mediumship due to negative personal experiences. Nonetheless, he conceded that in principle some phenomena could be real. He was skeptical of dematerialization phenomena, claiming that this process would produce an excess of force never seen with mediums. But later in his book he was willing to speculate in relation to ideas from modern physics.

Following ideas about atomic structure and the existence of a variety of states of energy, Comas Solá speculated on the existence of a process in the human body analogous to the decomposition of light, as studied spectrographically. Assuming the possibility of conducting spectrographic analyses of the human body, this author wrote that:

maybe we could decompose it in various *matters* or *elemental forces* of different types; that is, we may discover in the known complex of the individual the existence of different elemental individuals. Its whole in equilibrium constitutes the normal living body, such as the compositions of elementary rays form the color of light. Consequently, we can assume that in an anomalous bodily state these different energies that form the living being lack cohesion, and in specific cases it is completely or partially disaggregated in elementary bodies (p. 86).

In this view, mediums were unstable individuals in a physical way. Their bodies showed different signs of lack of cohesion, such as trance during the phenomena and fatigue afterwards. The exteriorization of an element from the medium's body would consist of a diminished version of the medium's strength and mentality. This, Comas Solá argued, could in principle explain luminous phenomena and fluidic phantoms because the exteriorized element "could vibrate its *molecules* and transmit itself towards our retina through the ether" (p. 87).

As argued before (Alvarado, 1993), medium Eusapia Palladino provided a focus for discussion of concepts of force. In addition to the ideas of Morselli (1908), briefly discussed in my previous paper (Alvarado, 2006), she inspired many others. Lombroso speculated on the emission of motor forces related to "interruption of functions of . . . cerebral centers, while the activity of other centers is augmented, notably the motor centers" (1892, p. 150). Later, Lombroso (1909) was open to discarnate agency:

Most potent, then, is the power of the medium in spiritistic matters, so much so that it explains the greater part of the phenomena, but not all; and the complete explanation can be found only by integrating the mediumistic force with another force, which, although it is more fragmentary and transitory, yet acquires, by

identifying itself with the medium, a greater potency. And this force, authenticated by the tradition of all ages and all peoples and by experimental observation, is pointed out to us as found in the residual action of the dead (p. 184).

Polish researcher Julian Ochorowicz (1896) conceptualized some of Palladino's phenomena as a "collective psycho-physical creation" (p. 109). This involved a combination of nervous force and the ideas of the circle. The "medium is nothing but a mirror that reflects and directs the ideas and nervous forces of the sitters" (p. 111). The process was ideoplastic because the character of the phenomena was shaped by the expectations and beliefs of the sitters.

Another researcher with wide experience with Palladino was Hereward Carrington (1909). He believed that the medium's vital force, a force that constituted life and regulated processes in the body, could be exteriorized from her body and cause physical phenomena. In minor phenomena like movement of objects this force could be directed consciously or unconsciously by the medium. But Carrington believed that in complex materialization phenomena suggestive of personal identity spirits made use of this force.

French Astronomer Camille Flammarion also speculated on mediumistic forces, as seen in his *Mysterious Psychic Forces* (1907). He wrote: "We must admit . . . this prolongation of the muscular and nervous force of the subject . . . . This prolongation is real, and only extends to a certain distance from the medium . . . . We are forced to admit that this prolongation, usually invisible, and impalpable, may become visible and palpable; take, especially, the form of an articulated hand, with flesh and muscles; and reveal the exact form of a head or a body . . . ." (p. 424). Another Frenchman, science writer and psychical researcher René Sudre, discussed what he referred to as the "psychic fluid" in his book *Introduction à la métapsychique humaine* (1926). This was an "unknown substance-energy capable of imitating all forms of life and raw matter, and of accomplishing mechanical, physical, or chemical tasks of the greatest variety" (p. 209).

Many others speculated as well on such ideas as: radioactivity and transmutation of the medium's energy (Aggazzotti et al., 1907); projection of vital force "which can go as far as extra-organic manifestations, that is, out of the body" (Ochorowicz, 1909, p. 757); "magnetic aura and vital forces of the medium" (Sprague, 1912, p. 67); and transformation of unknown nature of the "biopsychic forces of the medium's organism" (Schrenck-Notzing, 1920/1925, p. 312). Several other ideas are summarized in a previous paper (Alvarado, 2006).

### Note

1. Readers should keep in mind that these notes are meant as supplementary material for a previous paper (Alvarado, 2006).

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## Is the UK again the centre of the psychical research world?

It is generally accepted that with the formation of the SPR in 1882, the leadership in psychical research passed to the UK, even though Modern Spiritualism had appeared in the United States in 1848, with Robert Hare, among others carrying out scientific experiments (*Experimental Investigation of the Spirit Manifestations*, 1855.).

Here leadership remained, at least until the publication of J.B. Rhine's "Extrasensory Perception" in 1934 after which the USA laboratory approach gradually became standard. Post-war poverty after 1945 also became standard in the UK. Sometimes funds were only available from the Parapsychology Foundation, founded by the medium Mrs Garrett in 1951. The then quarterly "LIGHT" for example was saved from closure by her, and numerous ventures throughout the world seeded and sustained.

The Americans had other sources, such as the Kidd Bequest<sup>11</sup> and wealthy private donors such as Chester Carlson. (see Ian Stevenson (1969). Chester F. Carlson: An Appreciation. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, 63, 115–122). By the 1960s, when research into altered states of consciousness grew, and the ASPR also had a substantial research programme, British eyes frequently gazed longingly across the Atlantic.

Is it possible however, that leadership has now moved back to the UK? In her "President's Note" in the SPR magazine "Paranormal Review" (January 2008), Professor Deborah Delanoy, a psychologist at the University of Northampton suggests that "Parapsychology and psychical research have arguably never been in a stronger position in Britain". This is because of a snowballing effect through university training of researchers, to which developments at the University of Edinburgh, especially the Koestler bequest, gave a major boost.<sup>12</sup>

"At the last count" she notes" there were eleven UK universities, both old and 'new', where one could take classes and/or pursue a research degree ( MPhil or PhD) focused on parapsychological/psychical research topics."

As a result staff and students in universities come to see such research as normal. In contrast, parapsychology in American universities has become precarious. Private sponsorship of research groups is often uncertain and cannot in itself provide degrees and career progression. In the academic environment, Delanoy summarises, there is training, financial security, improved planning of long term projects and a better public image.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.survivalafterdeath.org/articles/rogo/kidd.htm>

<sup>12</sup>

[http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/archive/archive\\_home.cfm?volumeID=19&editionID=137&ArticleID=1049](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk/archive/archive_home.cfm?volumeID=19&editionID=137&ArticleID=1049)

However there is another aspect to leadership, and that is the genesis of major theoretical and practical advances in psychical research. On that the jury is still out!

Caution has been expressed by London's leading parapsychological blogger, Robert McLuhan. In a post of March 15 2008 about "The Psi-Seeding of Academe" he noted: *"It has taken more than two decades for the psi-seeding of academe in the UK to take place, but a sceptical campaign to discourage universities from 'harbouring pseudo-science' could quickly reverse that. Scientists see creationism as the main threat right now, but that's only because the movement to teach intelligent design in schools has had a much higher profile. Parapsychology could soon be in the firing line. "*

McCluhan suggests the test might come if highly significant results are reported by one of the UK academic research groups. His blog can be found at: [www.paranormalia.com](http://www.paranormalia.com)

It comments on news and events relating to parapsychology and psychical research.

LP.

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## INTERVIEW WITH DR. PEEBLES

[**Note by Psypioneer:** - *James Peebles (1822 – 1922) was featured in our Australian section in the last newsletter<sup>13</sup>, below is printed an interview by LIGHT<sup>14</sup> carried out on Peebles brief visit to London from Australia en route to America.*

*Peebles remained in England only for a few weeks; on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1902 he delivered an address on Spiritualism and his Australian trip at the Cavendish Rooms at 51, Mortimer Street, W. London. It is interesting to note that it was Peebles who was the first speaker who ever occupied this famous Spiritualist venue some thirty years previously on June 20<sup>th</sup> 1870. Later in 1894 largely due to an anonymous donor of fifty pounds, this commodious Spiritualist meeting place was secured by the Marylebone Spiritualist Association,<sup>15</sup> and on Sunday evening, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1894, Emma Hardinge Britten, delivered the opening address. The M.S.A held a seventeen year tenancy at these premises which saw many of the finest mediums and speakers of the day, until c1913 the Cavendish Rooms were demolished]*

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<sup>13</sup>See: - page 74 <http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP4.3March08..pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Published in LIGHT August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1902 page 403

<sup>15</sup> See the story of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association 1872-1928....  
<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP2.12December06..pdf>

Dr. J.M. Peebles, with his stenographer and typewriter, Mr. Green, arrived in London last week from Australia by the steamer 'Runic,' and we have had a long interview with the doctor, who is known in all quarters of the globe as an earnest worker on behalf of Spiritualism.

**'How long have you been absent from America?' we asked.**

'About one year. This is my fourth voyage around the world, but in all probability not my last, for my health is good, and I am more vigorous, and can do more mental work now, than I could forty years ago. As I have often said, the field is the world, truth is my authority, and all nations constitute my parish.'

**'Then you do not take these long journeys in different countries for mere pleasure?'**

'Never! No, never! Pleasure-seeking is selfishness. I gave the first courses of lectures in Australia and New Zealand upon Spiritualism ever delivered there; and I was anxious to see if the seed had taken root, and was producing an hundred fold. The great Nazarene martyr said to his disciples, "As ye go, teach." This I emphatically do, whether by sea or land. Upon this steamer "Runic" with its nearly five hundred passengers, I lectured upon woman's suffrage, India's magic, travels in Egypt, and talked Spiritualism with the parsons day after day. And then, as a further reason for taking these "round the world" voyages, I have worked for past two or three years almost unremittingly in getting out pamphlets and my last two books, "Vaccination a Curse and a Menace to Personal Liberty" and "Death Defeated, or the Psychic Secret of How to Keep Young," and all this, together with diagnosing and prescribing for the sick in and out of the medical office, together with lecturing every Sunday, had induced insomnia, and a threatening kind of nervo-exhaustion, so I resolved upon this long voyage.'

**'Have you regained your strength, and did you do much literary and lecture work in those far-off lands?'**

'Never was I stronger, healthier, and never could I do so much writing as now. I can also run a foot-race and bat a ball, and work on my forthcoming book ten hours per day. Growing old is a foolish habit. "Did I do much work?" Judge for yourself. I wrote and published while in these colonies three pamphlets, and gave the bigoted, conservative Melbourne "Argus," a scathing printed leaflet for its injustice to Spiritualism, and the honourable and venerable Luther R. Marsh, of America. The journalism of Melbourne, a city of some 400,000, is dominated by Roman Catholics and Scotch Presbyterians. While in the Commonwealth of Australia and in New Zealand, I lectured every Sunday except one or two; and sometimes three times on Sundays, besides frequent week-day evening lectures and social parlour gatherings. On the whole I delivered eighty public lectures'

**‘Were your lectures all upon Spiritualism?’**

‘Far from it; and yet, carefully, critically considered, the most of them were, and all of them indirectly, for Spiritualism, grounded in God, who is *Spirit*, and rooted in the moral constitution of man, over-shadows and inspires all the reforms of the age. It is the bulwark of progress and toleration. In Melbourne I lectured several times in the Unitarian Church, for the, Vegetarian Society, and in the Friends’ Church upon peace and arbitration. In Sydney, I addressed the, Spiritualist Society, the Metaphysical Society, which brought Mr. Colville out from England, and on four Sunday mornings and one Sunday evening I lectured in the Australian (Unitarian) Church, the clever and eloquent Rev. George Walters being the pastor. During the Sunday evenings of four months I lectured in Melbourne under the auspices of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists, in the Masonic Hall, Mr. W. H. Terry being the president. And during these several months I also delivered a number of lectures in the children’s Progressive Lyceum halls. I also lectured to gentlemen and ladies, each by themselves. There was no end to calls, no end to work.’

**‘I have been told that the people of those far-off colonies are more liberal than we are here at home?’**

‘They certainly are, especially in New Zealand. While India is the poorest and most superstitious country in the world, New Zealand, so far as I can judge, is the most liberal and prosperous. These lovely islands have no snakes, no tramps, no unemployed toilers pleading for work, and no compulsory vaccination law. The Government owns the railways, telephones, and telegraphs. They have women’s suffrage, a limit to land-owning, and native Maories are permitted seats in the New Zealand Parliament.’

**‘How did the Press and also the clergy treat you?’**

‘The New Zealand Press gave full and handsome reports of my lectures, sometimes nearly a column. The most popular Congregational minister in Wellington (the capital city) came to hear me lecture upon Spiritualism, and later I spent an afternoon in his library, where he had invited other preachers to meet me. It was a rich feast. I enjoy nothing so much as preaching to preachers. At another interview in another city, when I had been pretty severe on the clergy and their creeds, one of them inquired in a rather “trifling” way, if I “thought priests would be eventually saved.” “Certainly,” I answered, “but not so much for their merits as on account of this Biblical text, ‘The Lord preserves the simple.’” While in Wellington, the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Robert Stout, called upon me, and in turn I dined with him on a Sunday afternoon. He is universally conceded to be the cleverest and most broad-minded jurist in those flourishing islands. Spiritualism has many strong supporters in the city of Wellington. The president of the society, Mr. William McLean, is an ex-member of Parliament. At Invercargill I gave my lectures in the Y.M.C.A. Hall. Many were turned away unable to gain admission. In Masterton, the mayor of the city, a barrister and a strong Wesleyan, took the chair for me, and gave a very handsome opening address. Yes, the general tone and tenor of liberality in New Zealand is admirable. I might say, especially is this true also in Dunedin, for my stopping place was in a Presbyterian family, that of Mrs. Stables, and most excellent people they were. I attended some fine seances in that city.’

**‘From what sources did Spiritualism in those countries receive the most opposition?’**

‘Emphatically, Roman Catholics, Christian Scientists, Seventh-day Adventists, and Theosophists. The latter, of whom so much might be expected, especially in Australia, take unwearied pains to frighten young mediums about being influenced by “elementals,” “spooks,” and “disintegrating astral shells.” Saying nothing of the theosophical seceders, there are about as many kinds of Theosophists as there were colours in the patriarch's flock of sheep. Personally, I am a Theosophist, but not a bigot. Truth is more important than the cuddling of any cult. Pregnant with assertion and grandiloquent assumption, the Oriental Theosophists stand upon stilts, and looking down upon Spiritualists, smite with heartless ingratitude the maternal breast that gave them life; for modern Theosophy, remember, was born in the residence of a wealthy New York Spiritualist. He was its first treasurer, and many of its first supporters, such as Emma Hardinge Britten, were spiritualists; but when the cult moved to India and began to weave into its mystic-inclined web the superstitions of Hinduism and Buddhism, taking more of “Mahatmas,” “reincarnation” “karma,” and “astral shells,” than they did of that much-extolled nucleus, “brotherhood,” Spiritualists began to leave, such as Dr. Wyld, of London, Professor Coues, of Washington, D.C., and other distinguished thinkers, preferring Western science and enterprise to Hinducaste, child-marriage, shiftlessness and superstition. Spiritualists demonstrate; Theosophists speculate. Spiritualists live in the grand present; Theosophists in the dim, dust-buried, mythological past. Spiritualists are tolerant and altruistic; Theosophists are sectarian, insisting upon “reincarnation” and other Hindu dogmas. These are among the gulfs that divide. And further, Theosophy has become a self-satisfied sect - a little self-admiration society, with nearly half-a-dozen wrangling, unbrotherly, seceding and sub-seceding divisions. There are over forty reported “dormant branches” in India. There are more than that in America.’

**‘Addressing so many organisations, did you not address or speak for the Theosophists?’**

‘No. I addressed neither Catholics, Adventists, nor Theosophists; I went to Australia under the auspices of the Spiritualists - that was reason enough why. Do Theosophists invite the eloquent expounders of Spiritualism upon their platforms in London? Excepting T. DeWitt Talmadge, Madame Blavatsky was the bitterest opposer of mediums and Spiritualists that ever walked on American soil. Many of her followers, taking their cue from her, continue their uncharitable work, and yet talk of “brotherhood.”

Do not construe these plain words as antagonising Theosophy - true Theosophy, the purpose of which was to study the psychic powers of man, undermine materialism, and establish universal brotherhood without regard to caste, colour, or creed. It is the barnacles in the name of Theosophy that I antagonise, and I am equally as critical when speaking of some Spiritists - mark, not Spiritualists. These two words are not synonymous, and should never be used interchangeably. The materialistic and irreligious Spiritists are many of them narrow-minded and full of spite in regard to faith in the All-Father, God, belief in the existence of the martyred Man of Nazareth, and the uplifting power of prayer. They hunt in promiscuous seances for tests, tests

multiplied, and for communications concerning the finding of coal mines, or some other selfish purposes. This was the necromancy that Moses condemned.

Spiritualism, a science, a religion, and a philosophy, should be approached in a most candid, reverent spirit, and be studied for the grand purpose of demonstrating a future existence, establishing brotherhood, and mentally and spiritually benefiting humanity. I wish there were more such Theosophists as Mr. G. R. S. Mead, Editor of the London "Theosophical Review." His ripe scholarship charms me, and his very clever articles and essays appearing in 'The Theosophist' in regard to Gnosticism, the existence of Jesus, and early Christianity are above all price.'

**'It has been said in some of the religious journals, both in Britain and America, that Spiritualism is "on the decline." Is this in consonance with your experience?'**

'Farthest from it possible! The wish was father to the statement. Spiritualism must be differentiated from Spiritism. The latter, relating largely to phenomena for selfish ends, or for curiosity, may and ought to decline; but Spiritualism, being a positive truth, cannot decline. No truth can die. It is making rapid progress, diffusing itself through all the social and religious organisations, and it largely floods the literature of our time. It is, in fact, leavening the whole ecclesiastical lump of the religious world. It richly abounds in the utilities of art, of invention, and in all sanitary enterprises. It inspires the sublimest discoveries of science and exploration; the broadest researches of history, archaeology, ethnology, philosophy, and all scientific research.

'The continual and speedy march of Spiritualism in all enlightened lands, its vigorous life, its outpushing force, its undermining of materialism, its vivid and palpable demonstration of a future conscious existence, are no ordinary proofs of its heavenly origin, as well as of its supreme fitness for the position in the world that it justly claims - the position of a science, a philosophy, and an all-comprehensive religion, the wisdom of the ages'

**'Do you remain long in London, and will you be able to deliver some lectures while with us?'**

'Business, financial and literary, will compel me to return to America as soon as possible. Much of the time that I do remain in London I wish to spend in the British Museum, and also devote to the study of the results of the recent explorations in Egypt, Babylonia and Palestine. This is especially impressed upon my mind from the fact that one of the most remarkable mediums that I ever met resides in Australia, and his entrancing intelligences have not only proved their intimate acquaintance with the dwellers in Babylonia, Egypt, and other ancient countries two and three thousand years ago, but they have brought rare coins, very ancient manuscripts, and other long-buried antiquarian relics from those ancient civilisations, into the séance rooms. The question of matter (spirit-substance) passing through solid matter is no longer a question with those who have made psychic research and spirit phenomena a careful, critical study.'

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