

PERCY WILSON

SNU President 1950 - 1953

Below is taken from *Psychic News* May 7th 1977 front page:

‘Elder statesman’ Percy Wilson promoted to higher service

LEADING MEDIUM FORETOLD HIS PASSING YEAR AGO

PERCY WILSON, 84, rightly regarded as Spiritualism’s elder statesman, passed peacefully last Saturday into the spirit world whose distinguished exponent he had been since he was a teenager.

The long list of offices he held in the Movement is an indication of the unique service he rendered. They include being chairman of Psychic Press Ltd, the company owning PN, from 1956 to the time of his passing.¹

Of Percy it can be said he was cradled in Spiritualism. His grandfather was a Unitarian minister who became a Spiritualist medium and preacher.



¹.-**HAS ANYONE HELD MORE OFFICES?** IT WAS typical of Percy, who was thrice married, to prepare these biographical notes: He was born in Halifax, W Yorks, in 1893. At its Heath Grammar School he obtained a scholarship to Queen’s College, Oxford, in 1911.

Four years later he was awarded the BA degree with first-class honours in mathematics, followed in 1918 with an MA degree.

From 1915 to 1919 he was an instructor lieutenant in the Royal Navy.

During part of that period he was a Lecturer in Applied Mathematics at the Royal Naval Engineering College, Devonport.

This was followed by becoming an administrative officer at the Ministry of Education from 1919 to 1938; Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Transport, 1938 to 1946; Principal Assistant Secretary, Roads Department, Ministry of Transport, 1946 to 1949. He retired because of ill-health.

Percy was SNU president from 1950 to 1953. He became an SNU minister in 1941. From 1958 to 1964 he was a vice-president of the College of Psychic Science (now College of Psychic Studies).

He was managing director of Psychic Press Ltd, from 1951 to 1962. He was also a trustee of the Spiritual Truth Foundation since its inception in 1965 and acted as a trustee of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers from its foundation in 1951.

Percy also listed his record in the audio field. He was technical adviser to “The Gramophone” magazine from 1924 to 1938, and its technical editor from 1953 to 1966.

He wrote two books, “Modern Gramophones and Electrical Reproducers,” in 1929, and “The Gramophone Handbook” in 1957. He was a founder-member of the British Sound Recording Association, and also a member of the Audio Engineering Society, USA, with a citation award in 1966. (P.N. May 7th 1977.)

His father was a Spiritualist, so was his uncle. Naturally his three sons, one a barrister and the others leading scientists, were brought up as Spiritualists.

Percy also achieved fame as an audio expert. His knowledge and experience in this field were used to instal equipment in several Spiritualist churches.

No one was more familiar than Percy with Spiritualism's history. He could quote from tributes written by pioneers in the last century. His library of books on the subject – they included many out-of-print classics – was extensive. It is a pity he never found time to write a history of Spiritualism.



Percy's passing was foretold at PN's annual dinner in May last year. The forecast, which of course was not told him, was known to his wife Winifred and several close friends.

It was given by leading Scots medium Albert Best, one of the guests at this function.

Albert told Winifred, when she saw him, that he was horrified to realise while Percy was speaking that he had cancer and would not be able to attend another PN annual dinner.

Later she wrote Albert to say: "I have known for about two months that Percy had lung cancer – since he had a chest X-ray and an investigation of his sputum in fact. Percy does not know."

All he was told by his doctor and William Lang, the surgeon guide who regularly gave him treatment through his medium George Chapman, was that he had congestive heart failure and must limit his activities to a minimum.

It is a credit to Winifred that she bore with fortitude all the problems and difficulties involved in tending Percy during his illness. Winifred's conduct has been admirable, and the perfect example of how a Spiritualist should behave in such circumstances.

She accepted his passing as a merciful release from pain, which restricted his activities, and as a promotion for his long, dedicated service. Of course she will be attending our dinner on May 14.

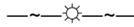
Winifred, like Percy, was "born" into Spiritualism. Her father, George F. Berry, was an SNU secretary for many years.

In her letter to Albert she referred to some of the evidence he gave her at last year's dinner. The medium had mentioned the spirit presence of Cora Tappan, a pioneer, eloquent trance orator.

Winifred wrote that Cora Tappan opened the Sowerby Bridge Spiritualist Church, W Yorks, and Percy's grandfather presided at the ceremony. Percy received his spirit name at the same church from the guide of another famous medium, J. J. Morse.²

Percy's funeral service will be conducted by Maurice Barbanell on Friday, May 6 at Oxford Spiritualist Church, 39b Oxford Road, Cowley, at 3 pm, and at Headington Cemetery at 4 pm.

Winifred and the family request that no flowers be sent. Instead they suggest donations be made to Branden Lodge, the old people's home. It is run by the Spiritualists' Housing Association, from our offices. Percy was one of its trustees.



The issue quotes a profile from 1956:

'I was dedicated to the spirit world's service'

WHEN he was interviewed for his profile in 1956, Percy said: "I was dedicated to the service of the spirit world many years ago.

"That being so, when the need arises for me to be given advice on psychic matters it is always forthcoming in unexpected ways and through more than one channel. Again and again this has happened in my life."

He told his interviewer that, despite his family connections with the Movement, he did not attend a Lyceum. "It was more convenient for me to go to a Unitarian Sunday School."

Percy said that his active entry into Spiritualism came in 1912 when he attended an SNU national conference at Liverpool. Thereafter he participated in many Spiritualist activities for 12 years.

In 1938 he was elected secretary of the propaganda committee of the SNU's London District Council. Two years later he became LDC president.

²—Cora Tappan: Married four times, and adopted the last name of her husband at each marriage, and at various times carried the surnames Hatch, Daniels, Tappan, and Richmond. She was mostly known as Cora L. V. Richmond (1840-1923). Duncan Gascoyne the second longest serving SNU President (2000-2010) wrote a booklet in 2010: "Historical Aspects and Personalities Attached to the Early Years of Sowerby Bridge SNU Church" as quoted below:

"BUILDING THE CHURCH – Building work commenced in the latter part of 1873 and finished in June 1874. If it had not been for Mr John Harwood who gave his name as being responsible for any monies drawn from the bank, the work would have stopped. The Lyceum, the rooms and two cottages underneath and six adjoining houses were completed.

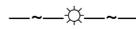
"The cost was £1,800 of which £1,500 was borrowed, the rest being raised by members. The Lyceum building was opened on the second Saturday in June by Mrs Cora Richmond, with Abbey Wilson presiding. The choir which had been trained by Abbey Wilson and noted as the best choir in the district rendered special music.

"Abbey Wilson must have been a very proud man that day, as well as being the friend of Emma Hardinge Britten, Cora Tappan, J J Morse and many other well known Spiritualist workers. He also gave talks and wrote articles for the local press and wrote several hymns, one of them being 'Forward press to Conquer'."

In 1941 he served as a member of the SNU national council and chairman of its education committee.

The interviewer described Percy as being always active but sometimes forbidding of expression.

“He is a man of decision and stubborn will. But those who ask his help find in him a sympathetic listener – and a strong arm for their aid, once he is satisfied the cause is right.”



The following week’s front page:

THEY COME FROM FAR AND WIDE TO HONOUR PERCY WILSON

‘He was truly a servant of the spirit’

Called ‘sound’ man of two worlds

PN Reporter

OXFORD’S Spiritualist church was packed last week to honour veteran Percy Wilson, now in the spirit world. Only hours before his funeral service, taken by Maurice Barbanell,³ two of his sons, Professors Geoffrey and Richard, arrived from America to attend it.

Also present was his third son Laurie, who arranged the whole service.

For Percy – he was the church’s founder president – it was truly a family occasion. The first hymn sung was written by his grandfather. One grandson, Hugh, sang a solo. The piano accompaniment was played by his daughter-in-law.



Keynote is simplicity

Percy’s coffin was flanked by two simple bouquets from the family. And simplicity was the ceremony’s keynote.

At the church and the crematorium, Barbanell quoted from the spirit-inspired funeral service written by “that splendid pioneer medium, J. J. Morse.”⁴

³.–Maurice Barbanell was one of the first SNU ministers in the late 1930’s - see the SNU Pioneer issue two “Who were the first Ministers of the Union?” He was the founding editor of *Psychic News* whose first issue was on May 28th, 1932. (He continued until 1946 when he left; sixteen years later on June 20th, 1962 he returned as editor until his death). He was born 3rd, May 1902 and died July 17th, 1981 at the age of 79. The photograph is from the Britten Memorial Museum at the Arthur Findlay College.

Barbanell paid tribute to Percy, whom he knew for 40 years. Here are extracts from his words:

Being individualists, we did not always see eye to eye. But I can say our disagreements were few but our agreements many.

One of the best tributes to Percy is that he bore no malice. Nor was he capable of telling a deliberate untruth.

Percy would always go out of his way to do a kindness, particularly to visit old workers who had retired from the fray and thought they were forgotten.

Always persevered

Percy would stick to his guns if he thought he was right. With great foresight Morse's guide gave Percy the spirit name Perseverance.⁵ He always persevered.

If you agreed with him, you admired his determination. If you disagreed you would complain of his obstinacy! It's the same quality every time.

Percy had a great sense of humour, loved jokes and could always tell some about Spiritualism's early days.

He can be described as a "sound" man of two worlds. I refer to his distinction in the audio world. He used this knowledge and experience to equip without charge many Spiritualist churches.

Percy was fortunate in that he was born into Spiritualism as were his three sons. Because of his long experience and wide reading he should have written a modern history of Spiritualism. He was always going to do this.

Perhaps in the higher life, where there is more time and he is not subject to the limitations that cramp us, he will find an automatic-writing medium to communicate this history.

To the nth degree, Percy had loyalty and dedication to Spiritualism. He was truly a servant of the spirit.

Percy was a personality. Today, humanity seems to have been manufactured on assembly lines. He was an individualist, a Spiritualist who required no prefix or suffix.

⁴.-James Johnson Morse can be found under the Spiritualists' National Federation Presidents page. Barbanell had previously used this reading, as he notes in the Two Worlds: "I conducted the cremation service for an old friend, the healer George Jessup. He is the second member of Hannen Swaffer's home circle to pass to the higher life. The first was Nettie Abrahams, whose cremation service I also conducted." Barbanell edited the TW's from around 1957 (jointly with PN from 1962) until his death in 1981 and re-publishes Morse's funeral service in the February 1977 issue: "When the spirit bids adieu to mortality" Morse's service was much admired by Percy and is re-published at the end of this article.

⁵.-When six weeks old he was named at the Sowerby Bridge Church by J. J. Morse and Tien Sien Tie.

Spiritualism satisfied his reasoning and provided him with a religion, philosophy and science.

His service to our movement provides a luminous chapter in its history.

Percy laboured for over six decades to help others to become aware of the truth that enriched his life.

His virtues were far greater than his blemishes. He earned that respect of Spiritualists not only in Britain but all over the world who regarded him as their elder statesman.

Co-operation goes on

We give thanks for a life well lived. We are aware there is a physical loss for his family, colleagues and friends.

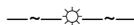
It is inevitable that, with time's passing, the ranks of Spiritualism's pioneers on earth grow thinner.

How fortunate are we to have the certainty that the ranks grow larger on the Other Side and that death does not separate: we can still co-operate and give service.

As the ceremony ended, Barbanell stepped to the coffin and on it placed a single white carnation. Like the flower, he said, Percy was still living.

The SNU, of which Percy was past-president, was represented by the current holder of this office, Gordon Higginson. Harold Cox attended for the Greater World.

At a buffet after the service, I told Percy's wife, Winifred what a wonderful ceremony this, my first Spiritualist funeral, had been. "You could not have started with a better person," she replied.⁶



⁶—SOME travelled many miles to attend the service. For David Dutton, Psychic Press director, chairman of the Spiritualists' Housing Association and a Spiritual Truth Foundation trustee, it meant a long journey from his Herne Bay, Kent, home.

Sylvia Barbanell, like David, a Spiritual Truth Foundation trustee, was also present. Quoted was one of her poems, "Some Call Him Death."

Leicester journalist Charles Bullen and his colleague Win Wood attended. London Spiritualists present included Wilfred Watts, Connie Ransom, veteran Muriel Boddington and Walter Earrey.

Midlands Spiritualist Eric Hatton, recently ordained as a Spiritualist minister, was accompanied by his wife Heather. Eric, noted for his beautiful voice, sang two hymns.

And the Saxons, husband and wife, from Huddersfield, Yorks – Percy installed the sound recording equipment at their Spiritualist church – made the long journey as their tribute.

Former SNU president Charles Quastel tried to be present, but found that travel from the Isle of Man proved impossible.

Pioneer Norfolk Spiritualist Jim Duffield was also unable to make the journey from Norwich because his wife has not recovered from an illness.

Healer M. H. Tester, a PN director and STF trustee, was prevented from being present because he contracted influenza. (P.N. May 14th 1977)

It was further noted:

SIGN OF THE TIMES

IT was a surprise to see in the “Times” last Saturday an obituary notice, measuring ten inches, to Percy Wilson! The writer was an unnamed “correspondent.”

This began by saying he was well known here and abroad in the field of sound recording and reproduction, “and as a leader of the Spiritualist movement as well as having had the distinguished career as a civil servant...”

Details of all these activities were printed.

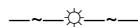
Then came, “The spiritual name ‘Perseverance,’ given him in infancy as his dedication to Spiritualism (his grandfather and uncle having been leading Spiritualists of their time), certainly typified his life.”

The obituary added that Percy became active in the Spiritualist movement during the last war, when he persuaded Lord Dowding to appear with him at public meetings, and was president of the SNU from 1950 to 1953.

“His guidance ensured the successful passage of legislation on 1951 to relieve Spiritualists of harassment under the ancient laws on witchcraft and vagrancy.”

Readers were told that Percy stimulated the formation, on a non-denominational basis, of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers and persuaded Harry Edwards to become its president.

Finally it said, “He established the Spiritual Truth Foundation to control the weekly newspaper Psychic News, of which he was the chairman of directors.”⁷



Percy Wilson’s eldest son Laurence (known as Laurie) had previously given this tribute for his father’s 80th birthday:

I blew family trumpet for my father’s 80th birthday

We reprint extracts from the tribute by his barrister son Laurie to Percy (PN March 10, 1973) who became an octogenarian in that month. An introduction stated that famous healer Harry Edwards was not the only veteran Spiritualist about to celebrate an 80th birthday. Percy was Harry’s senior in this respect by two months.

AS 80th birthdays appear to be in fashion, dare I blow the family trumpet by pointing out that Percy Wilson reaches that age on March 8?

He will be celebrating the occasion, as on his 75th birthday, with friends in the world of acoustics. Here his eminence is at least as great as in the world of psychics.

⁷.-The “Spiritual Truth Foundation” is mentioned numerous times in the article for more details please see the end of the article.

Percy's grandfather, A. D. Wilson was one of the founders of the Spiritualists' National Federation 83 years ago, having already served the Movement for 20 years and sacrificed his career to it.

Percy's uncle, Hanson G. Hey, was one of those who transformed the federation into the Spiritualists' National Union. For 20 years he served it as general secretary for a trifling honorarium.

Percy – named indirectly after the poet Shelley, but given the spirit name “Perseverance” – began his service to the Movement over 60 years ago as an interpreter at an international conference. He has been a subscribing member of the SNU for over 55 years.

The heyday of his service to the Movement was in the later 1940s. As a top-flight civil servant and a back-room boy for Government-sponsored Bills in Parliament, he found himself in a unique position to solve the political and legal problems which had baffled earlier generations of Spiritualists.

A series of lawsuits in the 1860s and 1870s had made Spiritualism an illegal religion (or so it appeared). They subjected Spiritualists to prosecution under the Witchcraft and Vagrancy Acts.

In 1944 Helen Duncan, the materialisation medium, was jailed under the Witchcraft Act. The real reason, it subsequently appeared, was that information given through her mediumship revealed war secrets.

Legal proceedings in the first world war had failed to secure exemption from military service for Spiritualist ministers.⁸ A legacy for training mediums had been quashed in the High Court. Political campaigns had got nowhere.

Where political and legal action failed Percy's administrative know-how succeeded.

His familiarity with the ways of Whitehall showed how administrative action could circumvent adverse legal decision, take advantage of existing laws, and finally gain the confidence of those in authority so as to get the law changed without opposition.

The secret of his success was quiet persuasion and absence of polemic; stress on the religious aims of genuine Spiritualism and dissociation from sensationalism and charlatanry.

The recognition which he won from many Government departments for Spiritualist churches as religious charities was no mere status symbol.

It meant fair treatment in taxation and in war damage compensation, and – especially in recent years – generous compensation on the basis of “equivalent reinstatement” for churches demolished for town improvement schemes.

⁸.–See the SNU Pioneer issue two: “Who were the first Ministers of the Union?”

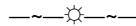
It overcame the adverse effects of earlier lawsuits by distinguishing between the genuine and the spurious in Spiritualistic activity.

He analysed the reasons underlying political and administrative opposition to previous attempts to repeal the Witchcraft Act and parts of the Vagrancy Act, and worked out ways to meet both points of view.

These were the foundation of the new confidence, built in parliamentary and governmental circles by Tom Brooks, MP, which finally enabled the Fraudulent Mediums Act – the real mediums’ charter – to pass in 1951 without opposition.

Percy’s presidency of the SNU (1950-53) was marked by unusual progression from financial red to black. This was achieved mainly by his securing the co-operation of Harry Edwards in promoting healing demonstrations throughout the country

He later stimulated the creation of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers.



We note in Laurie’s tribute to his father the name Helen Duncan. At a Conference organised by the College of Psychic Science (formerly called the “London Spiritualists’ Alliance,” today called “The College of Psychic Studies.”) at Brighton on November 28th – 30th 1958, Percy was one of the lecturers and relates his involvement in the war time problems involving Helen Duncan re the sinking of the H.M.S. *Barham* in 1941 leading to her 1944 trial. Quoted below from *Psypioneer* Volume 5. No 1. January 2009, originally published in *Light* (Special Conference Number) Spring 1959:

EVIDENCE FOR SURVIVAL

The Historical Significance of Physical Mediumship

By Percy Wilson, M.A.

The next case I wish to draw your attention to is one within my own experience: there are many more but I think it is time to reveal some of the things of this particular experience, relating to Helen Duncan’s mediumship, during the last war, and leading up to her trial. The story so far as I am concerned began with an invitation to me to have lunch with Maurice Barbanell. During that lunch he asked me if I had heard what had happened at a Helen Duncan séance at Portsmouth the previous evening. He told me that he had had a message that morning to say that at this séance a figure had appeared of a sailor with a capband H.M.S. *Barham*;⁹ and the information was given that the *Barham* had been sunk in the Mediterranean but that the fact was not to be announced for three months because of the political and military situation. I went back to my office. I was then what you might call a senior official of the Ministry of War Transport. I was in a detached building, Devonshire House, whereas the main office was in Berkeley Square House; so I deliberately went along to Berkeley Square House to ask some of my senior colleagues and

⁹.–Note some of the problems and myths surrounding Helen Duncan in *Psypioneer*, for example in Volume 2. No 6. June 2006: *We Shall Fight Them on the Web Sites?* – Leslie Price.

remember, the Ministry of Shipping was part of the Ministry of War Transport whether they had heard of the sinking of the *Barham* in the Mediterranean. No one had heard, but one of them said he would make an enquiry; and he told me later that afternoon that it was not known in the Ministry of War Transport. That was on the day after the message had been given in Portsmouth.

Well you will find, as I found, that in fact the news of the sinking of the *Barham* was only released three months later and the explanation was given that it was not in the public interest to reveal the fact at the time. You can imagine the consternation and feeling in Portsmouth when this piece of rather colourful information had appeared at a séance with Helen Duncan. In passing I would have you observe that although this was a physical séance, it contained evidence at the same time, rather straight evidence, of the survival of the particular boy who came back to speak to his mother.



Nothing further happened until, I think it was about a year later, Mrs. Duncan paid another visit to Portsmouth, and gave another séance.¹⁰ In the course of that she was seized, and a white sheet, so called, was seized but was never heard of afterwards; and then the prosecution under the Witchcraft Act of 1735 began. The defence under that Act was really conducted from my house, where Mr. MacIndoe stayed with me.

At the beginning of the trial I got a message from two of my sons, who were then undergraduates in Oxford, and had visited the Cowley Spiritualist church. There they met a man called Spencer who asserted that at the Cowley Works of Morris Motors in the previous year a young man had made a bet that the next time Mrs. Duncan appeared at Portsmouth she would be arrested. That bet was taken, the side stakes were given to a third party, and when Mrs. Duncan was arrested the bet was paid. It transpired that the principal witness on behalf of the police against Mrs. Duncan was the uncle of the man who had made the bet.

I immediately saw the value of this testimony and with a lot of last-minute effort we managed to get Mr. Spencer up to the Old Bailey during the trial; but for some reason he was not called as a witness. I would ask you, however, if you ever read the record of the trial, to look at the concluding remarks, after the conviction, of the Chief Constable of Portsmouth, which seem to me to shed a lurid light on the circumstances of that trial. The only conclusion I can come to is that the police and the naval authorities did not want Mrs. Duncan about in Portsmouth before D-Day or during D-Day.

¹⁰.-The time line is slightly out, the *Barham* sunk in November 1941 – Duncan was arrested in January 1944

Séance During Trial

During the trial one of my sons, Geoffrey, acted in the court as a messenger for the defence, and when it was half-way through, after prosecution evidence had been given, we arranged (it was a Friday afternoon) that he should collect Mrs. Duncan straight from the court at four o'clock, take her to Holborn Viaduct station, bring her through to Wimbledon and then by taxi on to my house. This he duly did. She had had no opportunity of going anywhere else from the court on the way. And I had my usual home circle gathered there.

So, we gave Mrs. Duncan a good tea, I don't advocate this before a physical circle, but there was a reason for it on this occasion because we included some really good red jam in it, thanks to the regurgitation theory of Harry Price. Shortly afterwards, we went upstairs to my own séance room and held a seance. I was seated next to the curtains of the cabinet, and there was a red light behind me on the ceiling. (I could not see it but it was shining behind me, so that my eyes were not inhibited by it.) In the course of the séance Mrs. Duncan stood up and ectoplasm poured in streams, in ribbons, from her nose and her mouth, on to her massive bosom, curled up in a ribbon on her bosom, and dropped to the ground; and then, as she was standing with her arms akimbo, I suddenly saw it leap up two ways to her hands. I was within a yard of her with a light above my head and I saw everything that happened. Shortly afterwards the whole mass of ectoplasm disappeared in an instant. I could not tell you when: it was there and then it was not. It just disappeared.

Now that evidence was sufficient for us to conclude that it was safe, even in the hard circumstances of the court at the Old Bailey, for Mr. Loseby to offer the judge and jury a personal demonstration when he opened his evidence for the defence. That offer, as you will remember, was refused.

Those are the circumstances which I want to put on record now, relating to the Helen Duncan prosecution. I think they tell a story of their own, and I need not dot the i's or cross the t's.

Now these testimonies, all that I have quoted, are so positive that I suggest that only three conclusions are possible. (a) The facts are substantially as I have related them, or were related by the witnesses, or (b) the people testifying were unworthy of credence, which is precisely the criterion, I may remark, which Professor Sidgwick himself, in his first presidential lecture to the S.P.R. on its foundation, had postulated as being one of the desirable positions to get into. Here are his words: "We must drive the objector into the position of being forced either to admit the phenomena as inexplicable, at least to him, or to accuse the investigators either of lying or creating, or of a blindness or forgetfulness incompatible with any intellectual condition except absolute idiocy".

Or (c) that the people who deny the testimonies are like the Irishman who was brought before a judge on a charge of stealing a kettle. Three witnesses gave full personal testimony that they had seen him steal the kettle; whereupon he said to the judge, "Surely, Your Honour, you are not going to convict me on the evidence of three witnesses? I can produce fifty who did not see me steal that kettle!"

To conclude:

Albert and May Saxon, from Huddersfield have donated numerous items of historical value to the Britten Memorial Museum. Part of their generous donations includes an envelope of information on Percy Wilson, and his links with former SNU President George Berry, and Hanson Hey. Apart from the last article all material used in this article is thanks to Mr and Mrs Saxon.

For more information on Percy Wilson and his family see “Our New President – Wilson family tradition goes back to 1870,” *Psypioneer* Volume 6. No 1. January 2010. Percy’s uncle Hanson Hey, whose premises the SNU held as its first registered office; see *Psypioneer* Volume 6. No 10. October 2010: “Hanson Gledhill Hey 1866-1921 Paul J. Gaunt,” and “The Passing of Mr. Hanson G. Hey – The Two Worlds”.

Please note:

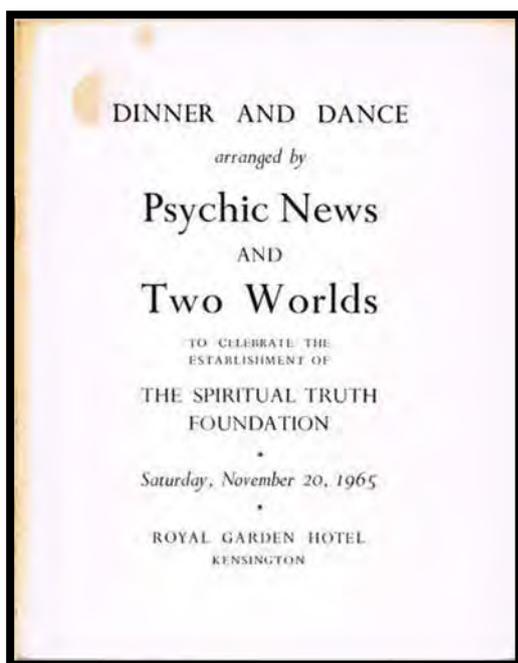
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Anyone who would like this article, please contact:—pioneer@snu.org.uk



Below are the two articles referenced in the footnotes:

Deed that makes psychic history



*This important announcement, signed by Percy Wilson, as chairman of Psychic Press Ltd., which publishes “Psychic News,” our companion weekly periodical, was printed in its columns.*¹¹

IN front of me is a document that I am firmly convinced is historic, one that will make a tremendous contribution to the future of Spiritualism.

Some two years ago I made an announcement in “Psychic News” regarding the control of Psychic Press Ltd. This company is responsible for publishing “Psychic News,” for the running of our bookshop, for the Psychic Book Society and for publishing books on Spiritualism and allied subjects.

¹¹.—Article taken from the *Two Worlds* July 1965 page 220

I announced that the control of the company had passed to a body of London Spiritualists whose intention was, to form a charitable trust.

That trust has now been established, under the title “The Spiritual Truth Foundation.” It is being registered with the Charity Commissioners. Its objects are stated in the trust deed to be:

1. The promotion and advancement of the religion and religious philosophy of Spiritualism.
2. The promotion and advancement of spiritual healing.
3. The relief of poverty.

The trustee’s are: Gordon H. Adams, Maurice Barbanell, Sylvia Barbanell, R. David L Dutton, Maurice H. Tester; Laurence Wilson and myself.

Influential support has already been promised for the trust, which will not linked exclusively to any existing organisation. It will be free to help *all* genuine Spiritualist and psychic activities; without emphasis on any niceties of interpretation. Arrangements are being made for the trust to have a controlling, interest in Psychic Press Ltd., the Two Worlds Publishing Co. Ltd., and the Psychic Book Club Ltd.

It is the intention of the trustees to interpret the wide powers that are given to them in the trust deed in the most generous ways (provided they are legally “charitable”) and so provide a medium for the fruitful expression of the benevolence of all concerned with the diffusion of the knowledge of spirit power.

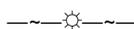
As an example of their forward-looking policy the trustees have invited two of their younger members, David Dutton and Gordon Adams, to be chairman and secretary respectively of the trust.

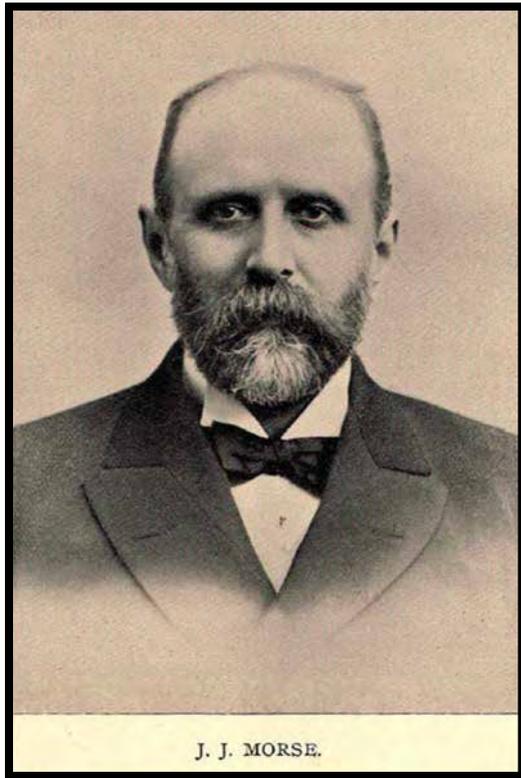
The support of well-wishers is earnestly sought, whether in prayer; in conscious thought, or in the more material ways of gifts to the trust of shares in any of the subsidiary enterprises, of donations or of legacies. Communications should be addressed to Gordon Adams at 23 Great Queen Street, London, W.C.2.

This is the most hopeful adventure in the expansion of Spiritualist philosophy and chartable activity that I have witnessed in my earthly lifetime.

As the representative of a third generation of Spiritualists, and the father and uncle, grandfather and great-uncle of the next two generations, I commend it to the attention and active support of all who long for the more effective break-through of spirit power to the denser atmosphere of this sorely stressed material world.

The motto of the trust will surely be that of the Prince of Wales, “Ich Dien” (I serve).





A famous medium was inspired for this service

When the spirit bids adieu to mortality

by J. J. MORSE

AS promised I conducted the cremation service for an old friend, the healer George Jessup. He is the second member of Hannen Swaffer's home circle to pass to the higher life. The first was Nettie Abrahams, whose cremation service I also conducted.

I take no credit for the fact that non Spiritualists always volunteer how impressive and uplifting they find these funeral services because of their marked contrast to the sterility of orthodox ones.

I use what I consider the ideal one written over 60 years ago by J. J. Morse, a former editor of this magazine who was also a brilliant trance medium. I reproduce it with a very few revisions so that you can read the heights of inspiration and beauty achieved by

a man who had practically no education. M.B.

For use at the house

IN the fulness of time comes the harvesting. The golden sheaves are garnered, and the husbandman rejoices that his labour has not been in vain. He thanks the giver of all good whose laws have thus fulfilled His purposes.

We are ears of corn in the fields of life, ripening for the Great Reaper to gather us in for the harvest home in the sweet homeland beyond.

Man, too often ignorant regarding his heritage of continued existence, sees but gloom and sorrow in death. He notes the drooping of the young, the failing of early prime, the steadily advancing snows of age. His heart aches, the brevity of life seems so pitiful, the dread ending so swift that, in anguish, he asks, "What is there beyond?"

He muses that if life be all, then all too brief is life. The little span of three score years and ten scarce affords him time to know he truly lives. Youth and age alike ever feel the coming of the white angel all too soon. But, truly, God knows best, for assuredly His will and wisdom rule all things wisely and well.

Death is the gateway of life. In very truth to die is to gain. In all ages the eye of faith has caught glimpses of the serener regions of the life beyond. Prophets, poets, seers and soul-illuminated thinkers of all lands have upheld the hope of immortality, while visions, trances and open visitations from the spirit realms have added knowledge to faith, giving man the certainty that death does not end all.

But human life is not all suffering and strife. To each of us comes something of gladness and sweetness. The tender ties of blood bind hearts in loving unison, while those still holier links of human love hold us firm and true to each other when trials and disappointments fret us almost beyond endurance.

Our children comfort us in age, soothing our pains of body and mind. Tenderly they minister to us when the spirit bids its adieu to mortality as it goes to realise its greater freedom.

Sad it is when death comes to the accompaniments of pain and anguish, but then sweet are the ministries of those nearest and dearest to us.

Let us then give thanks with heart and soul, for the love that blesses and soothes in our hour of separation.

But a greater comfort is ours in the certain knowledge that death, as men call it, is truly a part in the great plan of life. As the rose buds and blossoms, making summer airs fragrant and the days beautiful, so, in due time, the human spirit buds, blossoms and is made ready to be transplanted to the more congenial life of the Summerland beyond. To die is as natural as to live.

As the bud contains the potentiality of the flower, so we each contain the finer elements which are fashioned into our supernal forms. Those forms, fashioned in life, are liberated by death that they may evermore grow beautiful under the clearer skies of the spheres of glory and light towards which each and all of us are surely tending.

How can we say there is no death? Because those whom we once counted dead are oft about us, not as phantoms of our dreams or articles of our faith. They are realities, the arisen ones of our hearts and homes, the friends of former years, parents, children, the loved and the loving.

Today, as of old, the gates are ajar. Messengers come and go. Loved ones come to the aching and hungry-hearted to console them, to add further proof of life hereafter to those who already hold such testimony, to cheer those who have it not. Tears may flow. We are but human, for the great poet has truly said, "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

Not cleansing fires, but cleansing tears remove ills and hatreds, cleansing our minds, our loves, freeing us from the impurities of unkindness and uncharitableness. The tears of joy are also shed, of joyful thankfulness that wounds are healed, that the haven has been gained.

The tears that give ease to sorrow, that relieve the overcharged breast, are nature's means to ease her children's griefs. Be not ashamed to receive our great mother's kindly help.

This silent form is to be removed from its accustomed home. One face will be absent from the family circle. There will be a vacant chamber, an unused chair, a

voice no longer heard. Reverently take away the discarded garment; quietly bear it to its final resting place.

It is but the casket that hid the beautiful jewel. That which made this form so wonderful, the form we knew so well, has gone. The immortal jewel it contained has now a richer setting, one more fitting to its nature and high destiny.

Bowing to the wonderful mystery of death, yet lifting our faces that they may be flushed with the glory of life, let us rejoice that another has gone a little further along the road our feet are treading.

But the home is not vacant of the presence of the arisen. The dead do not all depart; they are with us often, to help and cheer us on our way. The blessing of heaven be upon us, and the hallowedness of this hour remain a sweet memory for many days to come.

At church or chapel

LIFE and death are the servants of God, love and duty the incentives that link people to their higher selves. A well-spent mortal life is man's best acknowledgement of indebtedness to God and nature.

Now in this place let each search his heart in silence that the good or ill therein may be discerned, that one may be fostered, or the other overcome.

(Let the company indulge in silent prayer.)

We have not assembled to grieve, but rather to rejoice that the arisen one has escaped from darkness and found the light. We pay soulful tribute to the eternal power. Within these walls there is no insensate grief, no uncontrollable terror. We know that death is liberation, a step "Nearer, my God, to Thee," an uplift in the divine order of eternal progression.

God's laws heed neither creeds nor rituals. His only ritual is the order of His laws; His church, the universe, its members all mankind; His ministers the souls that are seers, the hearts that live, the minds that serve. His altars are human hearts sanctified by love and service.

In honouring the departed, let us not forget our duty to the living. Unwisely to bemoan our loss is to becloud our judgement. It is not pleasing to the arisen, nor is it helpful to the living.

Rather than unduly lamenting, let us recall the goodness of the departed, that we may emulate it. If we needs must remember their ill, let it be that we may avoid its like in ourselves, and do our best to prevent it in others.

(Here introduce appropriate personal comments to the arisen one.)

Out from these walls, for the time being sanctified by our sympathy and love, let us follow this mouldering flesh, that it may be decently returned to the great mother from whose vast stores it was first compounded.

She will resurrect its elements for her further purposes. The late dweller in this silent form will never need it, or its like, again. It has done its work, it has served its purpose.

**(For cremation services substitute the three paragraphs beginning with the one marked with an asterisk.)*

Committal

LEAVES have their glad recall. Flowers bloom and die, but they come again. Night and silence bring quiet and rest. Death smoothes out the creases from the faces of those who have suffered, leaving the face as tranquil as if an angel had said, "Poor, tired frame, be at rest."

With the trees as sentinels we leave this empty tabernacle, while flowers, like silent watchers, keep their guard. Summer suns and winter snows will come and go. Oft our memory will turn towards the grassy mound that presently will rise above the form we leave beneath the earth.

But life is growth and change, as in the great order of the universe. Life never ceases, it only varies in its moods and forms. We know death is but the doorway to a larger life. Up-ward lies the pathway of the deathless soul. Earth and its limitations are left behind, sense and time no longer thrall.

To nature then what nature loaned.

For cremation

*THE life-containing spirit having finally departed from its temporary earthly tenement, the body is now to be resolved into its original elements, for mother earth to use again in her own way.

The one who occupied it will never need it again. It has done its work. It has served its purpose. We are about to hasten and sweeten the process of disintegration by committing it to the purifying flames.

As fire and smoke ascend, so too does the deathless spirit. Earth and its limitations are left behind. Sense and time no longer thrall. To nature then what nature loaned. The body is dead, but the spirit still lives.

After interment

FAREWELL to thee thou raiment of mortality, so wondrously fashioned to serve the purposes of our earthly life, thy task is done. May we who still wear thy semblance learn to use our garment ever wisely and well, that we may return it undimmed by aught dishonouring to our God, our fellows, or ourselves.

All hail to the enfranchised soul that lately left this tenement. Let us, dear friends, rejoice in the knowledge that giveth strength, the knowledge that there are no dead.

The silver cord is loosened, the golden bowl is broken. The bond has been freed. Never again shall the flesh be the prison-house of the soul now released.

I always find it helpful to include in the service these highly appropriate verses written by my wife which she titled, "Some call him Death."

SOME call him Death whose hands efface,
With swift and certain skill,
The lines of pain that marked a face
Now mercifully still.
At the appointed hour comes he,
As envoy of the Lord;
With gentle touch he tenderly
Severs the silver cord.
Arise bright soul with living breath,
Vanished is mortal strife;
Greet then thy friend whom some call Death —
His other name is Life.

