

## **What We Can Learn from History Regarding Mediumship and Psychical Research**

**For almost fifty years my Home Circle has met weekly apart from Holidays and sickness etc. I rather imagine that there are not many Circles that have been sitting for so long!**

**My own physical mediumship began to develop over fifty years ago and some years later I was honored to be appointed the Archives officer and later the President of the now defunct 'Noah's Ark Society' for physical mediumship. As a direct result of my deep involvement and commitment to the Society, I eventually took the decision, as did the renowned medium Colin Fry, to demonstrate my mediumship at its seminar physical 'séances'. Prior to that I had never had any thoughts of working in a public sense, always being happy to keep my physical mediumship private - strictly within my own Home Circle.**

**However, and quite understandably, I have down the years been asked if I have ever considered inviting psychical researchers into our séance room so that my mediumship could be proved genuine in a scientific sense. My response has always been – and will always be - that we can learn such a great deal from history – from what has gone before.**

**Indeed, we would be somewhat foolish if we chose to ignore the past. What I have personally learnt over a period of almost sixty years of research is that many physical mediums of the past were persuaded to cooperate with the world of psychical research – to have their mediumship placed under the proverbial microscope. And the result? Nothing whatsoever was achieved. Indeed, so very often, the medium's concerned found themselves at the centre of negativity. Their mediumship was so very often reported to be dubious at best and invariably they were often accused of fraud, and they were to suffer considerable inhumane indignities as a result.**

**Often, mediums who initially met with success found themselves in a no-win situation with the research world demanding tighter controls etc. Nothing was gained but a great deal was lost.**

**Of course there were exceptions amongst some investigators such as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, Charles Richet, Gustave Geley, W.W. Baggally, Hereward Carrington, Frederick Myers, and several others who following their investigations were convinced of the authenticity of certain physical mediums after studying them under strictly controlled conditions, eliminating the possibility of fraud. But sadly, their positive reports largely fell upon deaf ears. One is bound to wonder if the scientific world today has any knowledge whatsoever of those scientific reports? I think that the answer is a resounding ‘no’.**

**Perhaps one of the most horrendous multiple investigations involved the physical medium known to the world as ‘Margery’ who, back in the 1920’s and 30’s, was generally regarded within the Spiritualist movement as the ‘Eighth Wonder of the World’ and also as the ‘Jewel in the Crown of Spiritualism’. However, the indignities that she underwent throughout her long and full cooperation with the psychical research world were truly appalling. Today she is widely labelled by the cynics and sceptics as the ‘Greatest Psychic Fraud in History’ and her séance room phenomena - which cannot possibly be explained away - are totally ignored. To mention them would absolutely destroy their argument.**

**Now – understandably I have on several occasions been asked why I will not allow researchers into my own séance room. The argument being that the scientific examination of my mediumship would, in effect, prove communication between the living and the so-called dead and therefore the reality of survival beyond death. However, whilst I totally understand why the question has been asked, I passionately believe that the people who would encourage this have absolutely no knowledge of the past history of the many physical mediums who agreed to have their mediumship examined by so-called researchers. Based entirely upon my long research into the subject - I have (no matter how disappointing this may be) absolutely no intension in proceeding in that direction. Mediumship – in my own opinion - cannot be subjected to cold unfeeling examination. We are dealing here with sensitive human beings and not unfeeling machines.**

However, during the early days of my own physical mediumship development, I was actually a member of a research organisation and back then, in my innocence, I felt that it was only right that I should report to them the phenomena that were manifesting in our séance room. As a direct result of that, they arranged for a researcher to attend one of my seances.

Understandably, as the date of his intended visit grew closer, I became nervous simply because I knew that he would be travelling a very long way to sit with my Circle, and the fact was (and still is) that I, and my Circle, have no control in respect of what may or may not manifest. Anyway, upon his arrival, he appeared to be very friendly and to an extent, as far as I was aware, the séance proved to be partly successful.

Following the séance, we had a long conversation with him during which he mentioned the fact that some years earlier he had, on one occasion, sat with the legendary Materialisation medium Alec Harris. He told us that while waiting for the bus to go to the sitting, along with a group from his church, he noticed an elderly gentleman who was holding a bouquet of flowers.

Apparently, he learnt that the gentleman's wife had passed away a few months earlier and the man was taking the flowers in the hope that she would materialise. He went on to tell us that the bus took them to the home of Alec Harris and in the room where the seance was to be held, there was a cabinet at one end in which Alec Harris sat and at the other end, facing the cabinet, were two rows of seats – one behind the other for the sitters. We were told that he had a seat in the front row and the elderly gentleman was seated immediately behind him in the second row.

A short time later, Alec Harris came into the room and took his seat within the cabinet, and the curtains were then closed so he was then out of sight. The researcher went on to tell us that the main light in the room was then turned off and a light was switched on which dimly illuminated the cabinet curtains, and then the séance began.

However, the researcher told us that the light was so dim, that the so-called materialised forms that came out of the cabinet could, in his opinion, have been the medium in a bath robe. He then began to think that it was all fraud, and he sat back and concluded that the visit had been a waste of his time.

**However – and these were his exact words which I have never forgotten: ‘Suddenly the cabinet curtains opened and I plainly saw an elderly lady come out shouting her husband’s name and the old gentleman with the flowers behind me pushed me out of the way and ran towards his wife’. Apparently they had embraced and hugged each other, and the researcher told us that watching this he understandably felt very emotional – in his precise words ‘it was amazing to see’.**

**For a short while they had continued to hug each other whilst they chatted away, but after a few moments, the researcher noticed that the materialised lady had begun to sink downwards towards the floor and her husband - still holding her - was going down with her imploring her not to go. She told him that she had to. A few moments later she disappeared and all that was left on the floor was a mound of ectoplasm which moments later shot back into the cabinet.**

**Well, as you can imagine, his account of what he witnessed has stayed firmly in my memory. In my opinion - which is based upon over half a century of research regarding physical mediums of the past – Alec Harris has to have been the most wonderful materialisation medium of all time.**

**However, many years after I heard that account, I was shocked (to say the very least) when I came across an article, written by that researcher, in which he gave an account of that sitting with Alec Harris that he had attended years earlier. In short, he labelled it fraudulent from start to finish. Surprisingly (or in my mind – not surprisingly) he failed to even mention the materialised elderly lady. Of course one may wonder why!!! Well – in my own opinion there can only be one explanation. Throughout the mediumistic career of Alec Harris, no fraud allegation had ever (as far as I am aware) been made. However, he, the Great Researcher, had seen through it all. Without wishing to appear unkind, I can honestly think of no other reason why his written account was in total contrast with what he had verbally and emotionally told me and my Circle members years earlier. Also, within the article, he mentioned in a few words the sitting that he had attended with me. Whilst he did not actually name me, he did name my Spiritual Guides and insinuated that the séance had probably been false.**

**Finally, and quite understandably, in recent years I have been asked several times why I will not allow infra-red or low-light cameras into my séance room in order to capture on film the reality of the phenomena which manifest within it. So, I shall end this article by explaining the reason why I will never allow that to happen. Of course, I fully appreciate the inevitable reaction of researchers etc. with what follows, but despite that I shall not in any way change my mind. Picture this: infrared camera's capture on film the reality of the physical phenomena which regularly occurs at my seances. Overnight this would surely become 'world news' and the outcome would be (beyond doubt) that the world's press/media would descend on my home. My family life would in all probability be destroyed, as too would my treasured Circle which has now been meeting weekly for almost fifty years. Of course, I have no doubt that in today's world some people would welcome such notoriety, but I AM NOT ONE OF THEM and that is a fact.**

**As I pointed out earlier, the only reason that I agreed – over thirty years ago - to occasionally hold Guest Circles was because at that time, I was the Archives Officer and later the President of the now long defunct 'Noah's Ark Society for Physical Mediumship'. Had the society not existed then in all probability I would have remained only within my private Home Circle. And so, I sincerely hope that this article will speak clearly for me in the years ahead, when I am no longer at this side of life, to respond to the inevitable critics of my mediumship.**