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RECORDS OF THE CANTERBURY MUSEUM

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Southern spirits: The case of the Psychical Research Society of Christchurch

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ABSTRACT

This research report analyses the eclectic yet incomplete archives of the Christchurch Psychical Research Society held at Canterbury Museum and the Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury. The Society, active in the early decades of the twentieth century, was part of a wider international spiritualist movement situated on the border of science and religion. This report presents a critical reading of the Society's scrapbook evidence collated by its leader, Edgar Lovell-Smith, between the 1920s and 1940s. Through these ephemeral fragments and in particular the ritual of the séance, the authors attempt to better understand what can be learnt about psychical research in Christchurch, a historical hub for reformist and alternative spiritualist movements, in the interwar period. The research methodology combined family history with a critical and descriptive reading of archive documents on a topic – Spiritualism – frequently overlooked by mainstream academic historians. Drawing from key secondary alternative religious literature we sought to uncover how investigations into the paranormal by the Society were simultaneously embraced and questioned by its members.

KEY WORDS

Spiritualism; New Zealand; Edgar Lovell-Smith; Christchurch Psychical Research Society; Post-World War One recovery; Museum and Library collections.

INTRODUCTION: OPENING THE SPIRITUALIST ARCHIVE

Housed in the Macmillan Brown Library is a scrapbook. It is a thick volume bound in dark cloth and faded brown velvet, with some gilding. Its marbled page edges testify to a post-Victorian culture of scrapbooks and collecting. Inscribed in the front cover, written in blue ink, is the following "The SCRAP-BOOK of the Psychic Research Society of Christchurch Inc., 27 Chancery Lane, Ch.". Inside is a collection of national and international newspaper articles from the 1930s and 1940s from publications such as *Aquarius*, a New Zealand psychic magazine, *The Harbinger of Light*, a Melbourne-based spiritual magazine and *The Truth*, a newspaper published in Sydney. Some stories were transcribed while others were clippings. Combined with these are letters and séance transcripts which fill 186 of a total 700 pages. In addition, the Macmillan Brown Library houses the catalogue of the Bycroft Psychic Library as public education was part of the Society's culture. A clipping from *The Greater World* (25 July 1936), noted that Gertrude Lovell-Smith started the library in the late 1920s 'for the benefit of local enquirers into psychic subjects' and had readers from all parts of New Zealand.¹ Her husband, Edgar Lovell-Smith, the main figure of the Psychic Research Society and eldest son of Jennie and William Lovell-Smith, supported the library project.² This local family was entrenched in

Christchurch reform movements, including universal women's enfranchisement, Fabian socialism and general philanthropy. Their story is chronicled in *Plain Living, High Thinking*, the family biography written by Margaret Lovell-Smith. In this family, men and women worked together to effect change. Their staunch Methodism instilled a practical worldview given to philanthropy and social reform. Edgar Lovell-Smith trained at the Canterbury College School of Art and at art and technical colleges in England where he met Gertrude. Returning to New Zealand he worked as a lithographic draughtsman at Smith and Antony Press, Christchurch; he was, in Margaret's words, 'the family historian and entertainer.' Having been a member of the Anglican Church, he left it in the mid-1930s for the Christian Spiritualist Church, 'his role virtually that of a pastor.' Spiritualism is understood as a belief in the ability to contact the spirits of the dead. This traditionally took the form of séances, rituals where a talented medium could contact the departed on request. Robert S Elwood describes Spiritualism as an 'esoteric religion' and a form of 'alterative spirituality'.³

The Society was active in the 1930s and 1940s, before disappearing at the end of the decade.⁴ The scrapbook contains little information as to the Society's fortunes after 1950, the year in which Lovell-Smith died. As rich as the scrapbook is, other sources offer insights into the darkened rooms of spiritualist thought. Canterbury Museum possesses samples of 'spirit writing' collected by the Society. These writings and drawings were scrawled in a trance by a medium, and were a challenge to decipher. More accessible were the messages from an Ouija board. Taken from the French and German words for 'yes', Ouija had begun its life as a parlour game in the 1890s, but by World War One, mediums were frequently using it to spell out messages from the other world.

Working with the fragmentary nature of archival-based historical research is not unusual and has been addressed by Bronwyn Dalley and Bronwyn Labrum in *Fragments: New Zealand Social and Cultural History*. The allure and challenge of re-reading and re-interpreting archival documents with historical distance has been documented by Michele Leggott in her chapter 'Opening the Archive' in an edited collection about New Zealand writers. We also take the cautionary words of historian Robert C Williams, and

understand that history is 'nonfiction, not fiction. It is imaginative, but not imagined.'⁵ We have engaged in some form of imagined reconstruction of the mind-set behind the Psychic Research Society of Christchurch, a movement that emerged during a time of religious disaffection, pseudoscience and wartime death. Interest in Spiritualism was sparked during the Victorian period when there was a jump in technology; travelling long distances was facilitated by steam, the telegraph enabled 'real time connections' with people from the other side of the world and photography invited the enquiring mind to explore new territory such as the spirit world. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century communities of active and enquiring readers – in urban or rural spaces and in the Old and New Worlds – tapped into international networks through print media, lecture tours, demonstrations and visual media.⁶ These factors combined to make Spiritualism and its analysis by psychical research a rising force in New Zealand between the 1920s and 1950s. The formation into societies was a vehicle for giving alternative spiritual movements 'institutional shape'.⁷ Never completely mainstream, Spiritualism did succeed in unsettling the academic and religious networks of New Zealand society, while the Spiritualists themselves were confident that a new age of enlightenment and spiritual contentment was about to dawn.⁸

HISTORY OF SPIRITUALISM

Contacting the dead has been a long, persistent undercurrent in Western culture, from Renaissance legends of black magic and necromancy to mystical visions of paradise. Biblical bans on the occult notwithstanding, it was during the Enlightenment that a belief previously considered superstition surfaced. Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish scientist and theological writer, in his book *Beyond Heaven and Hell* (1758) developed the idea that the souls of the dead could be contacted. He reconceived the Trinity as a multi-sphered spiritual residence for the departed. Swedenborg later immigrated to Britain in the 1780s and continued to develop and teach his ideas. By the nineteenth century, Swedenborgianism had taken root in Britain and America. Spiritualism, as a religious and social movement, began in America with the Fox sisters in New York State in the 1850s, and spread out to parlours across the Anglosphere.⁹ In colonial New Zealand the early proponents of Spiritualism also met in

'spirit circles' in the domestic sphere. As the movement matured in the early 1900s, these groups formalised into churches or societies, which, like the Psychic Research Society of Christchurch, met in hired rooms. Visiting lecturers 'was the lifeblood' of Spiritualism in New Zealand and advances in mass media and travel facilitated the spread of the religious movement.¹⁰

In a period where modern science and a craze for the occult co-existed, the Christchurch Society followed a broad pattern of attempting to merge the two in psychic research. Such research was first undertaken in 1882, with the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in Britain. Led by Henry Sidgwick, Frederic Myers and Edmund Gurney, the SPR aimed to measure psychic phenomena by scientific standards through conducting research into phenomena such as telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and psychokinesis.¹¹ Writing in 1980, CEM Hansel was adamant that 'during the past 50 years [psychic phenomena] have been demonstrated in the laboratory by means of rigorously controlled experiments.' These experiments, however, were in doubt, because they 'appear to have established the reality of phenomena which conflict with well-established principles.'¹² In other words, although the SPR was obviously serious about academic rigour, the supernatural nature of their research enquiries left audiences sceptical.

An American SPR was founded in 1885, and led to similar societies in Paris, Berlin and as far afield as Warsaw. These faculties, together with myriad local associations, helped to spread an empirical attitude toward the psychical. Nevertheless, the public ridicule of Spiritualism quickly tainted the name. In turn, Duke University academic JB Rhine, one of the main American exponents of the discipline, renamed it as *parapsychology* in 1930, a term coined by German parapsychologist Max Dessoir in 1889 (*parapsychologie*). This indicates some of the growing tension between Rhine and the academy, and after his retirement, Duke University ceased its Parapsychology Studies. The spillover of Spiritualism into the academy was surprising, yet natural. Much of its success can be attributed to wealthy Spiritualists, whose fortunes allowed them to be patrons of the movement. When professional scientists took an interest, it inevitably required more rigour. Yet, unsurprisingly, the small footholds it did establish in the academy were

short-lived. Renée Haynes in *The Society for Psychical Research, 1882–1982: A History* argued that the scientific apparatus, which initially lent credence, soon became a source of ridicule. Heather Wolfram in *The Stepchildren of Science* came to similar conclusions in her study on psychical research and parapsychology in Germany.¹³

The quest for alternative spirituality had numerous fellow travellers. Theosophy, a blend of Tibetan Buddhism and Hellenistic Hermeticism, was developed by the Russian adventuress Madame Blavatsky in the United States and had small but concentrated followings worldwide in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁴ Hermeticism, following a minor pursuit in Renaissance Europe, spawned a number of secret 'lodges', where late antiquity mysticism was imbibed. Robert Ellwood in *Islands of the Dawn*, states that the intellectual movement of Theosophy had an important presence in New Zealand. Theosophy developed a Wellington branch from 1894. The Hermetic Lodge of the Golden Dawn in Havelock North was also the centre of the School of Radiant Living, a local offshoot of Christian Science, whose first branch formed in Christchurch in the early 1900s.¹⁵ Preoccupations with mental health are reflected in the scrapbook with articles from *The Harbinger of Light* on psychic healing and in newspaper advertisements dedicated to ecclesiastical and spiritual matters.¹⁶

It would be a mistake to see these systems as dominant in their era; scientific rationalism and Christian orthodoxy both took a dim view of these beliefs, and constantly warned against them. After an initial period of novelty, it was precisely as a reaction that alternative spiritualities found a niche: in a disenchanted, materialist world, Spiritualism, Theosophy and other systems offered enchantment and transcendence for its followers. It is in this capacity that such a flowering offered a unique episode in the history of Western culture. Beginning in the *fin de siècle*, it intensified as world war, cultural crisis and economic depression took hold; Spiritualist historiography from the 1990s shows that alternative beliefs had powerful echoes, deep in the South Pacific.¹⁷

CHRISTCHURCH SPIRITUALISM

It is unknown exactly what events spurred the founding of the Psychic Research Society of Christchurch. As early as

1873 'spirit rapping' – a form of communication between the souls of the dead and the living whereby the medium tapped out messages by knocking on a hard surface – had attracted coverage in *The Press*.¹⁸ Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the *Sherlock Holmes* novels and a high-profile advocate of Spiritualism, visited Australia and New Zealand in 1920 and shared with his audiences the pain of 'still-fresh losses to the demons of battle' during World War One.¹⁹ This naturally boosted Spiritualism and possibly caught Lovell-Smith's attention. Doyle, recounting his visit to Australasia in *The Wanderings of a Spiritualist* (1921), believed he 'woke up the Cathedral City' where both the Catholic Bishop and the Anglican Dean were vocal in their criticism calling 'Spiritism, the abrogation of Reason' and 'a blasphemy nurtured in fraud'.²⁰ The Society was founded in 1940 in imitation of its counterpart in Wellington, in which many of its members were involved. Lovell-Smith became involved in Spiritualism, filling several notebooks with records of the séances and at their home, Bycroft, co-created a library with his wife Gertrude.

Outside the orbit of Edgar Lovell-Smith, the other members of the Christchurch Psychic Research Society appear something of an enigma. Drawing from the types of articles pasted onto the scrapbook pages we can deduce they were equally interested in investigating 'creative thought' and psychic phenomena.²¹ A series of names continually recur in the minutes: Violet Barker, the Sumner resident, who was a regular at the Chancery Lane séances; Mrs Lily Hope, the medium; Mrs Eddles the medium's assistant and photographer; Mr Edlin and his wife, who both created and posed in 'spirit photographs'; Mr O'Brien, who organised a visit to the nearby town of Timaru to spread the Spiritualist ideas; and another couple, Mrs Jessie and Mr Cecil Eyles, all bear testament to a circuit of the committed, the helpful, and possibly the fraudulent.²² Overall the Society members are a shadowy presence in the archive sources, arguably even less visible than the spirits they searched for.

Lovell-Smith, despite his vehement distaste for hierarchy, appeared to have taken a strong hand in the compilation of the Society's research. The scrapbook's focus is on spiritual phenomena and paranormal events. It is a text-based scrapbook rather than pictorial, designed to educate the readers rather than for display.²³ The scrapbook begins with 'The Archer Insurance Policy

Case', which involved meticulous tracing by the Society of a Linwood family whose dead son communicated to his family about an unclaimed life insurance policy hidden in their garden shed. Nine letters to insurance companies in New Zealand, Australia and Britain searched for the name, to no avail. A sketch by Lovell-Smith of the garden shed enriches the scrapbook pages (Fig 1).²⁴ From here, the contents of the scrapbook diversify, containing a lengthy series of New Zealand and British newspaper articles, going back to 1876, discussing spirit photography, local incidents and hoaxes.²⁵

On page 67 of the scrapbook the late Prime Minister of New Zealand, Richard Seddon, came back from the dead, 'he being dead, yet speaketh', offering enlightenment for all who leave their stubbornness to become 'spiritual children'. Distinctly less reassuring was Henry Slade, the self-styled 'Doctor', whose 'spirit rapping' turned out to be an ingenious mechanism in his table, offering insight into the mind of the Spiritualist, which on the one hand projected a desire to discover truth while on the other hand embarked in fraudulent empirical methods. Wartime death and memory emerge with a clipping about Ada Dean's photographs, which are believed to have captured the spirits (ectoplasm) of the fallen 'heroic boys' during the Armistice Day service at the Whitehall Cenotaph, London, on Armistice Day, 11 November 1923.²⁶ Dean's spirit photographs are housed in the British Library.

Within the Lovell-Smith family papers at Canterbury Museum is the Psychic Research Society's Ouija collection, with the letters and numbers written on a large sheet of paper – these are the disjointed fragments of 'spirit writing'. Only some of the messages are legible. Lovell-Smith saw his grandmother come back to offer old-time spiritual advice, with a quick greeting from national and international suffrage heroine, Kate Sheppard, who was connected to the family.²⁷

In the early twentieth century, Spiritualists took pains to show themselves as 'scientific', proving that the séance rested on empirical results.²⁸ As a result, the rituals inevitably incorporated safeguards to 'prove' that the medium was not falsifying apparitions. These grew increasingly elaborate as Spiritualism spread and as hoaxes were exposed. Wolfram outlines how spirit photography and witness reports were frequently

employed as tangible evidence of 'what had taken place' and that such proof was necessary to quell claims that those present were not fraudulent, 'hypnotised nor delusional'.²⁹ Mediums in the early twentieth century described their work as a 'science', yet complained that efforts to validate the apparitions empirically disturbed the spiritual atmosphere and made the materialisations feeble.³⁰ The Spiritualists also framed their work in explicitly Christian terms. Many séances began with the Lord's Prayer and signs of the cross, and Lovell-Smith's papers included a list of biblical references supposedly supporting communication with the dead, probably to counteract religious opposition. An anonymous note in the scrapbook says 'One should start with a prayer through Christ for protection and guidance...if it is his will'.³¹ This kind of Spiritualism operated on the border of science and religion, not entirely at ease with either, yet appropriating strains of both. Within these conditions, the ritual of the séance unfolded. The Chancery Lane séances of the Christchurch Psychic Research Society

were no exception.

One Friday night in 1937, at 8 pm, the spirits of a cultured nun and a Native American girl materialised for a rapt audience. The medium who facilitated these materialisations, Mrs Lily Hope, was, the *Psychic News* asserted, a woman of 'the highest integrity', unassuming and earnest in her sacred work.³² Norah Foster, one of the Society members, wrote the article, which was copied into the scrapbook and labelled as a 'spirit test'.³³ According to this article, the séance room was entirely dark, except for a red light. Mrs Hope was sewn into a chair in her 'cabinet'; curtains held up with safety pins hung across the northwest corner of the room. Black cloth covered the walls and ceiling. The especially dim light would not 'disturb' the notoriously shy spirits. Lengths of ribbon held Mrs Hope to her chair. With these guards against fraud set in place, Society members sat in a circle and recited 'two or three' verses of *Abide with Me* and the Lord's Prayer. From the darkness two greetings

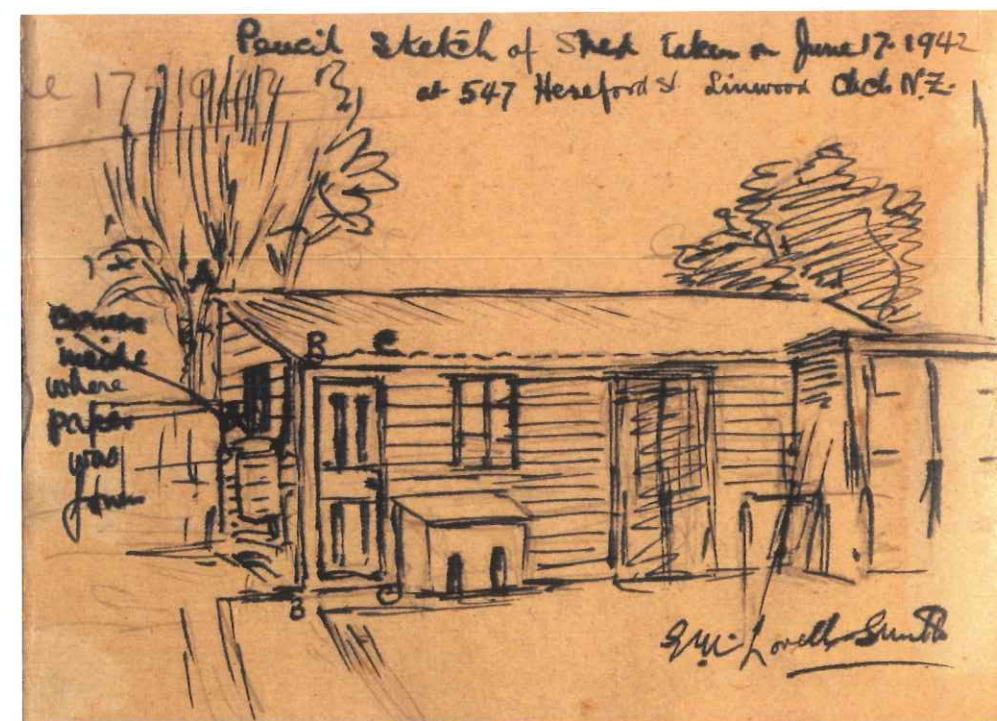


Fig 1: Pen and ink drawing: "The garden shed, Linwood" by E. M. Lovell-Smith, 17 June 1942. *Scrapbook of the Psychic Research Society of Christchurch New Zealand Inc.*, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, MB 705.

were heard, ostensibly from the spirits. The disembodied voices requested that the safety pins be undone, but asked the gathered to continue singing. Puzzled by this request, the assistant Mrs Eddles stalled before unpinning the curtains. She then felt the medium's hands, head and face. The medium was warm, but her hands were cold. The wrists were strapped in. The curtains were pinned again, and the assembled began singing *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*.³⁴

Subsequently, two personalities, Sister Monica and Sunrise, appeared. According to those there, Sister Monica materialised before the onlookers. Sunrise, a more reticent spirit, preferred merely to speak. In her account of the séance, Norah Foster, who had previously seen Sister Monica in Wellington, was enraptured by her appearance. She 'has a beautiful, cultured voice, sweet facial expression,' a photograph of a drawing (Fig 2) of

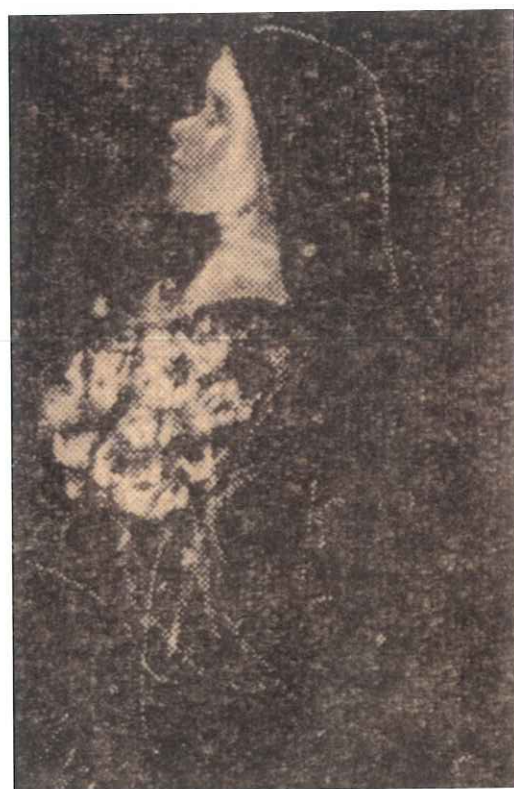


Fig 2: Photograph: "The materialisation of Sister Monica". *Scrapbook of the Psychic Research Society of Christchurch New Zealand Inc.*, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, MB 705.

the materialisation reveals a plump, youthful, slightly pouting face under the black veil. The nun was quite willing to show her feet, and, according to Foster, all the toes were intact; whereas the medium, Mrs Hope, had part of a toe amputated. At another point two flowers fell from the ceiling. Sunrise, the native American girl who frequently accompanied Sister Monica, was claimed to have sprinkled carnations as a way of marking her presence. What did the floral apparition symbolise? An answer may be found from a departed woman who appeared in the Wellington séance: 'Don't put flowers on my grave. I'm not there'.³⁵

Even deceased members of the Society could make an appearance. A nameless woman wrote to her sister on the slate and her husband was greeted by his late father. The content of these messages was quite typical: an undescribed 'bliss' awaited the dead. In the context of post-World War One recovery, where so many families had lost loved ones, such edification was comforting to the bereaved, with promises of meeting again, meanwhile keeping contact via the ritual of a medium in a séance room. After this conversation, the ribbons that bound the medium, Mrs Hope, were cut. It was found that Mrs. Hope's feet were crossed and strapped, still within the sateen confines. Formerly, they had been strapped straight, suggesting that a spirit had changed them without breaking the ties.³⁶

UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUALISM IN NEW ZEALAND

This recounting of events was not a credulous tale intended to win converts – or was it? Such incidents and many more, form the scrapbook and collection of spirit writings and drawings of the Christchurch Psychic Research Society. These collections represent a New Zealand body devoted to probing stories of the supernatural, in an effort to test the occult through scientific means. The significance of reading these combined archival sources reveals an approach to the supernatural unique to New Zealand. 'The New Zealand islands', wrote Elwood in his 1993 study of alternative spirituality, 'are islands of the dawn in more ways than one.' As well as being among the first islands to see the sun rise, 'they were also the last separate terrain to receive, subsequently, large-scale European settlement. Thus there is something dawn-like about life and culture in New Zealand. However old the cultures from which

its various waves of settlers derived, in that land humanity is barely past sunrise'.³⁷

New Zealand was also among the most secular parts of the English-speaking world.³⁸ This does not necessarily mean that religion was unimportant. John Stenhouse and Jane Thomson have both advocated for church as a focus for social activism and prestige. Secularisation refers not only to religious belief and practice, but shifts of morality and social outlooks from religious to secular frames of reference. In Stenhouse's study, religious practice was low, but churches offered both a forum for activist causes such as women's enfranchisement and an evangelical morality to fuel such causes. They offered social networks for newly arrived immigrants, dispensed charity and provided forums for activism. The most notable example is the granting of female suffrage, enabled through the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Through the gathered minutiae of the studies of individual congregations and parishes in the nineteenth and twentieth century, a clear picture emerges: small-scale networks of support and grassroots activism, which included limited numbers, but which animated society as a whole.³⁹ Rather than full secularisation, denominational fragmentation filled a secular vacuum. While working-class Spiritualism was a replacement for traditional religion, the middle-classes used it as a supplement to evangelical piety, integrating Spiritualist 'churches' into the denomination spectrum.⁴⁰ Following the Stenhouse argument, the older generation of Lovell-Smiths were devout Methodists who ploughed efforts into their church, with its cultural pursuits, temperance campaigns and feminism and exemplified an avant-garde. The offspring of this practical arrangement looked elsewhere in their search for transcendence, while appropriating aspects of their heritage. In this way, Christchurch was a hotbed of alternative ideologies, spiritualities as well as secular philosophies.

CONCLUSIONS

Working with incomplete collections is both alluring and challenging to the researcher but we believe it offered a springboard into experimental history writing. A critical and descriptive reading of the Society's archival fragments served as a connection between international movements and local expressions set against a backdrop of post-World War One recovery. Less religiously structured, New Zealand was more

open to experimentation, improvisation and blending of belief systems and both women and men were actively involved. Antipodean Christchurch was a pioneering site of esoteric and alternative religions. Yet mainstream historians portray New Zealand as among the most secular of English-speaking societies in the early twentieth century.⁴¹ Settled in an era of advancing secularism, and without an established church, it had lower rates of church attendance, possibly allowing a greater opportunity to indulge in alternative spiritualist practices. The 1949 letters to *The Press* pasted in the scrapbook exhibit a great deal of frustration with 'theology, orthodoxy and ritual', as a straitjacket which inhibited the things that religion ought to do – provide comfort to an uncertain world.⁴² The paradoxical effect was to set up a 'new religion', with theologies, orthodoxies and rituals to beguile the jaded. Spiritualism had the mystery, which the high-minded philanthropy of the Lovell-Smiths lacked. There was also a link between this quest for the mysterious and the activism of Edgar's forbears. Alternative beliefs often blended with emerging political ideologies, just as traditional orthodox churches leaned to conservative politics, the search for 'alternatives' found parallel expressions in politics and religion. The links between Fabian socialism and Theosophy in Britain provide a case in point, as well as the well-documented presence of Fabianism in Christchurch. At the same time, it led to an existential gap, which could be filled by Spiritualism, Theosophy or Rosicrucianism.⁴³ It is in these other forms of alternative spirituality that the modern heir of Spiritualism can be found. Spiritualism was just one of Edgar and Gertrude Lovell-Smith's shared interests, horse-drawn carriages was another and that story is connected to another part of the Canterbury Museum collection.

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END NOTES

¹ This article is an expansion of a digital exhibition "Southern Spirits" <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/southern-spirits/>. Objects examined included the Scrapbook of the Psychic Research Society of Christchurch New Zealand Inc., Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, MB 705. A list of the publications housed in the Bycroft library was pasted in the scrapbook. Works include Annie Besant, *Birth and Evolution of the Soul*; Emanuel Swedenborg, *God, Creation, Man and Heaven and Hell*; HP Blavatsky, *Key to Theosophy* and *Nightmare Tales*; Rev. DHD Wilkinson, *A Christian Searchlight on Spiritualism*; and Rev. G Vale Owen, *The Lowlands of Heaven, The Highlands of Heaven and Body, Soul, Spirit*. Publication dates are not noted.

² In 1921 Gertrude and Edgar built their home Bycroft at 15 Middleton Road, Upper Riccarton, next door to his parents Will and Jennie Lovell-Smith, see Margaret Lovell-Smith, *Plain Living: High Thinking: The Family Story of Jennie and Will Lovell-Smith* (Christchurch: Pedmore Press, 1994), 124, 131–132.

³ Robert S Ellwood, "Esoteric Religions," in *Religions of New Zealanders*, ed. Peter Donovan (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1996), 144–158; Robert S Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn: The Story of Alternative Spirituality in New Zealand* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993).

⁴ Edgar Lovell-Smith died in March 1950, which could account for the end of the Society, see Lovell-Smith, *Plain Living: High Thinking*, 124.

⁵ Bronwyn Dalley and Bronwyn Labrum, "Introduction" to *Fragments: New Zealand Social and Cultural History*, eds., Bronwyn Dalley and Bronwyn Labrum (Auckland University Press: Auckland, 2000), 1–13; Michele Leggott, "Opening the Archive: Robin Hyde, Eileen Duggan and the Persistence of Record," in *Opening the Book: New Essays on New Zealand Writing*, eds. Mark Williams and Michele Leggott (Auckland University Press: Auckland, 1995), 266–293; Robert S Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 51; Robert C Williams, *The Historians Toolbox: A student's guide to the theory and craft of history* (New York and London: M E Sharpe, 2012), 56.

⁶ James H Carrott and Brian David Johnson, *Vintage Tomorrows: A historian and a futurist journey through Steampunk into the future of technology* (Sebastopol, California: O'Reilly Media, 2013), ix–xi.

⁷ Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 21.

⁸ The Spiritualist Church of New Zealand Act of 22 September 1924 formally recognised the Spiritualist

denomination, its constitution and dealings with property, see <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/private/1924/0002/latest/DLM93588.html>. The Act gave regional Spiritualist groups a legal entity and equal standing with other Orthodox churches, Ellwood, 52–53.

⁹ To understand the influence of Maggie and Katy Fox see Logie Barrow, *Independent Spirits: Spiritualism and English Plebians, 1850–1910* (London: Routledge, 1986), 4; Bret E Carroll, *Spiritualism in Antebellum America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 21, 38, 121; Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 20.

¹⁰ Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 32.

¹¹ Benjamin B Wolman, *Handbook of Parapsychology* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1977), 11.

¹² CEM Hansel, *ESP and Parapsychology: A Critical Reevaluation* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1980), 3.

¹³ Wolman, *ESP and Parapsychology*, 7, 20; Alan Gauld, *The Founders of Psychical Research* (London: Routledge, 1968), 144; Richard S Broughton, *Parapsychology: The Controversial Science* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 364; Renée Haynes, *The Society for Psychical Research, 1882–1982: A History* (London and Sydney: MacDonald & Co, 1982), 172; Heather Wolfram, *The Stepchildren of Science: Psychical Research and Parapsychology in Germany, c 1870–1939* (San Francisco: Clio Medica, 2009).

¹⁴ Scrapbook, 65, 67.

¹⁵ Mary Simpson is credited for becoming the first ordained Christian Science practitioner in New Zealand. She held meetings in her home from the late 1890s then trained in Sydney in 1911 before returning to Christchurch. See Margaret Lovell Smith, "Simpson, Mary Elizabeth", the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 12-Feb, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s19/simpson-mary-elizabeth>. Edgar Lovell-Smith's sister, Connie, converted to Christian Science in the 1920s when she briefly moved to Wellington to teach, see Lovell-Smith, *Plain Living: High Thinking*, 111.

¹⁶ Scrapbook, 120. From the late nineteenth century Christian Science lectures were advertised in the Christchurch Star, 5 September 1891 and letters from the editor debated the healing powers of Christian Science thought. See "Correspondence to the Editor: Christian Science," *Star*, 11 December 1902, 2. A search of ecclesiastical notices in national New Zealand newspapers throughout the 1930s revealed a variety of listings such as Methodist and Baptist church sermons to alternative

spiritualities including the Baha'i Faith, the Christian Spiritualist Church and Christian Science in addition to notices about lectures and psychic demonstrations from visiting mediums like Neil Michie from Sydney see *Auckland Star*, 3 September 1938, 23. Teaching the bible in schools was debated in the *New Zealand Herald*, 14 August 1937, 26. In these alternative faith movements women were actively involved as members, mediums and ministers; this was not the case with orthodox churches, see Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 40. For a study about the feminisation of the church see Paula Nesbitt, *Feminization of the clergy in America: occupational and organizational perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁷ Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 9–14, 53; Barrow, *Independent Spirits*, 272; and Shaun Broadley, "Science, Spiritualism and Nineteenth Century New Zealand," *Australasian Victorian Studies Journal* 2 (1996): 115.

¹⁸ Spiritualist 'amusements' such as "Mr Tyerman on Spiritism," *The Press*, 30 November 1873, 3, and "Mr Stead as a Spiritualist" are advertised in *The New Zealand Herald*, 4 March 1893, 2. Correspondence debating the worth of Spiritualism can be found in *The Press*, 24 February, 3, and 6 March of that year, "Stead v Spiritualism," *The Press*, 3.

¹⁹ Ellwood writes that Doyle had 'altered the point of view of many hundreds of people who attended' his lectures in Australia and New Zealand, see Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 54–55; Ellwood, "Esoteric Religions", 147; Harold Sell in "Spiritualism in New Zealand" wrote that Doyle's visit 'aroused great interest' and gave Spiritualism in New Zealand 'stimulus and direction', see The Spiritualist Church of New Zealand, <http://www.spiritualists.org.nz/cms/pages/history/n.z-spiritualism.php>.

²⁰ See Project Gutenberg's *The Wanderings of a Spiritualist* by Arthur Conan Doyle, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/39718/39718-h/39718-h.htm>. Drawing from scrapbook evidence on page 92 is a newspaper clipping highlighting the burial of Conan Doyle.

²¹ Within the scrapbook are newspaper clippings such as "Personal Demonstrations: the power of creative thought," *Aquarius Journal*, 21 June 1939, 130; and a listing of 'psychic phenomena in the Bible,' includes 'spirit writing,' 'levitation,' 'trumpet speaking,' 'dreams' and 'spirit voices', 130.

²² Ellwood describes Lily Hope as a 'remarkable new materialization medium'; see Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 51.

²³ For insight into how to analyse scrapbooks we drew from Raechel Guest, *Victorian scrapbooks and the American*

middle class (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1996), 1–2.

²⁴ 'The Archer Insurance Policy Case,' Scrapbook, 10–12. Filed loosely within the scrapbook are letters from The National Mutual Life Association of Australia (dated 23 August 1944), Norwich Union Life Insurance Society (24 August 1944), Provident Life Insurance (30 August 1944) and The Prudential Assurance Company Limited (31 August 1944). The 'District Manager' signed all correspondence.

²⁵ The topic of spirit photography appeared frequently within the scrapbook pages, see 6, 44–48.

²⁶ One of the 'Armistice Day spirit photograph' articles is stamped with 'Bycroft Psychic Library, 15 Middleton Road, Upper Riccarton,' see scrapbook, 150, 166. For more on Ada Deans spirit photography go to the British Library "Help for researchers," <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/prbooks/namedcolnprintedmat/namedcolnprintedmatb/namedcolnprintedmatb.html>. See also A Gauld, *The Founders of Psychical Research*, 124–25.

²⁷ Lovell Smith Family Papers, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, ARC 1988.88, Box 5, Folder 26, Item 284, Automatic Writing; Folder 27, Item 294, Spiritualist Readings; Folder 28, Item 296, Spiritualist Notebook.

²⁸ Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 237.

²⁹ Wolfram, *The Stepchildren of Science*, 9.

³⁰ Owen, *The Darkened Room* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 69.

³¹ Scrapbook, 130.

³² Scrapbook, 94, 106. See also Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 51, who noted that by the late 1920s Spiritualism was growing rapidly in New Zealand, in this section of the book he was referring to the Waikato and Auckland in the North Island.

³³ Scrapbook, 110–118.

³⁴ Ibid, 90, 102, 126.

³⁵ Ibid, 18, 107–108, 110, 116.

³⁶ Ibid, 104; Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 53.

³⁷ Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 2.

³⁸ In 1891, church attendance nationwide was approximated at 32 per cent and Canterbury was a little higher at 32.5 per cent. This compares to 74 per cent in Victoria, Australia, in 1900 (almost certainly an inflated figure), and 45 per cent in New South Wales. The Lovell-Smiths were initially Methodist, of whom nearly 88 per cent practised in 1896, but Edgar was described by

Margaret Lovell-Smith as Church of England, which had a much lower attendance rate of about 27 per cent. See Hugh Jackson, "Churchgoing in Nineteenth Century New Zealand," *New Zealand Journal of History* 17 (1983): 43–59.

³⁹ John Stenhouse, "Religion and Society," in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed G Byrnes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 323–356. See also Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn*, 2; Keith Furniss, "Moray Place Congregational Church: A Social History, 1862–1966," in *Building God's Own Country: Historical Essays on Religions in New Zealand*, eds, John Stenhouse and Jane Thomson (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2004), 78–80; Laurie Guy, *Shaping Godzone: Public issues and church voices in New Zealand 1840–2000* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2011), 177.

⁴⁰ Broadley, 117; Gauld, 75.

⁴¹ Ellwood, 186; see also Philippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 91 and James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A history of New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000* (Auckland: The Penguin Press, 2001), 164–165.

⁴² Scrapbook, 61–62.

⁴³ Lovell-Smith, *Plain Living High Thinking*, 53. See also Jim McAloon, "Radical Christchurch," in *Southern Capital Christchurch: Towards a city biography, 1850–2000*, eds, John Cookson and Graeme Dunstall (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2000), 172, 194–197.

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