

# SNU TODAY

September 2018

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Where sold

## A JOURNEY THROUGH A JOURNEY

*Spiritualism & Ireland*

At the 2018 World Congress of Spiritualists Miriam Fitzgerald gave an inspiring keynote speech about her work for spirit in Ireland.

## MY WAY OF LIFE

SNU TODAY speaks to Roy Simpson, CSNU of Farnord Spiritualist Church about his contribution to the Dementia Friends cause.

## NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES

Near-death experiences are more than just compatible with Spiritualism, they are part and parcel of it. Who better to ask about the afterlife than those who have had a brief encounter with it?

## CHURCH FOCUS

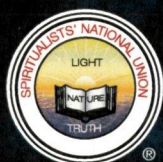
We talk with Preston Ethical Spiritualist Church and Rhyl Spiritualist Centre about how they keep their Churches thriving, keeping Spirit in Action for 2018.

## GRAZIE MR PRESIDENT!

Minister David Bruton recently visited Italy and 'Spiritus Italia'.

## WHAT IS GDPR?

Chief Administrative Officer Jane Barton talks you through what to expect with the new GDPR rules and how they may impact on your Church.



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*Your regular Union update*

News, reviews and comments from around the Union, keeping you informed of the what, where and how of your SNU – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

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# THE MYSTERIOUS MARIA HAYDEN

This year has seen the World Congress of Spiritualists come to the UK, where it was hosted by the Arthur Findlay College. It's a reminder of Spiritualism's international roots, after it was brought to our shores by Maria Hayden, herself of diverse heritage.

Sharon DeBartolo Carmack looks into her life, raising the question, would we have Spiritualism in the UK without her?

**M**aria B. Hayden was the pioneer who brought American Spiritualism to the U.K. in 1852-53. Through her séances in England Maria convinced many of the elite and upper classes that there is life after death. One such person was the already well-known Welsh social reformer and agnostic, Robert Owen. After he converted to Spiritualism in his eighties, he was instrumental in endorsing and promoting Spiritualism and Maria's mediumship in the British press.

Maria was never a public or trance speaker; she preferred to offer séances and private sittings. These private circles were the mainstay of the early Spiritualist movement, with mediums often enduring test after test from skeptics. Yet many skilled and

in-demand mediums like Maria have received little critical attention. My A1 thesis, "Spirit Rapping, Spiritoscope, and Psychometry: The Mediumship of Maria B. Hayden, M.D.", argued the importance of Maria's involvement in Spiritualism, demonstrating that her role as a Spiritualist pioneer is more significant than is generally acknowledged and deserves closer examination, so Maria does not slip any further between the cracks of our history.

Maria B. Hayden, née Trenholm, was born 16 November 1826 in Nova Scotia, Canada. Her paternal grandfather, Matthew Trenholm (1757-1828?), hailed from Welbury, Yorkshire, England, and had immigrated to Canada, probably in 1772. Maria married Massachusetts-native William R. Hayden on 27 October 1850 in Boston, and she became a U.S. citizen by virtue of her marriage.

Based on a memoir William wrote and serialized in *The Banner of Light* in 1857, the spirits chose Maria as the medium during a séance in the spring of 1851. This communication transpired through raps. When asked who at the table was the medium, the spirits rapped when Maria's name was called out. From there, Maria used a piece of cardboard printed with the letters of the alphabet, as well as numbers 1-0. The sitter pointed to each letter on the alphabet, then waited for a rap. No sound meant no, a rap meant yes.

The sitter or a designated scribe put the letters together on paper to form words and sentences. Often Maria's eyes were shielded from seeing the letters the sitter pointed to, so she was not influencing the message. Her reputation as a medium spread in her area. Encouraged by William Hayden's friend, George W. Stone, a popular English lecturer on electrobiology touring in America who found Maria's mediumship impressive, he offered to sponsor the couple's travel abroad. He felt sure his countrymen would be equally interested in her gifts. Thus the Haydens embarked for England in September 1852. While in England, reviews of her mediumship were mixed. Some people did all they could to trick and discredit her publicly in the press, but she also had a significant following.

Along with Robert Owen, a few of the respected members of society who publicly endorsed the accuracy of her mediumship were Dr. John Ashburner, Sir Charles E. Isham, publisher Robert Chambers, and Augustus and Sophia De Morgan. William and Maria concluded their time in England at the end of October 1853. Although her adversaries wanted to believe they had driven Maria back to America with their "venomous stings", the more likely reason they left was that Maria was pregnant again. Maria had already buried one child in America before embarking to England, and she was pregnant again when she had sailed to England a year prior. That pregnancy resulted in a miscarriage either en route or once she arrived. So it's not surprising that she would want to head home before she was too far along in her third pregnancy. She gave birth in Boston on America's Independence Day, 4 July 1854.

After Maria's return to America she continued to practise as a medium. She served as a test medium for Dr. Robert Hare, who invented an instrument known as the Spiritoscope to aid in communication.

Maria was unable to see the scope that contained the letters of the alphabet and numbers 1 through 10. She rested her hands on the table, and the spirit vibrations operated through her hands to trigger the device, indicating the letters, which spelled out words and sentences. Sometimes these communications happened so quickly it was difficult for the scribe to keep up. Hare lectured and wrote about Maria and other mediums he tested in *Experimental Investigation of the Spirit Manifestations, Demonstrating the Existence of Spirits and Their Communion with Mortals* (1855). As

“After Maria's return to America, she continued to practise as a medium. She served as a test medium for Dr. Robert Hare, who invented an instrument known as the Spiritoscope to aid in communication.”

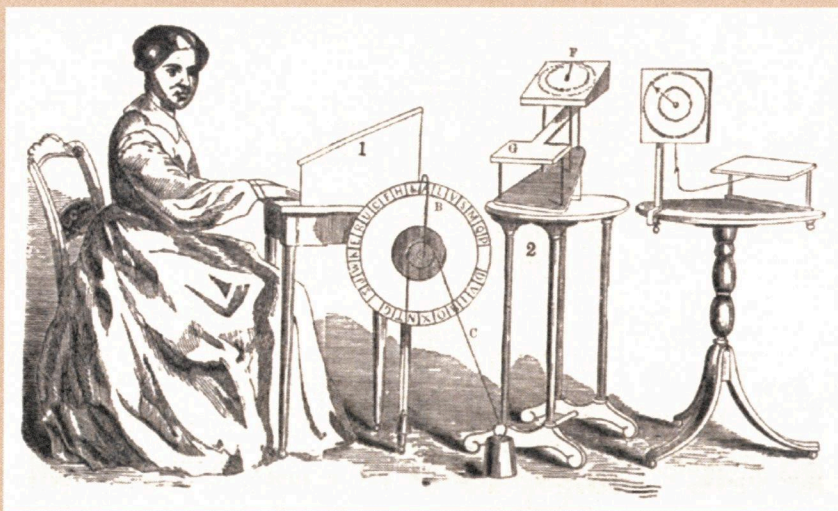
in England, Maria's reputation in America spread for the accuracy of her mediumship. Maria's abilities also leaned toward healing, and she began advertising her services as a "clairvoyant physician". She attended medical school in New York City and graduated with an M.D. degree at the age of 40 in 1867. Maria's accomplishments did not end there. In 1877 Maria studied with Joseph Rodes Buchanan, M.D., the father of psychometry, who had coined the term in 1842 from the Greek *psyche* (soul) and *metron* (measure).

Maria became an expert psychometrist, using it in her medical practice for diagnostic purposes. She gained a reputation for being a "psychometric genius". Dr. Robert A. Gunn wrote in *The Medical Tribune: A Monthly Magazine* that Maria was "one of the most remarkable women that has ever graced the profession of medicine. Her analysis of morbid conditions of the human body were simply extraordinary for their lucidity." Maria passed into spirit at age 57 on 11 February 1883 in Manhattan.

Unfortunately, we still do not have a photograph or accurate image of Maria. I contacted Paul J. Gaunt, the archivist for the SNU, as well as dozens of repositories and archives in the U.S. and the U.K. without success in locating a likeness. Newspapers of the day did not carry photographs or sketches, so I traced and contacted all of Maria's known living descendants. One descendant wrote, "We have many photos and stories about the Haydens, but it will take a week or so to dig everything out. We're happy to share with you." But as the weeks went by, no photographs were forthcoming.

Part of the problem was that, despite good intentions, this lady was in her eighties and wheelchair-bound, and her husband (the descendant), also in his eighties, had Parkinson's Disease. Sadly, this lady passed into spirit on 4 October 2017.

Clearly, Maria's contribution to Spiritualism far exceeds her time in England. I'm presently at work on a biography of Maria's life; there is still so much more to tell of this pioneer's story, and I am ever hopeful a photograph of her might surface.



Medium using a "spiritoscope". Robert Hare, *Experimental Investigation of the Spirit Manifestations* (New York: Partridge and Brittan, 1855), Plate I.

**2018 SNU Annual General Meeting**

This year the Union's AGM was held at the Cedar Court Hotel, Huddersfield, on Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd July and the event was hosted jointly by the North and South Yorkshire Districts. The President, Minister David Bruton, welcomed members and delegates to Conference on behalf of the Union, after which Minister June English, President of the South Yorkshire District, and Minister Alan Rawnsley, President of the North Yorkshire District, welcomed everyone on behalf of their district councils with their Yorkshire humour. Minister Norah Stringer gave a beautiful opening prayer, which united us in the power and presence of God and created a magnificent ambience of belonging to a collective community.

John Blackwood OSNU was invited once again to take the Chair and, as always, we were privileged to experience John's professional chairmanship with the usual inclusion of his excellent and warm sense of humour, which uplifted all in attendance and invigorated the proceedings. After a dinner all enjoyed the music and singing by an Abba Tribute band, which certainly stirred many to exhibit their dancing feet and rhythmic talents, and the entertainment continued with the music perfectly pitched by a DJ. Attendees were given an opportunity to meet members of the NEC and colleagues from different parts of the country at a drinks reception, which set the scene for an engaging and enthralling AGM. At the conclusion of the AGM appreciation was expressed by members to the North and South Yorkshire District Councils for their joint efforts in hosting a well-managed and excellent event. Their hard work in ensuring that the hosting of the Conference went smoothly provided a very gratifying experience.

The President, Minister David Bruton, presented an inspiring and motivating address, and we were truly honoured to experience an uplifting address from Lionel Owen, nephew of Sir Robert Owen. The intention had been to live stream the event so those unable to attend could join the AGM but, regrettably, due to technical issues, we were unable to do so. However, we would like to thank Franchie Gervasoni for the hard work, time and dedication invested into helping the Union to launch this as a possibility for future years.

On Sunday morning delegates joined together to share in what was a wonderful and moving service of worship, which united Spiritualists nationally and where all embraced the opportunity to become

as one. Following the service prizes and awards were presented by the President and Vice-President Minister June English. The meeting concluded with four interactive panel sessions where those present were invited to listen to the view of three or four panel speakers. There were four panels: Charting the Future of Our Religion; The Ministry of Spiritualism; Spiritualist Outreach, and Philosophy and a Message: can we have both? Many members seized the opportunity to participate and share their own views and ideas on the subject matter and the event was both productive and interesting.

**Elections**

**President of the Union:**

Minister David Bruton  
(first year of two-year term).

**Vice-President of the Union:**

Minister June English was elected to office unopposed (first year of two-year term).

**Council Member to NEC:**

Minister Lynda Bradley was elected to office unopposed.

**Individual Members Representative:**

Mark Bradley CSNU was declared elected unopposed.

**Elective Auditor:**

Tom Dynan CSNU was returned to office unopposed.

**Members of the Council:**

In addition to the four Officers of the Union, the members of the Council are as follows:-

- East London: Keith Parsons
- East Midlands: Minister Myrrha Hibbert
- Northern: Minister Lynda Bradley
- North Lancs & Cumbria: Helen Taylor OSNU
- Scottish & Irish: George Falconer DSNU
- South Western: Minister Marian Bishop
- North Yorkshire: Kathryn Crossley OSNU
- West London: Lorraine Gilbert OSNU
- West Midlands: Lorraine Todd
- Manchester: Helen Lomax
- Merseyside & North Wales: Jacky Ellis CSNU
- Southern: Vacant
- South Wales: Sandra Jarrold DSNU
- South Yorkshire: Jean Smart CSNU
- SNU International: Minister Alan Baker
- Spiritualists' Lyceum Union:  
Minister Jenny Peacock

**Individual Members National Councillor:**

Mark Bradley CSNU

**Appointments**

Financial Director: Julia Almond OSNU

(first year of one-year term).

At the AGM 2017 a motion was carried providing for the Vice-Presidents to be elected in alternate years, the President and one Vice-President in one year and the other Vice-President and Finance Director in alternate years. The election of the Finance Director was confirmed as being for one year at the 2018 AGM to bring the roles into alignment with the above for this electoral year and the two-year cycle for subsequent electoral years.

**Director of Education and Exponents:**

Minister Steven Upton

**Director of Communications:**

Alv Hirst

**Ordinary Member 1:**

Minister Suzanne Gibson-Foy

**Ordinary Member 2:** Pat Seymour OSNU

**Ordinary Member 3:** Vacancy

Curator and Librarian: Paul Gaunt

**Public Relations Officer:**

Minister Steven Upton

**Interfaith Ambassador:**

Minister David Hopkins

**Faith Advisor to HMPI and YOI:**

Minister Steven Upton

**Faith Advisor to HM Armed Forces:**

Minister Steven Upton

**SNU Almoner:**

Minister Marian Bishop

**National Safeguarding Co-ordinators:**

Minister Kim Moore-Cullen, Minister June English (Deputy).

**NEC Sub-Committees**

**Collegiate Committee Chairman:**

Jackie Wright (OSNU)

**Vice-Chairman:**

Minister David Bruton (Principal)

**Secretary:** Anne Kelly CSNU

**Members:** Julia Almond OSNU; Minister Simone Key (Senior Tutor), Sandie Baker CSNU (Course Organiser & Tutors Representative); Lorraine Todd; Tanya Smith (Manager, Arthur Findlay College); Seamus Davies (Manager, Barbanell Conference Centre)

**Complaints Committee Chairman:**

Minister Judith Seaman

**Vice-Chairman:**

Russell Fitzpatrick (Misconduct of Affairs Coordinator)

**Members:** Gillian Grimson (Complaints Coordinator); Mediation Coordinator - Vacant

**Education Committee:**

**Chairman:** Dr Chrissy Waters  
**Vice-Chairman:** Richard Cuthbert OSNU  
**Secretary:** Joan Dempsey  
**Members:** Jacky Ellis CSNU, Robert Dangerfield, Debbie Ridgway OSNU

**Exponents Committee Chairman:**

Minister Judith Seaman  
**Vice-Chairman:** Mark Bradley CSNU  
**Secretary:** Christine Thompson CSNU  
**Upgrading Documentation & Publications, Representative to Healing Forum:** Tim Smith  
**Members:** Linda Walker CSNU (Teaching Training Coordinator), Vanessa Follett CSNU (PAS & CSNU Coordinator), Kathryn Crossley OSNU (CAAS Coordinator), Jean Smart CSNU (HAS Coordinator), Trevor Barton CSNU (SNUi Boards & APL Coordinator), Andrej Djordjevtich DSNU (SNUi Healing Coordinator)

**Finance Committee Chairman:**

Julia Almond OSNU  
**Vice-Chairman:** Minister David Bruton  
**Secretary:** Jane Barton CSNU  
**Members:** Minister June English; Minister Alan Rawnsley; Graham Hewitt (Trust Property Coordinator); Ernest Gray; James Underwood CSNU, Lesley Gilbey (Finance Administrator)

**General Purposes Committee Chairman:**

Minister Tony Penketh  
**Vice-Chairman:** Minister Judith Seaman  
**Secretary:** Charles Coulston DSNU  
**Members:** Jane Barton CSNU; Derek Pipe, M.A., OBE; Minister Alan Rawnsley

**Ministers Administration Committee**

**Chairman:** Minister June English  
**Vice-Chairman:** Minister Brenda Newall  
**Secretary:** Minister Suzanne Gibson-Foy

**Members:** Minister Jenny Peacock

**Publicity & Promotions Committee**

**Chairman:** Joy Clark  
**Vice-Chairman:** Andrew Manship CSNU  
**Secretary:** TBA  
**Member:** Rachel Casson CSNU

**SNUi Committee:**

**Chairman:** Minister Arthur Plumpton  
**Vice-Chairman:** Cathy Tsoukalas CSNUi  
**Secretary:** Angela Foster CSNU  
**Council Representative:** Minister Alan Baker  
**Members:** Daniela Gervasoni CSNU  
 Karen Frances McCarthy  
 Charlie Seaman  
 Minister Steven Upton Ex Officio

**AGM Motions**

**Motion No. 1,** providing for the removal of Standing Committees and the appointment

of Designated Directors annually by the continuing or incoming Officers of the Union in consultation with the outgoing Officers. The motion was carried unanimously on a show of hands.

**Motion No. 2,** providing for the change in terminology for members of the Council: was carried unanimously on a show of hands.

**Appointment and Remuneration of Professional Auditors**

A motion re-appointing Messrs Price Bailey LLP as the Union's auditors for the coming year was carried.

**2019 SNU AGM**

The Union's 2019 Annual General Meeting is fixed for 20th and 21st July 2019 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow, with details to be announced in due course, and will be hosted by the Scottish & Irish District Council.

**2020 SNU AGM**

The Union's 2020 Annual General Meeting will be hosted by Norwich Spiritualist Church at the Norwich Holiday Inn, with dates to be confirmed in due course.

**Presentation of Awards**

The President and Vice-President June English presented the following awards at the AGM:-

**Award of Merit:**

Paul Gaunt (South Western DC)

**Award of Merit:**

Minister Simone Key (East London DC)

**Award of Merit:**

Minister Myrrha Hibbert (East Midlands DC)

**Award of Merit:** Lionel Owen (Overseas)

**Spiritualist of the Year:**

Minister Nora Shaw (Northern DC)

**Lifetime Achievement Award:**

Minister Dennis Jackson (Manchester DC)

Pauline Jackson (Manchester DC)

**Church of the Year Premier Award:**

Salford Religious Centre for Spiritualism (Manchester DC)

**Church of the Year Award of Excellence:**

Castleford Spiritualist Church (North Yorkshire DC)

**Church of the Year Award for Achievement:**

Telford Spiritualist Church (West Midlands DC)

**Community Service Award:** TBA

**J.B. McIndoe Prize:**

Sharon Carmack (Overseas)

**Dorothy Wilson Award:**

Cheryl Bach (Overseas)

**Tom Hibbs Prize:**

Yolanda Gordon (Scottish & Irish DC)

**Gladys Owen Award for Public Speaking:**

Sandra Hagger, OSNU (Southern DC), Minister Suzanne Gibson-Foy (West London DC)

**Gladys Owen Award for Administration:**

Theresa Rutledge (West Midlands DC)

**Eileen Ledger Award:** Valerie O'Sullivan

(North Lancs & Cumbria DC)

**Ted Annable Prize:**

Kathryn Stones (Southern DC)

**Education Shield:**

Minister Myrrha Hibbert (East Midlands DC)

**Bob Bassett Prize for Healing:**

David Gay OSNU (South DC)

**Olive Hayward Award:**

Juliet Van't Hul-Moll DSNU (Overseas)

**Arthur Conan Doyle Award for Platform Accreditation:** Not awarded this year

**Special Endeavour Prize:**

Not awarded this year

**The Vi Kipling Memorial Award:**

This award was dedicated in memory of Vi Kipling, who was a wonderful advocate of the power of education, and was dedicated in her memory. Not awarded this year.

**Other News**

**Ministers and Officiants of the SNU**

We congratulate Suzanne Gibson-Foy (West London DC) and Arthur Plumpton (Overseas) on their appointment as Ministers of the Union and Jackie Wright (Northern DC) on her appointment as an Officiant of the Union.

**International Faith Network (IFN)**

The IFN requested a Golden Rule from the Spiritualists' National Union regarding our religion, which is as follows: "We are all part of the universal creative force and therefore one family in God. Spiritualists try to understand the needs of others and help all people regardless of race, colour and creed." Brotherhood of Man, Spiritualists' Second Principle. The IFN are focusing on working with younger people.

**Spiritus Italia**

The President attended a conference organised by Spiritus Italia in Milan which saw one hundred people, most of whom were not Spiritualists, attend the evening's event, which was live-streamed through the internet and received considerable interest across the world.