

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

Paranormal Review

www.spr.ac.uk Issue 72 October 2014 £5.00

Special Report

PRESERVING THE
HISTORICAL
COLLECTIONS OF
PARAPSYCHOLOGY



SAVING THE PARANORMAL

ISSN 1369-0426

ParanormalReview

Publisher

The Society for Psychical Research
49 Marloes Road
London W8 6LA
020 7937 8984
www.spr.ac.uk

Editor

Leo Ruickbie

Production

David Ellis

Design

Leo Ruickbie

Subscriptions

Paranormal Review is sent free to members of the Society for Psychical Research. It is also available to non-members for a yearly subscription of £20.00, including post and packing in the UK. Contact secretary@spr.ac.uk

Back Issues

Members have access to previous editions of the *Psi Researcher* and *Paranormal Review* via the online library. Some back issues are also available for purchase at £5.00 per copy, including post and packing within the UK (outside the UK additional postage costs apply). Contact secretary@spr.ac.uk

Submissions

Features, articles, letters, experiences, notices, reports and reviews should be sent by email to Dr Leo Ruickbie at paranormalreview@spr.ac.uk. Material can also be posted to the editor at 49 Marloes Road, London W8 6LA. Please mark envelopes 'Paranormal Review'. Full submission guidelines can be found on the SPR website at www.spr.ac.uk under 'publications'.

Note

The editor reserves the right to edit or otherwise alter any material intended for publication. In the event of any dispute, the editor's word is final.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent those of the editor or the Society for Psychical Research.

Printed in Great Britain by

Newman Thomson, West Sussex

The Society for Psychical Research

The SPR was the first organisation established to examine allegedly paranormal phenomena using scientific principles. Our aim is to learn more about events and abilities commonly described as 'psychic' or 'paranormal' by supporting research, sharing information and encouraging debate. The SPR is a Registered Charity, established in 1882.

Membership

The SPR welcomes members of the general public, as well as students and researchers in all disciplines, to join. Membership does not imply acceptance of any particular opinion concerning the nature or reality of the phenomena examined, and the Society holds no corporate views. The minimum age for joining is 16, with reduced subscriptions for students, couples and senior citizens. To renew or apply for membership please visit the website at www.spr.ac.uk, telephone the Secretary, Peter Johnson, on 020 7937 8984, or email secretary@spr.ac.uk.

www.spr.ac.uk



Saving the Paranormal

Nothing is sacrosanct. We know it, but somehow do not believe it. That was why I chose this issue's cover image: to highlight the critical issues facing the subject that we study. Quite literally, these are burning issues.

The history of psychical research, or parapsychology, call it what you will, is under constant threat of loss and destruction. Books, journals, private papers, artefacts – everything – is at risk.

I had little idea of this until I attended the conference 'Preserving the Historical Collections of Parapsychology' in Utrecht earlier this year. As well as discovering the shocking reality, I also found people with enormous energy and determination – real passion – to recover and preserve this history. Some of their stories are printed here; a few more I have solicited from people involved with the same issues.



The SPR's Annual Report on fire.
Photograph by Leo Ruickbie.

Brandon Hodge has written a brilliant lead article, introducing us to both the thrill of the chase and the terrible truth that often awaits. But there are so many important contributions here from leading experts in their fields that it is impossible to pick highlights.

The efforts of these impassioned few should not make us feel that it is all in hand. It is not. That is why I went out on a moonlit night in early October and set light to the SPR's annual report – a copy, I hasten to add. Everyone at Utrecht had tales to tell of collections dispersed, binned or wilfully destroyed. Even our public institutions clear out this stuff, thinking it is outdated, unwanted and in the way.

I have delayed part two of my WWI centenary special to bring you these stories while they are still fresh and because I want to

pass on that enthusiasm and determination before it is too late. It has been estimated that almost a third of the historical publications on Spiritualism have already been lost forever. As you read this, someone somewhere is destroying something of historical importance. But this is a challenge that we can all take up.

It is possible and indeed quite likely – SPR members being who they are – that someone reading this magazine has a collection of importance to the history of psychical research. Read on and you will find out what to do with it and it is critical that you do do something with it. If you have any queries, then I can be contacted at paranormalreview@spr.ac.uk.

I wish to express my gratitude to Walter Meyer zu Erpen, who has given unstintingly of his time and expertise in preparing the Utrecht papers for publication. Special thanks are also due to Wim Kramer for allowing publication and providing additional assistance. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the contributors themselves and the great effort they have already put in to 'saving the paranormal'.

As a special bonus, I have arranged a 20 per cent discount for readers on the titles featured from publishers Ashgate. You will be able to read more about recent titles *Paranormal Cultures*, *Nineteenth Century Spiritualism and the Occult*, and *Co-Habiting with Ghosts*, as well as the anthology, *Parapsychology*, edited by Prof. Richard Wiseman and Dr Caroline Watt.

Finally, amidst all the alarms and excursions, I am delighted to report that I have received tremendously positive and supportive feedback after my first issue in July. This issue's cover might raise a few eyebrows, but take it as it is meant, a call to arms.

Dr Leo Ruickbie
Editor

editorial

contents

4. GHOSTS IN THE MACHINES
Brandon Hodge on the trail of the elusive 'Snitch Baby' and others.
8. WHY EVEN BOTHER?
Walter Meyer zu Erpen discusses the problems of preservation.
10. PSYCHICAL ARCHIVES
Melvyn Willin introduces the SPR Archives.
12. YOURS, ANOMALOUSLY
Callum Cooper and David Saunders on the CSAPP Archive.
14. PSYPIONEER
Leslie Price on 10 years of *Psypioneer*.
15. PRINCE OF THE PARANORMAL
Gerd H. Hövelmann opens his private collection.
18. PATROLLING THE BORDERS
Eberhard Bauer on the work of Germany's IGPP.
20. THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE
Andreas Fischer on art and the paranormal.
22. ASHGATE
From *Paranormal Cultures* to *Co-Habiting with Ghosts*.
24. GOING DUTCH
Wim Kramer and Anna Rademakers on the Dutch situation.
26. SECRET KNOWLEDGE
Marty Bax and Andréa Kroon on esoteric archives and the OVN.
28. PARANORMAL PARIS
Leo Ruickbie gets inside the Institut Métapsychique International.
29. ARCHIVES OF THE INSTITUT MÉTAPSYCHIQUE INTERNATIONAL
Renaud Evrard details the archival holdings of the IMI.
30. ESOTERIC ZURICH
René Schurte on Zurich's hidden archival treasures.
31. GET WISE
John Reed on the World Institute of Scientific Exploration.
32. 'PSYCHIC POSSIBILITIES'
Shelley Sweeney introduces the Hamilton Collection.
33. CONFESSIONS OF A BOOTLEG PRESERVATIONIST
Marc Demarest on the work of IAPSOP.
34. PSICOLOGIA PARANORMAL
Preservation in Argentina with Alejandro Parra.
36. SAVING THE PARANORMAL
Walter Meyen zu Erpen, Leo Ruickbie and Shelley Sweeney review 'Preserving the Historical Collections of Parapsychology'.
38. CONFERENCE REPORT
The 38th Annual International SPR Conference in York.
40. DIARY

