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Stephen E. Braude

ON LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND FELIX

Physical Mediumship Today

FULL REPORT ON STEPHEN BRAUDE'S LECTURE

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ALEJANDRO PARRA MEETS 'HANS BENDER'

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**Fall
of the
House
of Felix?**

PETER MULACZ INVESTIGATES
THE FELIX EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

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There are few cases today of the sort of physical mediumship that was once all the rage and general controversy of psychical research. Fewer still have been subjected to any sort of attempted scientific investigation. Foremost, perhaps even alone, among these is the case of Kai Mügge, the mediumistic star of the Felix Experimental Group (FEG) in Germany. (To underscore the theme, this month's cover is a photograph I took during my recent visit to the SPR Archives of alleged ectoplasm produced by Helen Duncan in 1939.)

Two lengthy reports on the FEG were published in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration* last year by Prof. Stephen Braude and Dr Michael Nahm, and Prof. Braude gave a talk on his research to the SPR back in October 2014 on the occasion of his being awarded the Myers Memorial Medal. For this issue Prof. Braude gave an interview, discussing his investigation in particular, and Marian Barton reports on his October lecture.

To supplement this viewpoint, I am delighted to be able to publish Dr Alejandro Parra's personal experience of an FEG séance, together with a comment by Michael Nahm covering the reaction towards his report and his assessment of the case. Prof. Peter Mulacz instigated the Parapsychological Association's Gilbert Roller funded investigation into the FEG, initially working alongside Braude until his sceptical stance made him *persona non grata* with the group. Here, for the first time, he gives us an in-depth account of his research, focusing on those areas that led him to his final, damning conclusion.

It is a rare chance to bring so many of the principal researchers in a case together and is something of a scoop for the *Paranormal Review*. Taken together, these different viewpoints provide a unique insight into the FEG and the development, not only of the alleged phenomena, but also of the

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investigations into it. Readers wishing to explore the controversy further may be interested in the article and photographs posted by Hermann Haushahn, recently taken down but still preserved at <http://web.archive.org/web/20141209133740/http://last-exit-felixcircle.blogspot.de>. The FEG's own website is at <http://felixcircle.blogspot.de/>.

To balance the increasing scepticism of these researchers, I have also included two articles that provide more positive assessments of different aspects of mediumship, one objectively, the other subjectively. Chris Connelly details his experiments with Spiritualist trance mediums and comes up with some interesting results; and Lawrence Pett writes of his personal experiences with medium Stewart Alexander.

Connelly originally presented his findings at last year's SPR conference and, ahead of this year's SPR conference in July, I am pleased to be able to publish another article based on a paper presented at the 2014 conference: Dr Sean O'Donnell on anti-memory. He first broached the subject in the *Paranormal Review* ten years ago and it is still just as challenging now as it was then.

Callum Cooper reports on the SPR Study Day on reincarnation in the West, giving a useful précis of current thinking on the topic. As usual, Brandon Hodge wraps up the issue with a enthralling tale of the collector's 'game of firsts'. I only wish that I had more room to print all of the wonderful illustrations that he sends me.

This issue is the fourth that I have published as editor and so marks a full year of the *Paranormal Review*. I remember the panic I once felt at the sight of those first empty pages; only to be replaced now with a growing waiting list of people wanting to be published in these pages. As I turn 'one', I am sure that you will also wish to join me in congratulating Prof. Braude as he turns seventy this month.

We are far from seeing the end of the FEG. Prof. Braude is already planning to continue his investigation towards the end of this year. But as will be seen from the articles published here, there are now serious reservations concerning the genuineness of the phenomena reported. Nevertheless, this is the most important case of our time. It will be interesting to see how this one plays out. Ψ

Dr Leo Ruickbie
Editor

editorial