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The Mediumship of Leslie Flint

'I need no trumpets or other paraphernalia. The voices of the dead speak directly to their friends or relatives and are located in space a little above my head and slightly to one side of me. They are objective voices which my sitters can record'. Leslie Flint. (1)

A full and very readable account of Leslie Flint's life and mediumship is to be found in his autobiography, *Voices in the Dark*. Writing in 1971, Leslie begins by advising the readers: 'In spite of a childhood which would give any modern child nightmares, or perhaps because of it, I have reached the age of fifty-nine without falling prey to neurosis, psychosis or even the screaming meemies. I am a happy man'.(2)

When Leslie's unmarried mother realized that she was pregnant, she left the home shared with her widowed mother in St Albans, and gave birth to Leslie in a Salvation Army home in Hackney, in 1911. On returning home, she married Leslie's father. However, the marriage was unsuccessful; Leslie's mother enjoyed the 'bright lights', while his father 'drank most of his wages and put the rest on horses which never seemed to win'. When war broke out in 1914, Leslie's father was one of the first to enlist, 'simply to get away from the domestic hell he lived in'. From this time onwards, his mother would go out each evening and deposit the young Leslie with the wife of the local cinema manager; therefore, each evening, he would spend his time watching whatever film was being shown. This situation came to a sudden end when Leslie's mother eloped with one of her many admirers and Leslie reports that she 'disappeared from my life'. He was then brought up by his grandmother who could not read or write, and took in washing to feed the extra mouth that she had taken in.(3)

Leslie relates his childhood ponderings regarding God and the afterlife, and records his bewilderment when hearing of a boy who attended three Sunday Schools. On realizing this provided the boy with three Christmas treats, 'a magic lantern show followed by a glorious feast of jam sandwiches, ice buns and cakes,

with lemonade to drink', Leslie promptly did the same and notes: 'I felt vaguely sinful, but quite determined to repeat the maneuver the following year'.(4)

It was during this period when Leslie had the first realization of his psychic abilities. He saw a soldier who then 'vanished', and on being later shown a photograph of his uncle who had been killed, he told his aunt and grandmother this was the same person whom he had seen. But the response for saying this, as Leslie recalls, was 'I got a good clout from Gran'.(5) After a similar experience, he, somewhat wisely, said nothing about the people that he saw and invariably disappeared. Shortly after reaching thirteen, he left school and worked as a gardener in the local cemetery.

Leslie recalls that it was a conversation in the cemetery potting shed between his atheistic, Darwinian boss, and a man who had become 'saved' through the Salvation Army, that aroused interest in the purpose of life. Leslie sided with the latter and told him of seeing his dead uncle, but his boss warned him that such talk would cause him to end up in the lunatic asylum. Time went on although this exchange remained in Leslie's mind and his work in the cemetery prompted him to think that death might indeed be the end of personal existence. Becoming increasingly anxious about the question, Leslie began to enquire at different churches but was left unsatisfied; he then saw a notice about a meeting of the local Theosophical Society and decided to attend. Unfortunately on doing so, and listening to the guest speaker, Leslie says that 'most of his discourse passed right over my devoted head'. Nonetheless, the speaker mentioned the subject of life after death, but warned the audience to avoid Spiritualism and the activity of communicating with the dead. Leslie was fascinated by such an idea: 'Obviously my next step was to find these Spiritualists'. Leslie kept asking people about how he could find Spiritualists, but due to the negative response, he came to the conclusion that he was trying to infiltrate 'some sinister secret society'.(6)

It was only when his boss was in the midst of another tirade against the concept of survival, that Leslie discovered that the local Spiritualists met at the local Friends' Meeting Place. Leslie went along and Mrs. Johnson, the medium, referred to a Mr. Lewis; before his death, he had been Leslie's art teacher and someone who had become a father-figure to him. The medium described him accurately, and went on to refer to Leslie's guide. In view of what he was being told, Leslie began to become confused: 'He was a Guide, said Mrs. Johnson, and he was not really an Arab, he was someone dressed as an Arab. This seemed to me to get more involved by the minute'.(7)

The experience baffled Leslie and he therefore continued to attend the meetings to investigate the matter further. In doing so, he often became angry at the blatant 'fishing' by some mediums, and the gullibility of those present. Those who claimed the 'messages unclaimed by others', whom Leslie called the 'Body Snatchers', at least provided some amusement for him. During these meetings,

he nevertheless received messages, including a number from 'the young Arab' and the call to develop his own mediumship.(8) One of those who was present at the meetings invited Leslie to her home circle and he agreed to attend. This was followed by the receipt of a letter from a woman in Munich who said that someone calling himself Rudolf Valentino had made himself known in her circle. He had asked that a letter be sent to Leslie, supplying his address, saying that he must develop his mediumship; the communicator added that he had been trying to communicate this request through various mediums whom Leslie had seen, but without success. Leslie therefore wondered if Valentino could possibly be 'the Arab who was not really an Arab': Leslie knew of the actor through his cinema attendance and that Valentino had appeared in different films as an Arab. Leslie replied to the writer and asked whether the communicator could make himself known in a convincing way.

In the meantime, Leslie began to attend the home circle to which he had been invited. This consisted of table-tipping, and one of the messages received was from someone calling himself Valentino, and it, 'was exactly the same message contained in the letter from Munich'.(9) The circle members were delighted with what had occurred and asked Leslie to return. Leslie left promising to do so, although doubts began to appear but he received another letter from Munich with another message from Valentino saying that he wanted Leslie to persevere. It was the distress of a widow that he later saw at a funeral in the cemetery that prompted Leslie to return to the circle. He did so and it was highly successful with Leslie becoming entranced and several communicators speaking through him to some of those present.

The circle members thanked Leslie for making this possible and told him that one of those who spoke was Valentino, who once again said that Leslie must continue with his development. Unfortunately, despite this momentous advance, Mrs. Cook, the medium who organized the circle, claimed to have an Egyptian high priestess as a guide, called Shu-shu, and at a subsequent circle meeting, Leslie's downfall occurred. Leslie's account was that: 'Shu-shu said she would demonstrate through her medium one of the rituals she used to perform when she was a high priestess in the temple of Isis...Mrs. Cook was...broad in the beam and her bosoms were of Earth Mother proportions...She gyrated her hips and weaved her arms, the while chanting what sounded gibberish to me but was acclaimed enthusiastically by the others as ancient Egyptian. The bounteous bosoms flopped alarmingly as the dance grew more energetic...the arms kept weaving like the tentacles of a busy octopus. I wanted to look away...but try as I might my eyes were glued to the spectacle'. At this point Leslie could not stop himself from laughing, 'until the tears streamed down my face'. Not surprisingly, when the meeting ended, Mrs. Cook suggested that Leslie did not return. Leslie departed, having made up his mind to 'have nothing more to do with Spiritualism'.(10)

After having given up his job in the cemetery, Leslie secured employment at the local cinema. Unfortunately, this came to a premature end when he managed to extinguish its electricity supply, and he consequently became unemployed. On being offered work as a barman in Barkingside, he duly accepted the offer and also occupied himself with dancing, a pastime that he had taken up while in St Albans. However, his mind returned to the messages from Valentino and after much thought, he decided to return to St Albans to try and develop his mediumship; he did so and took a job in a tailor's shop. In the case of his mediumship, no progress was made until he met Edith Mordin, a member of the local Spiritualist church, who invited him to her home circle. Leslie began attending the circle, and many weeks passed with no obvious development in his mediumship. This was until one night when he fell into trance and a number of communicators spoke through him, including Edith's late husband. Further development occurred with him becoming clairvoyant when he could describe the next-world visitors. By this time, Leslie was not only being kept busy with his mediumship, but also with his dancing and developing a friendship with Edith. At this point, Leslie recalls, 'my development as a medium was entering its last and most important phase'.⁽¹¹⁾ He had already noticed that he could hear voices near him, albeit only a few words; when this happened during a film that he was watching at the cinema, he realized this was not his imagination as, 'other members of the audience could also hear them because I was constantly being told to shut up or thumped angrily on the back by those sitting behind me... This happened so often that I had to give up going to the cinema altogether'.⁽¹²⁾

After moving into Edith's home as a lodger, Leslie had a quieter and happier environment in which to develop his mediumship and the voices became clearer; furthermore, much to Leslie's delight, becoming entranced was no longer necessary. Torn between his desire to become a professional dancer or to continue the development of his mediumship, he chose the latter. He soon discovered that he had made the correct decision as it was not long before Valentino was making himself known at the circle; his voice being audible to all those who were present. At this time, Edith decided that Leslie should train himself for public work. His first public demonstration at a local Spiritualist church, while in trance, was a success. Edith and Leslie then decided that his ability for independent direct voice mediumship should be made available for others and a church should be opened where this would be possible. After Edith and Leslie saved all the money that they could collect together, the day came when they could advertise services at their Watford Spiritualist Mission: the church was in fact an unfurnished room over a shop with a few dozen chairs. For his own living costs, Leslie began to give sittings in Edith's house, but aware there were people who could not afford the one guinea fee, he began an open circle one evening a week at the Mission. Many of these circles produced startling evidence; one being when a local woman, who had been murdered, communicated and gave a considerable amount of information about herself and the circumstances of her death. The circle members scanned the news reports in

the local newspapers and information that she had given was subsequently confirmed as being correct.

Noah Zerdin, one of the founders of the Link Association of Home Circles, attended one of Leslie's circle meetings and warned him of the danger of allowing simply anyone to attend these. He supplied further information about the dangers and problems, and it was agreed that Leslie sit in Noah's home circle.

Of his meeting with Noah, Leslie recalls: 'I had been moved by his burning sincerity and the compassion which urged him to share his own conviction with as many people as possible'.⁽¹³⁾ Leslie continued his work in the Mission, and while sitting with Noah's circle, the quality of the voice phenomenon improved. By this time, Mickey was Leslie's guide and worked with the developing medium to facilitate the voices. In view of Leslie's continuing development, Noah Zerdin and the Committee of the Link decided to hold a large demonstration in London on 16 May 1935, at Bloomsbury's Victoria Hall, with Leslie as the medium. Leslie recalls his deep fears about what faced him, although the voices of communicators were heard despite his considerable apprehension. However, it was found that the light was causing difficulties and after Leslie was shielded from these, the voices improved. Noah suggested that Leslie use a cabinet at demonstrations in future, with a microphone on the outside.

The next significant event in Leslie's life was deciding to move to Hendon, this being made possible by renting the property from one of his sitters. And so, Leslie, Edith, Owen (Edith's son) and Rags, the family mongrel, moved to Hendon and another phase in Leslie's life was about to begin. At the new location, Leslie's mediumistic work was now undoubtedly a full-time occupation. He continued to work with the Link and give demonstrations in some of the largest halls in London to which coaches full of people would come: 'The voices came and addressed friends and relatives in the audience to give their proof of continuing existence and many thousands were given conviction and their lives changed for the better'.⁽¹⁴⁾ Some examples of the evidence given in Leslie's public demonstrations are detailed by H. Porten.⁽¹⁵⁾

In addition to this activity, hundreds of letters were being sent from all over the world to Leslie about his mediumship. At this time it was also attracting attention from those interested in testing the phenomena. One of these was Dr Louis Young who had been a frequent sitter together with his wife. He had tested, and exposed, many mediums in America and was anxious to prove the genuineness of Leslie's mediumship. Leslie remarks: 'The tests he conducted with me made fraud impossible'.⁽¹⁶⁾ One of these was filling Leslie's mouth with coloured water for the duration of the séance while the voices manifested themselves and spoke to the sitters.

In addition to the independent direct voice phenomenon, Leslie's mediumship was able to facilitate materializations who participated in the events of the séance. In a dim red light: 'These materialisations were quite firm and solid and they could be felt as well as seen. They would move round the circle and sometimes they would speak to the members'.(17) Despite this success, it was discovered that materializations diminished Leslie's independent direct voice mediumship and it was decided to concentrate on the latter. Although his mediumship was clearly developing, he admits that it was not always successful; there would be occasions when sitters would sit in the dark for an hour or so, and nothing would occur. One of the many examples of Leslie's successes was when Shaw Desmond, an Irish novelist, attended a séance. Shaw was accompanied by a woman, although Leslie did not know the names of either sitter. Shaw's son spoke to his father at length, and Valentino spoke with the woman sitter and had clearly known her at one time. It later transpired that she had indeed known him: during the séance she had asked where they had last met and she later told Leslie that the communicator's reply was quite correct.

Furthermore, she advised Leslie that Valentino was passionately interested in psychic matters and used to spend much time discussing the subject. Leslie was also tested by The Confraternity; he refers to these people as 'a group of brave clergyman', i.e. they accepted the possibility of communication through mediumship.(18) Leslie's sitters also included those from the royal household. A sitting was booked by a 'Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Smith', and good evidence was supplied, e.g. one of the women spoke with her late husband. After this, another communicator spoke and it transpired from this that the two sitters were attached to the royal household. By virtue of their visit, Leslie gave a sitting to John James, who was steward to Princess Louise at Kensington Palace. James was so impressed with the evidence, that he arranged regular sittings with Leslie to be held every month. James then received various messages from different communicators that were duly passed on to those members of the royal family for whom they were intended (Leslie comments that he waited until all those concerned had died before giving this information.(19)) It was not long before Leslie was invited to Kensington Palace to speak with the Princess. On arriving at the Palace, they had a lengthy and pleasant conversation about survival and the afterlife.

Shortly after this time, various countries were becoming caught up in the Second World War and Leslie noted that he began to have problems with his mediumship, and he was advised the reason was because 'the atmosphere surrounding the earth was so filled with fear'.(20) As other mediums during this bleak time, Leslie worked to provide assurance of survival to those who had lost their loved ones in the fighting. As Leslie heard more and more communicators express their bewilderment and distress at suddenly being thrust into the next world, and seeing the grief of those who mourned, this caused him to reflect. The result was: 'I made up my mind that when the time came to stand up and be counted I would be a conscientious objector'.(21)

Leslie continued to give sittings, but eventually the time came when he had to explain his refusal to fight. Standing before the panel, Leslie explained that he was a Spiritualist to which one of the panel, whom Leslie described as being like a 'petulant walrus', retorted, 'This fellow's a crank of some kind'.(22) After much intense questioning, the President asked Leslie to provide a brief account of his beliefs, which he duly did. While Leslie affirmed his refusal to kill, he stated that he was fully aware that the war effort against Nazism was a struggle against evil, and he would gladly assist his country - but he would not kill. It was agreed that Leslie would be called into a non-combatant role in due course. It was not long afterwards that Leslie was called up and went to Ifracombe to undergo training. On his first leave, he returned home for a sitting arranged by Edith. During this, an air raid began and many people were killed nearby. Leslie recalls: 'Mickey at once returned to speak to us...He went on to say that hundreds of spirit people were already at the scene of the disaster to help the victims over the border between this life and the next....That evening, he talked to us very seriously and as he talked his treble boy's voice changed its timbre and became more adult, more cultured, more resonant'.(23) After the séance, Leslie proposed to Edith and two days later they were married.

On returning to barracks, Leslie's presence caused upset as one of the other non-combatants, a Christian, refused to sleep in the same hut 'as a necromancer'.(24) However, not all of Leslie's colleagues adopted this stance. It was reported how he held circles for fifty of his army colleagues on a regular basis although, 'they have to take it in turns to attend séances because there is not enough room in the hut for them all'.(25) On one occasion when Leslie's colleagues asked him for a demonstration of his mediumship, he did this, and a sister of one of the men began to communicate; however, this was abruptly ended by a sergeant barging in whereupon the ectoplasm rushed back, causing Leslie considerable discomfort. He then recalled Noah Zerdin's warning years before and decided never to hold a séance in such circumstances again. After moving to a new camp, Leslie felt guilty about his non-combatant role, and volunteered for bomb disposal duties and was moved to Cardiff. When local Spiritualists discovered that he was nearby, they asked him to give sittings and he says that: 'it was a joy to experience again the satisfaction of giving help and reassurance to those in need of it'.(26) After a while, the bomb disposal unit was disbanded and Leslie returned to London to undertake different work. He was therefore able to resume regular séances both at home and elsewhere. In these, excellent evidence was forthcoming, some of which related to parents hearing from their children who had been killed while fighting in the war. The next stage in Leslie's life was, as he says, 'rashly' responding to the call for miners. After a period of working underground, he laboured at Liverpool moving crates to be shipped out of the docks to the forces overseas. There he remained until V.E Day.(27)

The war having finished, regular séances resumed and at one, Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding was present. During this, Mickey made himself known and mentioned a young airman wishing to speak. He did so and gave his name as Peter Kite, his address and a message for his parents: he was particularly concerned about his mother as the distress of his death was causing her ill-health. He then mentioned that he knew Mr. Turner, one of the sitters, and told Mr. Turner that he had visited him for dental work. Leslie remarks: 'None of the other sitters knew Mr. Turner was a dentist nor did they know his name. Mr. Turner said he remembered Peter Kite coming to him for treatment...but he did not know he had been killed nor even that he had joined the R.A.F.'(28)

The airman's parents were contacted and invited to a séance. Arthur Conan Doyle was the first to communicate and took the opportunity to explain to the parents what had happened to their son, as they had no knowledge of the subject. The son then spoke and referred to practical jokes that he had played on them before his death and what he had seen them doing since that date. Leslie recalls: 'For close on forty minutes the voice of Peter Kite went on piling evidential detail on detail, details trivial in themselves but in the aggregate giving his parents incontrovertible proof of his identity and his continued existence'.(29)

One of Leslie's sitters, a Mrs. Barrat, was so impressed by the evidence that she received about her son who had been killed in the war, that she arranged and paid for sittings for other mothers who had suffered similar losses. On one occasion, one of these women did not arrive and the séance had to begin without her. A young man's voice then communicated and asked for his mother, and Mrs. Barrat recognized the speaker as the son of the woman who had not arrived. He then told the sitters that his mother's train had been delayed and she was sitting outside the séance room. It was explained the door could not be opened as this would allow light inside. Leslie relates how: 'Then a wonderful thing happened. As a rule the voices...speak from a point above my head...but as this spirit spoke his voice moved right away from me across the room to the door where he called loudly for his mother, From outside the door the mother answered him and the dead boy and the living mother talked together through the door'.(30) Another example of Leslie's spectacular mediumship shortly after the war was when Edgar Grant attended a séance and spoke with his wife, 'for some minutes in a perfectly ordered and natural manner'. After this, he recorded that: 'I then felt fingers take my pen and notebook from my hand and heard the pen moving across the paper'. On examining this, he declared the 'writing obtained at the séance and his wife's normal handwriting [before she died] is indisputable'.(31)

Leslie mentions how he was anxious to provide quality demonstrations to the public. In one at the Kingsway Hall in March 1950, Leslie was able to provide marvelous evidence of survival when a young man referred to his death by suicide, giving details of this. Mr. Shead, a member of the audience recognized the communicator, a son of a friend, with whom he had only met a short time

earlier and had mentioned his son's suicide. Shead later said the information given by the communicator, 'had been the same, almost word for word, [as] told by the father'.(32) This demonstration also saw various other communicators recognized by members of the audience, including instances of sons who had died in childbirth or killed in the war, with their mothers.

The pressure of the public demonstrations had an effect on Leslie's health. In one article headed 'Voice Medium Collapses at Public Séance', it recorded how Leslie had 'collapsed and had to be carried from the platform': this was at the Kingsway Hall in July 1950.(33) Nonetheless, Leslie was still able to demonstrate his mediumship and at one large public séance at the Kingsway Hall, he used a specially-designed cabinet. This was seven feet high and four feet square. The cabinet was covered in tarpaulin and the audience could therefore see all that was happening in the area outside. In this demonstration, various communicators spoke and convinced their loved ones in the audience of the continuing existence.

It was interesting to note how they confirmed what is repeatedly stated by communicators, i.e. they are 'more alive than ever'. In the case of Jim, a boy, who spoke to his mother, he confirmed that he was still very much alive; Mickey interrupted and said to the mother: 'Jim's a darned sight more alive than you are lady, I'll tell you!'.(34)

In the course of time, Leslie received so many requests to demonstrate his mediumship, that a committee was formed to deal with the administration and other related aspects. One of the members of the committee was the Rev'd Drayton Thomas, who had, through his tireless efforts, gained excellent evidence of survival through the medium, Mrs. Gladys Leonard, and had also served on the SPR Council. He was aware that some were suggesting that Leslie heard the voices clairaudiently, and then gave the messages himself through his own mouth. Thomas therefore arranged a test, details of which were reported in *Psychic News* (14 February, 1948); in this, a strip of elastoplast was placed over Leslie's mouth with a scarf then being tied over this, with cords being used to tie his hands and restrict head movement. In this situation, the voices were heard and 'Mickey emphasized his ability several times by shouting loudly'. At the end of the séance, with twelve people present, the cords and plaster were intact and had not been disturbed.

A further test was conducted in the presence of Dr West, the SPR Research Officer; after Leslie had his mouth firmly taped with the position of the plaster marked with a pencil, and his arms strapped to the chair, the voices manifested themselves and both Thomas and West held a conversation with the communicators. Leslie found the experience to be extremely uncomfortable, i.e. having great difficulty in breathing, and he had to cancel appointments for the next few days in order to recover. However, West then advised Leslie that as one of the plasters was not in line with one of the markings when the test ended, he

did not view the experiment as conclusive: West took responsibility for not taking sufficient care in fixing the plaster.

In view of the discomfort experienced, and the unsatisfactory manner in which the test had been conducted, Leslie, understandably, declined West's invitation to submit yet again. It appears that not even Leslie was allowed to escape the muddled and bungling efforts of researchers, many of whom, throughout much of the history of physical mediumship, have continually requested 'more' due to their lack of care and attention. In time, Leslie discovered, much to his distress, that while he originally thought that by demonstrating his mediumship to scientists and researchers, they would therefore join the chorus of those proclaiming survival, this was not to be: 'All too soon I learned the hard way that many of those who call themselves researchers have immutable values of their own which preclude belief in...the possibility of life after death'.(35)

In an attempt to provide irrefutable evidence of Leslie's mediumship, the Rev'd Drayton Thomas contacted an electronics expert who had an interest in psychic matters and provided various devices to use that would verify the voices were not coming directly from Leslie. In the presence of experienced researchers, Leslie underwent tests in which his lips were sealed with plaster, a microphone was attached to his throat, and there was an infra-red telescope that allowed the researchers to monitor the events in the dark; furthermore, Leslie's hands were held by the sitter on each side of him. Leslie reports that the result was: 'Voices spoke at many of the tests under these conditions and on more than one occasion a researcher viewing through the infra-red telescope was able to see the ectoplasmic larynx through which the discarnate speak forming on my left side some two feet distant from me'. One of the researchers later wrote to Leslie, confirming what had happened and saying this had been 'impressive'.

The actual content of Leslie's independent voice mediumship was itself indicative of the external sources responsible: as he points out, 'literally thousands of different voices...speaking in different dialects, in foreign languages unknown to me'. And this was apart from the 'mass of personal detail and reminiscence'.(36)

The success of tests made on Leslie is noted by Guiley: 'Flint was extensively tested - he called himself "the most tested medium in England" - but no evidence of fraud was ever found. The most dramatic test was done in London and New York in 1970. Flint's lips were sealed with plaster, and a throat microphone showed no evidence of use of his vocal chords, despite the manifestation of ghostly voices'.(37) Leslie corroborates this when he says: 'I have been boxed up, tied up, sealed up, gagged, bound and held and still the voices have come to speak their message of life eternal'.(38)

Notwithstanding, we nevertheless learn an important lesson here, relevant at this time. Leslie graciously submitted to being monitored through infra-red apparatus,

apart from a host of other modes of tests, and while no evidence of fraud was evident, the tests had little or no effect on scientists and sceptics, and added nothing meaningful to the field of knowledge. Yet again, this provides an example of how the filming, recording and/or monitoring of mediums has no value, and if anything only serves to minimize the phenomena.

The full scope of Leslie's mediumship is surely demonstrated by the judgments given by other mediums. Jessie Nason, who supplied so much excellent evidence to so many people and appeared on British national television to demonstrate her ability, attended a séance with Leslie in 1965. After receiving remarkable evidence for herself and witnessing this occurring with others, she declared Leslie's séance as 'fantastic'.(39) In 1970, Leslie spoke to the Spiritualist Task Force and referred to how physical mediums had been 'hounded out' of Spiritualism. When asked why he had not suffered the same fate, he replied with his usual dry humour, saying, 'Perhaps I'm a little more intelligent and a little more careful'. He also remarked on one sad fact that still prevails nearly forty years later: on commenting on how much effort and time he had devoted to developing his mediumship he remarked on how, 'You have to find self-sacrificing sitters. And believe me, I haven't found many among some Spiritualists'. He also spoke about the dangers that sometimes exist and recalled how someone had once turned on a light while he was in trance and he was 'ill for weeks afterwards'.(40)

Leslie's mediumship resulted in him traveling abroad and this clearly had no effect on the quality of the evidence supplied. One example was the séance at the W. T. Stead Centre in New York when Mickey announced that a Carl Schneider wished to speak. None of the sitters responded, but Mickey was adamant there had to be someone there who knew him. One sitter, a Robert Bolton, spoke up saying that he knew Schneider, but believed that he was in fact alive. The communicator nevertheless spoke and said that he had died a year earlier; moreover, Bolton recognized the voice as Schneider's. The following day, Bolton telephoned the number that Schneider had given him at an earlier time, and was told by the person answering that Schneider had died a year earlier, having committed suicide. Bolton was so impressed by the evidence that he wrote an account of the experience in *Psychic News*. Leslie then left New York to give successful séances and visit Chicago, Los Angeles and Hollywood; during which time he was entertained by Mae West and her husband, and visited Valentino's grave and placed flowers there.

Demonstrating that the pain of losing a loved one is still very much present, despite an intimate awareness of survival, Edith's death after a lengthy deterioration in health caused considerable heartache for Leslie. He recalls that after the funeral: 'A wave of desolation swept over me as I realised I had yet to come to terms with the loss of her physical presence...I wondered if I could go on living in a house filled with memories of past happiness'.(41) Following this,

Leslie's guides told him that he would soon be moving into a flat in central London, and despite his doubts, a few months later he was there.

It was at this time that Leslie became anxious about the pressure being placed upon him and he decided to retire from public work. He then gave all his energy to private séances that continued to be successful, and often eventful; one was when a Mr. and Mrs. Newton attended and Leslie was perturbed that they had brought an Alsatian dog with them as he did not allow animals in the séance room; but he then suddenly realized the dog was not physically present. When the séance began, Mr. Newton's father communicated and said that 'Rex' was with him and his wife. Leslie records: 'At this point to my surprise and embarrassment I heard Mr. Newton sobbing'. It transpired that Mr. and Mrs. Newton had once had an Alsatian dog called Rex, and Mr. Newton was deeply distressed by the circumstances in which the dog had died. Of the séances, of which there were a number, when this type of evidence arose, Leslie states: 'I am convinced that the love we give to our animals on this side of life lifts them on to a higher plane of existence...and that when we die we shall find them waiting to greet us'.(42)

Leslie mentions the many séances that he conducted for George Woods and Betty Greene. In these, a positive wealth of information about the post-mortem existence was revealed. A wide range of people communicated and no matter what their background had been, their statements had remarkable uniformity. This was made apparent with one communicator, Rose Hawkins, who had been a street flower seller before her death and had an 'earthly voice, strident, cheerful, with a Cockney twang even more pronounced than Mickey's. She said: 'You want me to describe our world in your material language! I don't know which way to start. I suppose if you could think of all the beautiful things in your world without all the things which aren't pleasant, you'd 'ave a vague notion of what it's like...The only things you get 'ere is by character and the way you've lived your life and how you've thought and acted'.(43)

In view of the valuable information imparted when the two were there, Leslie admits: 'I began to look forward more and more to my sittings with George Woods and Betty Greene'.(44) Details of some of these were detailed by Neville Randall in his book, *Life After Death*, that makes truly fascinating reading as it records much of the detail provided in a number of these sittings.(45) The work of Woods and Greene became public news resulting in Leslie appearing on television, and having the opportunity to expound the reality of everlasting life and the possibility of communication between the two worlds.

A number of communicators joined the Woods/Greene séances attempting to undo the wrong done in their earthly life: one was Lord Birkenhead who, having died, realized the immoral nature of capital punishment that he had once supported. Leslie records how he 'spoke eloquently and urgently for almost an hour on the necessity for the total abolition of the death penalty'.(46)

Another communicator was George Bernard Shaw. When the tape of his communication was played to the writer Laurence Easterbrook, O.B.E, who had known Shaw for a good number of years, he declared: 'I found the G.B.S. recording interesting indeed. The more I think about it, the more impossible it seems for none but himself to have been responsible'. When the tape was played to George Bishop, the dramatic critic of the Daily Telegraph, who was a close friend of Shaw but also someone who had no interest in the paranormal, he agreed, 'The mind and the mood are Shaw's'.(47)

One person who communicated and is well-known to Spiritualists was Dr Cosmo Lang, who had been Archbishop of York and had suppressed the report of a church commission investigating Spiritualism; he voiced his regrets regarding his behaviour. A tape of his communication was played to Conan Shaw, who had known Lang and he stated: 'Yes, I have every confidence it is Dr Cosmo Lang who is the communicator as he claims to be on the tape'.(48)

The Rev'd Allan Barham, a member of the SPR and Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies, wrote about Leslie and states: 'I have been present many times at a Leslie Flint sitting, when voices have spoken which have been recognised as the unmistakable expression of the personality of someone - a relation or friend - who has died'.(49) It was in fact Barham, who played the Shaw tape to Bishop, as mentioned above; he reports that after listening to it, Bishop 'was deeply moved'.(50)

Despite the well-known personalities who communicated through Leslie, he continued to provide evidential séances to 'ordinary people'. One such instance was when a Mrs. Dunk attended and Robin, her son who had died in a car accident in 1968, communicated. She noted how he continued using a term of language about which she always corrected him before his death. He gave a considerable amount of personal evidence about what had happened in the family since his death, even thanking his mother for 'the two roses bushes she had planted in his memory'. Mrs. Dunk's own mother also communicated and she reported how the voice was 'unmistakable'.(51)

Following the usual Spiritualist tradition, Leslie held Christmas tree séances. One, that took place in 1972, was described by a sitter, who recounted the usual dry humour that occurred, e.g. when Leslie asked Mickey to hurry up, the guide replied: 'I wish you'd shut up!' A number of children were able to communicate successfully and it was noted 'the voices seemed to be manifesting directly above the Christmas tree. Occasionally they moved as the spirit children examined presents' and that, 'the children's different personalities were marked'. Then, 'towards the end of the séance, presents on and under the tree were thrown about the room. Though the proceedings took place in pitch darkness, nobody was hit'. Noteworthy was the fact that 'Leslie was heard coughing

several times while the voices spoke. As Mickey said, "We've been having trouble with old Flint lately".(52)

A number of NAS members have also related their experiences when sitting with Leslie and provided a fascinating insight into the marvelous quality of his mediumship.(53) One of the accounts reveals something of the extent of Leslie's abilities: George Cranley describes a Christmas party when numerous children spoke, each with their distinctive personality, although this resulted in two of them arguing over one of the toys: 'Mickey would break in saying, "Ere, pack it in you two" so that three voices would be heard simultaneously'.(54) The NAS Newsletter has also featured a lengthy interview that took place with Leslie in 1993 concerning his mediumship, and mediumship in general.(55)

Leslie died on 16 April 1994: previously the Vice-President, he became the joint Vice President (in spirit) of the Noah's Ark Society with Noah Zerdin who accomplished so much in directing Leslie's course. A tribute to Leslie appeared in NAS Newsletter, No. 47, (56) and it is surely fitting to conclude with the words included in this: 'For many, Leslie had the quality of a Columbus, opening for us the portals into a new world that gave hope, that enlarged our vision of life, and deepened our values...He was a rare soul, who served us well'.

- (1)L. Flint, *Voices in the Dark* (London: Macmillan, 1971), p.9.
- (2)Flint, *Ibid.*, p.9.
- (3)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, pp.10,12.
- (4)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.14.
- (5)Flint, *Op. cit.*, p.15.
- (6)Flint, *Op. cit.*, p.25.
- (7)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.30.
- (8)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, pp.32-33.
- (9)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.35.
- (10)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, pp.43,44,45.
- (11)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.73.
- (12)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.73.
- (13)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.85.
- (14)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.93.
- (15)H. Porten, *The Miracle on the Wall* (Eastbourne: Porten, 1954), pp.79-81.
- (16)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.94.
- (17)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.95.
- (18)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.97.
- (19)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.104.
- (20)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.108.
- (21)Flint, *Op. Cit.*, p.112.

- (22) Flint, Op. Cit., p.118.
- (23) Flint, Op. Cit., pp.125-126.
- (24) Flint, Op. Cit., p.128.
- (25) Psychic News, 17 January 1942, p.4.
- (26) Flint, Op. Cit., p.134.
- (27) Flint, Op. Cit., pp.138-139.
- (28) Flint, Op. Cit., pp.141-142.
- (29) Flint, Op. Cit., p.143.
- (30) Flint, Op. Cit., p.145.
- (31) Psychic News, 2 March 1946, p.3.
- (32) Psychic News, 11 March 1950, p.1.
- (33) Psychic News, 22 July 1950, p.1.
- (34) Flint, Op. Cit., p.148.
- (35) Flint, Op Cit (London: Macmillan, 1971), p.169.
- (36) Flint, Op. Cit., pp.168,170.
- (37) R. E. Guiley, Harper's Encyclopedia of Mystical and Paranormal Experience (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 1991), p.150.
- (38) Flint, Op. Cit., p.169.
- (39) Psychic News, 16 October 1965, p.1.
- (40) Psychic News, 25 April 1970.
- (41) Flint, Op. Cit., p.186.
- (42) Flint, Op. Cit., p.190.
- (43) Flint, Op. Cit., p.193.
- (44) Flint, Op. Cit., p.200.
- (45) N. Randall, Life After Death (Ealing, Corgi: 1980).
- (46) Flint, Op. Cit., p.202.
- (47) Cit., Flint, Op. Cit., p.205.
- (48) Cit., Flint, Op. Cit., p.213.
- (49) A. Barham, Life Unlimited (Hythe: Volturna Press, 1982), p.43.
- (50) Barham, Ibid., p.48.
- (51) Psychic News, 10 July 1971.
- (52) Psychic News, 23 December 1972, pp.1,8.
- (53) NAS Newsletter, No.7, p.9. No.28, pp.24-25. No.29, p.13. No.52, pp.18-19.
- (54) NAS Newsletter, No.29, p.13.
- (55) NAS Newsletter, No.30, pp.12-15. No.31, pp.6-9. No.32, pp.7-9. No.33, pp.13-15. No.34, pp.22-23.
- (56) NAS Newsletter, No. 47, p.25.

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