

LIBER FUMO

de Frater Vigilo



Augustus Darcy's Guide to Occult London

THE BOOK OF THE SMOKE

The London Occult Miscellany of Augustus Darcy (Deceased)



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in memoriam

Augustus Darcy
1895–1934

Ex summa desperatione spes



TERRIBLE LONDON

A photogravure by William Hyde

FOREWORD

Augustus Darcy is dead. This news will come as a shock to those who were fortunate to count him amongst their friends, but the loss to knowledge is greater still. For Augustus (who will always be Gussy to me) was one of those secret scholars who toiled away in the shadow of lesser men and has produced, alone, one of the most startling books to emerge in this decade. You are holding that volume in your hand. Before you peruse it, first something about the man himself.

I had the privilege of being one of Gussy's few close friends. We met at school before the Great War and discovered a shared interest in the fiction of Edgar Poe and Algernon Blackwood and the revelations of Madame Blavatsky. We eschewed the playing fields and together roamed the woods and dales near the school, playing out myths and legends of old, dreaming of the glory that was Greece. How delicious were those days of wine and roses and how soon were they over!

The War came. He went to his regiment and I to mine. We both served at the Somme and had a chance encounter just behind Vimy Ridge. I was carrying orders to the front and he was repairing a broken telephone line. We exchanged greetings and in the middle of that great mess, with shells flying around us, he asked me if I had read the latest Burroughs. That was the kind of man he was, his mind always on higher things.

After the war I went to Cambridge, he to the other place and our meetings became less frequent. The last was on the platform at Brookwood as I disembarked from the Necropolis Railway for

a funeral. He was returning to Waterloo. He told me he was writing a book about London and was at the cemetery doing some poking about. When I said I hoped one day to read his work he disappointed me, saying that would not be possible as the book was for a private client. When I came back to the train after the funeral I could not find Gussy anywhere, not even in the third class carriages. And now I have that tome, but not under the circumstances I would have wished. And you, gentle reader, hold it now in your hands.

This is an important work. It is a survey of the current occult situation in London. Gussy left no stone unturned, no myth quiet. He poked folklore with the long stick of investigation and approached hearsay with the open mind of a fool but the wit of a servant. In these pages you will read about the secret powers at work in the very fabric of the great metropolis, of people who consort with demons, still even today, of giants at the Bank of England, dragons on Holborn Viaduct and angels on Peckham Rye. But be wary, gentle reader! For this is not a book to be taken lightly. In these pages is hidden powerful knowledge of an intrigue that cost my dear schoolfellow his life. This is a sorry tale and I will relate to you what I know of it.

I was unaware of the passing of Augustus Darcy until I was approached by his dear sister Ethel who informed me of his untimely demise. I should have wished to read it in the Times, but such was the impecuniousness of his estate that the matter went largely unpublicised, save for a short line in a local newspaper, which I do not take. This was an account of his death by drowning in the Thames with details of his forthcoming interment at Brompton Cemetery. His sister approached me because Gussy had requested in his will that I be his literary executor. I of course agreed.

I was invited to review his work and found to my consternation

that most of his books and papers had already been purchased by a charlatan of a book dealer* who had taken advantage of Ethel's ignorance of such matters. All that remained of value and that only because it was still in his haversack, was a copy of the manuscript that has become, with my careful editing, *The Occult Miscellany of Augustus Darcy*.

I have attempted to do justice to this remarkable work by bringing it to a wider audience than that for which it was originally intended. I have removed some references for which the fieldwork was not fully complete but otherwise this book represents the ultimate work of that dear man, noetic investigator and old friend that was Augustus Darcy.

Amery Greville
London
November 1935

* A Mr. Chesover of Covent Garden who paid far less than the collection was worth despite the presence of fragments of a "Sussex Manuscript" which I understand to be an important work. He now claims to have already sold these on to a foreign customer.

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The following letter was found with the original manuscript and explains why Darcy was compiling the book. I know nothing of the Brotherhood to which he refers. The map references, I have discovered, are to *Philips' A. B. C Pocket Atlas-Guide to London*, Twelfth Edition. A. G.

Dear Brothers

It pleases me greatly that our Order has grown so much in the past few years, spreading with His Majesty's Empire out of Great Britain to India, Canada, Africa and beyond. I hope our international brethren will permit me a moment's pride, however, as I acknowledge our Order's origins here in good old Blighty, and particularly in London. Well I remember my own initiation, some twelve years ago now, in our tiny temple just off the Strand! There I pledged my life to the service of our brotherhood and to our Master. I felt, then, immense peace. How marvellous that one could leave behind the cares of business and the bustle of the mighty metropolis and find instead such a marvellous collection of men devoted to the uplifting of the human soul above such mundanities!

As our Order thrives, it is unsurprising that many members from outside Great Britain seek to visit, in pilgrimage perhaps, the Mother Temple here in London. For this reason our Master has asked me to prepare this guide for you. Here is London's occult history, her stories stretching back a thousand years and more. Here are lingering spirits, devilish pursuits, places of power and people of mystery. Some of these may be visited still and are open to all earnest seekers. Some are denied to us forever, destroyed by fire, flood and time. Yet more are occult indeed.

I advise the casual visitor to take care in his meanderings around my home city. Only the most naïve would claim that the world we inhabit is not filled with traps for the unwary. Beware the charlatan, my friends! And beware also he who uses his magic for evil.

A warning too, about the Smoke, about London herself. It is little wonder that so many orders and fellowships have grown up here, for the very land radiates magical energy! Settlers have been

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pouring power into the place since Roman times, sacrificing to their gods, sending their prayers to the heavens, conversing with their angels and communicating with their hidden masters. All that activity must change a place, and I have recently felt a significant change in the genius loci, if you will. Soon, I believe, all this magical energy will overflow, flooding London and overwhelming the sensitive. Is this for good or ill? I do not know. Why now? I cannot say, but I fear malign forces have speeded this process. The energies have become darker of late.

Unfortunately, in researching this book I have inadvertently drawn rather more attention to myself than I would have liked. I have endeavoured to visit many of the locations herein described to make a full and topical report of each, but such was not possible with total discretion. There are those who seek to challenge our Order and to use their power for ill and to the detriment of this city. They are as aware as I of this build-up of magical energy and will usurp it for their own ends. I know I have been followed and I have received intelligence that there are some who do not want even this book to be published. Why they feel so threatened by my small researches and this simple tome, I do not know.

Brethren, welcome to London! I pray that your stay is both pleasant and educational. Should you be here when the fateful day comes I know I can rely on you to fight the good fight, as we used to sing in church! I hope I am there to fight alongside you.

I remain, as always
Frater Vigilo
Nixor Scio, Praesumo Intellego

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PLACES

The City of London

Bustling during the week, but almost deserted at weekends, The City is the original London. Famously a square mile in area, it houses London's finance houses, banks and the Stock Exchange. Excavations in the area have uncovered a number of Roman sites. Here too is the Tower of London, a royal palace since medieval times and a place of execution for just as long; St. Paul's Cathedral and many churches of great interest. Much of the City was rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1666. Many of its architects, including Sir Christopher Wren, were Freemasons; other architects may have served other less well-known Orders. Wren's protégé Nicholas Hawksmoor gave hints of his membership of a Solar Temple which did the will of older, pagan deities even while building six churches across London and redesigning the face of Westminster Abbey.

Some have suggested that the City has been laid out –either before or after the Fire, or as a long-running project by some esoteric Order –to follow some pattern of occult significance. It is true that the Rosicrucian and botanist John Evelyn's plan to rebuild London closely resembles the Kabbalistic Tree of Life.

London has changed since Evelyn's day, and even he suggested re-positioning a number of landmarks to better fit his scheme, but some correspondences may be drawn:

Kether: St. Dunstan's in the East (XI, 17L)

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Chokmah: London Bridge, or St. Magnus' (XI, 16L)

Binah: Bishopsgate (XI, 17K)

Daath: Gracechurch Fountain (XI, 17L)

Chesed: Steelyard, once the Hanseatic market, now Cannon Street Station (XI, 16L)

Gevurah: Guildhall, the home of Gog and Magog (XI, 16K)

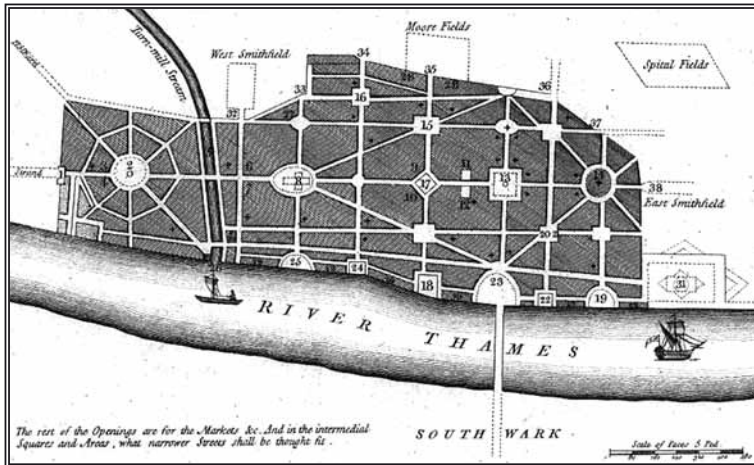
Tiphareth: Bank of England (XI, 16K)

Netzach: Queenhithe, where there has been a dock since at least Alfred the Great's day (XI, 16L)

Hod: Christ's Church Greyfriars (XI, 15K)

Yesod: St. Paul's (XI, 15L)

Malkuth: Ludgate Circus (XI, 15K), or St. Dunstan's in the West (XI, 14K)



JOHN EVELYN'S PLAN FOR REBUILDING LONDON
AFTER THE GREAT FIRE OF 1666

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Evelyn's plan was not followed, at least not overtly. Surely no Londoner would believe that the Sun-Tiphareth that the City orbits is the Bank rather than St. Paul's. My own experiences in the Works indicate a strong potential that some power (or Power) remains channelled, or pent up, in the spheres and paths of Evelyn's diagram.

§ Aldgate Underground Station (XI, 17K)

Aldgate was the Saxon *Eald Gate*, or Old Gate, presumably referring to a gate constructed by the Romans. The original Aldgate was demolished in 1761.

Workmen excavating the tunnel for the underground railway to Aldgate had human bones raining down upon their heads as they tunnelled below an old cemetery. Historians have shown



ALDGATE EAST STATION ENTRANCE, 1895

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that there were two plague pits where the tube tunnels are now. Unsurprisingly, this has led to reports of shadowy figures walking the tunnels and platforms late at night. I share my grandmother's belief that the living are far more dangerous than the dead. For this reason I am concerned that a group of people are living in these tunnels and masquerading as shades to frighten workmen, train drivers and such away. Given the inhospitable and dangerous nature of a life lived below ground leads me to wonder what they are there for. It may be that they plotting some criminal act, or the reason may be far darker than that One of our brothers, perhaps you know of him, is a police inspector and set out to investigate these sightings. Late at night, when the power was safely switched off, he cautiously ventured into the tunnel. Only a few feet in, he could go no further. There was no physical barrier, but he suddenly felt a great revulsion and emerged vomiting and staring-eyed through the station entrance. His mind remains disturbed to this day, and he has not been able to resume his duties. He is, I believe, now convalescing in a nursing home in Margate, Kent. This is a man who has seen many murders and other horrible crimes in the capital, and met all such incidents with equanimity. What could he have seen that night to cause him such terrible distress?

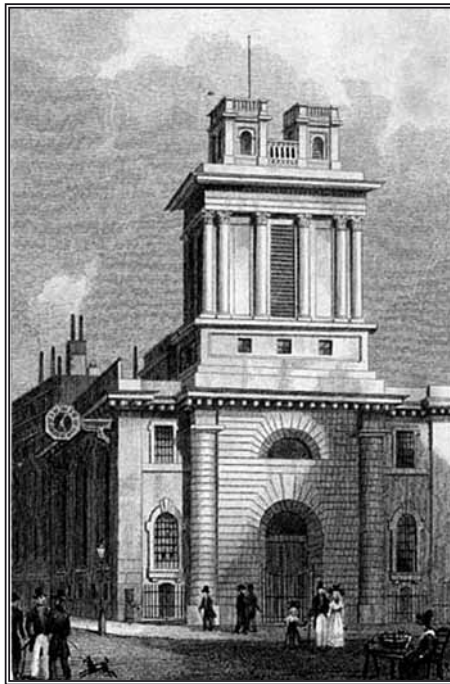
§ Bank Station (XI, 16K)

This station is part of the Central London Railway, and opened in 1900. As its name suggests, it is close to the Bank of England, in Threadneedle Street. Those peculiarly sensitive to psychic phenomena have reported an unpleasant odour, likened to a freshly dug grave, as one enters the station. There has been no formal investigation of the phenomenon, but perhaps the fact that the station is sited underneath the crypt of St. Mary Woolnoth has some bearing upon the matter. That church, designed by Nicholas

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Hawksmoor based on Vitruvius' 'Egyptian Hall', appears in Eliot's *Waste Land*:

*A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours*



ST. MARY WOOLNOTH

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*With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him . . .*

I fear that there is an addendum to this story that involves me directly and which I shudder to recount. About a month ago I was entering the Underground railway at Bank about noon, having had business in the City that morning. Although I use this station with some regularity, I had not myself noticed the bad smell before that day. The smell became overpowering and I looked for the exit but found the gate shut and locked behind me. Strangely the ticket hall had become suddenly empty, the blinds were drawn on the ticket office, all other passengers gone. Up the stairs from the platforms came the men from that night in Soho—the men wearing my face. Still dressed in their black weeds they walked slowly past me, heeding my presence not at all. I shivered as they passed and watched them leave the station through the now open gate. Suddenly the volume of people passing became deafening. I could hear coins clinking at the ticket office, the trains pulling in downstairs. Hastily recovering myself I ran out of the station entrance, but the men had gone.

§ The Bank of England, Threadneedle Street (XI, 16–17K)

The City of London contains many fine old financial institutions, but none more greatly respected than the Bank of England. The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street, as we affectionately know her, has two interesting ghost stories. The first is of Philip Whitehead, a young bank clerk who was convicted of forgery and executed in 1811, despite protesting his innocence. The shock of the affair and the death of her younger brother caused his sister Sarah to undergo some form of mental breakdown. She took to visiting the Bank daily and enquiring of staff going to and from their business ‘Have you seen my brother?’ This went on for many years until Sarah, by now a very old lady, passed away. Her ghost

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still accosts Bank employees as she seeks her long-lost sibling.

The other ghost story concerns William Jenkins, an employee of the Bank who was six feet seven inches tall. Jenkins was concerned that after his death his body would be a target for so-called Resurrection Men, or body snatchers. Every Englishman knows that there is nowhere safer than the Bank of England, so Jenkins bequeathed his remains to the Bank to be interred there for safe keeping. He was buried in the Bank's gardens, on the site of a former cemetery, in 1798. He did not rest easy, however. The shade of a giant was reportedly seen a number of times within the



SIR JOHN SOANE DESIGNED THE BANK OF ENGLAND

building's precincts in the years following this unorthodox burial. Ironically his body was eventually exhumed but not by body snatchers. When the Bank was renovated this year it was felt to be an inappropriate place for a grave and Jenkins, eight-foot coffin and all, was reburied in Nunhead Cemetery in South London. My very good friend and South London resident the bookseller Florence Hamilton-Beech avers that the ghost moved with it, and has been seen frequently in the few months since the move.

§ **Bleeding Heart Yard, Hatton Garden, Holborn (XI, 15K)**

Lord William Hatton was a favourite at the court of Queen Elizabeth I and built Hatton House in the area that now bears his name, Hatton Garden. The great power and influence the Hattons commanded came at a price, however. They would not have been so successful had not Hatton's wife Lady Elizabeth entered into an infernal pact with the Devil himself. And the Devil will always claim his due. On the night of a grand ball at the house Old Nick turned up to collect her soul. Legend has it she was torn to pieces and the pieces carried off to Hell, leaving only a beating, bleeding heart behind. During the struggle Lady Elizabeth rushed into a nearby street and fell heavily, dashing out her brains on the handle of the pump therein which is now said to gush blood instead of water if worked at midnight.

Almost as peculiar as the tale surrounding her demise are the efforts of historians to banish Lady Hatton from history completely. Many accounts of William Hatton say he never married. Doubtless Elizabeth was a most wicked woman, but why remove her so totally from the historical record? The existence and unfortunate demise of Lady Elizabeth are commemorated only in the name of the street where she died, Bleeding Heart Yard, across the road from her former home Hatton Garden. The house is long gone and Hatton Garden is now the centre of London's jewellery trade.

§ **Bunhill Fields (XI, 16J)**

The origin of the name Bunhill is rather strange. It is thought to be a contraction of Bone Hill, and indeed the place has been in use as a cemetery for some five hundred years or more, but the name pre-dates any record of use for burials. Some believe it was originally a Saxon burial site.

We do know that in 1549 Bunhill Fields was a burial place for bones from the charnel house of St. Paul's Cathedral. In 1665 it was enclosed as a cemetery but, although this was the time of the Great Plague, Bunhill Fields appears to have been used only for normal burials, the plague pits being sited elsewhere. It was long the burial place of Non-Conformists and there is no record of any consecration. Its inhabitants include Daniel Defoe and William Blake, but perhaps the most peculiar inscription is on the tomb of Dame Mary Pace.

It reads: 'Here lyes Dame Mary Pace relict of Sir Gregory Pace Bart. She departed this life March 4 1728 in the 56th year of her age. In 67 months she was tapped 66 times, had taken away 240 gallons of water, without ever repining her case or ever fearing the operation'. As far as I know, there is no medical explanation for this lady's extraordinary affliction.

Her tomb is a large one and stands some distance apart from the other graves. The grey stone is weathered and dotted with tufts of green moss. The inscription is still clear, however. Scraping the moss from the lip of the lid, as I have done reveals a row of small symbols on each edge. The script is unknown both to me and to my linguist friend, Professor Sir Watkin Bailey of Kings College, London. One symbol was not covered by the vegetation that hid its companions. It appears to be a small branch, with five leaves, three on one side and two on another. The cemetery is managed by the Corporation of the City of London so I approached their keeper of parks requesting further information

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on these engravings. To my surprise he became rather irate and asked if I had entered the cemetery at night. I was taken aback but managed to convince the gentleman that I was not an habitual lawbreaker. He then confided that the night watchman had seen lights near this tomb on a number of occasions, but regardless of how quietly or quickly he approached the intruders had always managed to elude apprehension. Moreover, even on a snowy night the watchman was unable to find any footprints apart from his own heavy work boots in the vicinity of the tomb.



Dragons

On 30th November 1222 dragons were seen flying over the City of London. Such unusual activity must be a portent of ill omen, and so it was proved. Shortly afterwards London experienced terrible thunderstorms and severe flooding, the like of which has not been seen since. Perhaps coincidentally Halley's Comet, long thought to be a harbinger of doom and disaster, was seen in the sky over London in September of the same year. It has visited several times since, the last visit being in 1910. It will next be seen in 1986.

The dragons of 1222 may have been the first to visit the City, but many more have come and stayed, albeit as statuary. The most fierce is resident outside the Royal Courts of Justice in The Strand, atop the Temple Bar memorial. This beast marks one of the boundaries of the City and it is underneath his monument

that the Lord Mayor of London traditionally receives the reigning monarch. More dragons are carved in stone at the entrance to St. Dunstan's in the West Church. Yet more are cast in iron on the supports of the Holborn Viaduct and, most famously perhaps, two dragons support the very coat of arms of the City of London.

I have received unsubstantiated reports of live dragons being seen in the Square Mile, flying at dusk in the summer. I do not give much credence to this, however. Many young lads work long hours in the banks and offices of the City and earn a tidy sum for so doing. If coming home from work rather later than normal and, perhaps, a little worse for drink the dragon statues may play tricks upon a young man's mind. That almost certainly explains the matter.



THE DRAGONS WERE UNCHRISTIAN BEASTS
WHEN THEY FIRST APPEARED IN THIS SEAL OF 1670

§ St. Etheldreda's Church, Ely Place (XI, 15K)

Supposedly the oldest Roman Catholic church in England, St. Etheldreda's is named after an Anglo-Saxon saint who died in 679 A.D. When her remains were exhumed for translation to

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the new Ely Cathedral some 450 years later, her body was found to be completely uncorrupted. St. Etheldreda died from a throat tumour, which she accepted as God's judgement for her vanity in wearing necklaces in her youth, and her church remains associated with throat problems. Each year the church holds a Blessing of the Throat ceremony in memory of St. Blaise, a saint who effected miraculous cures. Recipients of the blessing may find relief from tonsillitis and similar troublesome complaints.

§ Guildhall (XI, 16K)

The administrative and ceremonial centre of the City of London, the walls of the current Guildhall date from 1411. There has been a Guildhall for much longer, though. The original Guildhall is said to have been the palace of Brutus of Troy, first king of Britain and legendary founder of London. The Guildhall was the only stone building not a church to have survived the Great Fire, although its roof and woodwork were destroyed; an eyewitness described it as 'a bright shining coale as if it had been a palace of gold or a great building of burnished brass'. In that fire also perished two immense wickerwork statues, reminiscent of the Druidical frames for human sacrifice, carried before the Lord Mayor on Midsummer and other ceremonial occasions.

The current wooden statues were installed in 1708 and are known as Gog and Magog, in remembrance of the tutelary giants of Britain, although this is somewhat contentious; an anonymous broadside of 1660 identified them as Corineus and Gogmagog. Hackney coachmen once swore by their names, and even in the 1700s it was said that apprentices of the various Guilds of the Guildhall were as 'frighted at the names of Gog and Magog as little children are at the terrible sound of Rawhead and Bloody-Bones'. It is known that before their pitiless gaze Lady Jane Grey and Sir Nicholas Throckmorton were tried for treason in

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Tudor times, and the Jesuit Henry Garnet tried for abetting the Gunpowder Plot.

§ **The London Metal Exchange, Leadenhall Street (XI, 17L)**

Founded in 1877, the London Metal Exchange is a major world trading centre for non-ferrous metals. Although there is nothing overtly esoteric about the business conducted there, all metals traded are symbolised by their alchemical sign.

§ **The London Stone, Cannon Street (XI, 16L)**

Tra maen Prydain
Tra lled Llyndain.

Traditionally translated, the ancient proverb runs: ‘So long as the stone of Brutus is safe, so long shall London flourish’.

A piece of limestone approximately a foot square is built into the wall of St. Swithin’s, London Stone church. Pieces of ancient stone are not uncommon in London but what is remarkable about this one is that such a dull bit of off-white limestone is believed to be so remarkable. In 1450 the rebel Jack Cade declared himself king immediately after striking it with his sword. Myths about it abound –was it part of an ancient stone circle, a Roman milestone, or a marker of an ancient ley line? Was it brought to London by Brutus, the legendary founder of London, or is it connected with the early mediaeval King Ethelstane? Whatever its original provenance, the Stone is thought to embody the spirit of London. Should harm befall the Stone, London itself will fall.

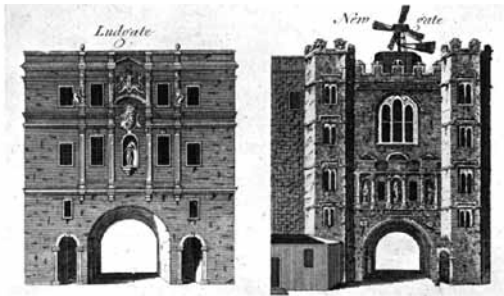
§ **Ludgate Hill (XI, 15L–15K)**

Sitting at the centre of London’s three sacred hills, Ludgate Hill (now the name of a narrow street running from St. Paul’s to Fleet Street) commemorates the pre-Christian Lud Gate, supposedly

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erected by and named after the legendary King Lud. Indeed, London itself may commemorate King Lud, being originally *Caer Lud*, or Lud Dun, or Lud's Town. The Ludgate itself contained both a prison and a church, St. Martins within Ludgate. The hill-top, on the west face of St. Paul's, served as a London folkmoot. William the Conqueror sought the approval of the Ludgate assembly before demanding the crown at Westminster. Above the gate was a statue of Lud, flanked at various times by his two sons and by Elizabeth I. When the gate and prison were demolished in 1760, the statues were removed to St. Dunstan in the West in Fleet Street.

'King Lud' may be a euhemerised version of the Welsh god *Lludd*, known to the Irish as *Nuada* and to the Romans as *Nodens*. The energies of this god, whatever his name, remain strong or even oppressive despite –or because of –St. Paul's looming presence. I have reports of a sect of seekers descended from the astrologer Ebenezer Sibly's Swedenborgian New Church (founded in the area by his brother Manoah) who climb various eminences with specific views of Ludgate Hill on nights when certain stars are in alignment. While on Ludgate Hill one night recently I surprised a climber descending from the Stationers' Hall. He must



LUDGATE AND NEWGATE WERE DEMOLISHED IN 1760

have believed me a policeman as he took instant flight. As he rapidly disappeared towards the river, he dropped a curious chased silver pendant in the shape of a human forearm and hand which was executed with superb anatomical skill. When I examined it again in the light of day, however, it was just as plainly formed as a dog's forelimb and paw. After ten nights of horrid dreams that I can no longer remember, I disposed of the item by depositing it in the Thames as near as possible to the place where it was found. Thanks be to Heaven that the dreams ceased! I can only add that Nuada's cognomen is 'the Silver-Handed', and that Nodens in Romano-British art is accompanied by lean hounds.

§ The Monument (XI, 17L)

This 202-foot high column was completed in 1677 and marks the point where the Great Fire of London finally burnt itself out. It was designed by Sir Christopher Wren and Dr. Robert Hooke, both prominent Freemasons. The height of the Monument is equivalent to the distance between it and Pudding Lane, where the Great Fire started in a baker's shop on Sunday, 2nd September 1666. The Monument has 311 steps up to a cantilevered viewing platform. Energetic members of the public may ascend there for a small fee and enjoy the excellent views over London. It is possible to climb higher and access the flaming urn at the top of the Monument via a trapdoor, but the public are not permitted to do this, for reasons of safety. This huge Doric pillar was originally planned not only as a monument to the Great Fire, but as a place for the Royal Society to carry out its experiments. These were discontinued as the noise of passing traffic proved too great a distraction. It is indisputable that the basement laboratory remains, but entry is denied to visitors. The laboratory was designed to house a Zenith telescope for Dr. Hooke. I have been unable to find any record of its installation or information regarding other

equipment that may be housed in the basement.

Entry to the Monument is during normal business hours. There is a small office at the base of the steps where one can purchase tickets. Normally there are two custodians on duty, one selling tickets and the other ensuring the welfare of the public on the site.

§ Newgate Prison (XI, 15J)

The hellish noise, the roaring, swelling and clamour,
the stench and nastiness . . . an emblem of hell itself.

Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*

As a child I remember being taken past a pile of rubble by my nurse. 'That's the old Newgate' she said, but I don't remember it being demolished—almost thirty years ago now—just the tremendous mass of rubble. There were several Newgate prisons, the most recent being built in the eighteenth century. Newgate was the nearest thing to hell on earth I have ever heard of. In the fifteenth century prisoners refusing to plead would be pressed under boards by heavy stones until they played the game. Men and women prisoners mixed without regulation, and the women sometimes offered sexual favours; pregnancy or 'pleading your belly' was one way to avoid the gallows.

Far more prisoners died of gaol fever (typhus) than kept their appointment with the hangman. Even in death, however, prisoners were not free. Until relatives paid a release fee corpses were effectively held to ransom and allowed to rot where they lay.

Within Newgate's dark history lurks another horror, which has passed into local legend. The story goes that during the reign of Henry III a scholar was confined there on suspicion of conjuring demons. Being made of rather softer stuff than his cell-mates, and fresh meat being hard to come by, he was butchered and consumed by a rabble of starving prisoners. That night many fancied they saw the spirit of the scholar returned in the form of a great

black dog which groaned and cried as if in agony. So frightened were the prisoners that they killed a guard and escaped but felt the spirit leave with them. In the weeks that followed all the men, wherever they ran to, were killed. All died alone, the cause of death being a mauling by some large animal.

Reported sightings of the black dog of Newgate continue to this day and have increased slightly since the Great War, especially since the mid 1920s. People walking alone in the area late at night sense someone walking with them. Some glance down to see a black creature, rather resembling a wolfhound, trotting beside them. The more unfortunate turn to see a menacing, unearthly hound with eyes of fire and often flee in terror. Others simply hear the sound of claws clicking on the cobbles. Sometimes, too, a large menacing shadow has been seen to slip down at the corner where two walls meet to enclose Warwick Passage, an alley that was once Deadman's Walk, the way to Newgate's gallows. This shadow has been interpreted by some as the hound leaving the site of the old prison to commence his nightly patrols. It is said that the hound still seeks the descendants of those prisoners of long ago.

§ The Prophecies of Merlin (XI, 17L)

In the time of Vortigern, ancient king of the Britons, appeared a prophet of great talent and renown, whose vision extends even to the present day. Like many, I thought the tales of Merlin were romantic confections of chivalry and magic. I recently undertook a serious study of his predictions, however, and I feel I judged him wrongly. These are no childish fairy stories; I truly believe they carry a warning for London's citizens even into the twentieth century. This is what Merlin said about London:

'Then a Tree shall spring up on the top of the Tower of London. It will be content with only three branches and yet it will overshadow

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the whole length and breadth of the island with the spread of its leaves. The North Wind will come as the Tree's enemy and with its noxious breath it will tear away the third of the branches. The two branches which are left will occupy the place of the one ripped off: this until one of them destroys the other by the very abundance of its leaves. This last branch will fill the place of the other two and it will offer a roosting-place to birds come from foreign parts. To birds native to the country it will seem harmful, for through their dread of its shadow they will lose their power of free flight.'

A Tree with but three branches! I am certain that this refers to the three main occult orders of London, the Freemasons, the Community of the Inner Light and our own dear Brotherhood. A powerful, evil force will come from the North and tear one away –which one? –another will be forced out as the third swells its ranks from overseas, until that Order triumphs and all other adepts are left powerless. I pray, brothers, that this Order is not ours, as:

'London shall mourn the death of twenty thousand and the Thames will be turned into blood.'

Better that we be dead than that we become such monsters!

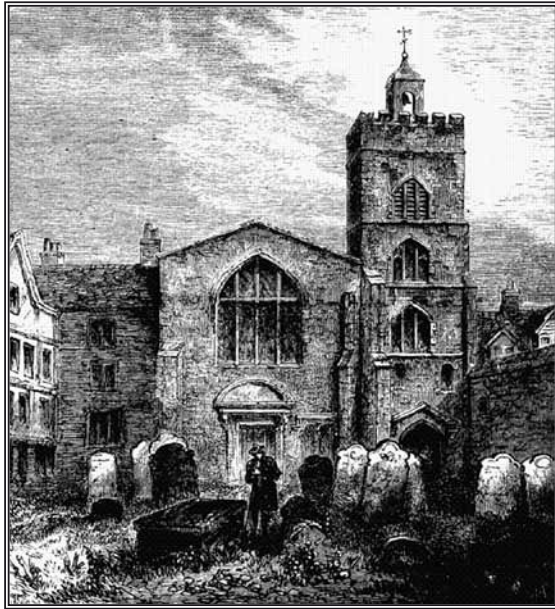
§ **St. Bartholomew-the-Great Church, Smithfield (XI, 15K)**

In your guide's humble opinion, one of London's most atmospheric churches. Originally founded as a priory by the Augustinian monk Rahere, also founder of St. Bartholomew's Hospital (colloquially known as Barts). Legend tells us that Rahere was court jester and Master of the Revels to Henry I. Whilst suffering from malaria Rahere received divine instruction to become a monk and build a mighty church to bring healing to the people. At the time Rahere built it, St. Bartholomew-the-Great was bigger than many European cathedrals; although little of the original twelfth-century building remains today. Augmentation and

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rebuilding of the priory began after the death of its founder (who is entombed therein) with the building as we see it now completed in the seventeenth century.

Rahere is reputed to haunt the church he founded, appearing as the eternal jester flying around the nave on a pair of artificial wings. An illuminated manuscript produced by the nearby Charterhouse Carthusian Priory in the late fifteenth century depicts this extraordinary spectre in great detail. The wings are not plain, but bear some form of writing not dissimilar to Dr. Dee's Enochian. This manuscript is available for perusal at the British Museum Reading Room, but is very fragile.



THE CHURCH OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW-THE-GREAT, 1737

§ St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street (XI, 15L)

Famous as The Journalist's Church, St. Bride's was built by Sir Christopher Wren, architect of St. Paul's Cathedral. Bride –or Brigit, as she is also known –was not originally a saint. Her origin is in pre-Christian times as *Brigantia*, a goddess of healing, and the Bride's Well next to the church is sacred to her. It is believed that worship of pagan gods took place on the site of the church some three thousand years ago. The assimilation of Bride into the pantheon of Christian saints is, perhaps, a sign that the energies of the old gods linger there still.

§ St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside (XI, 16L)

Atop the spire of St. Mary le Bow is a weathervane depicting a dragon in full flight, with a curiously intent and intelligent expression on his face.

Those born within the sound of St. Mary le Bow's bells are the only Londoners who are genuinely Cockneys. Given the increasing 'sound of horns and motors' in London, the number of Cockneys must ever decrease. The word Cockney may derive from *Cockaigne*, the hallucinatory land of plenty that gave London its nickname in the thirteenth and fourteenth century. This suggestion of London as an entryway to Fairyland or some other dream realm is hard to avoid. Given the role of Bow Bells in opening the way to such, perhaps the Theosophist tradition that the Lemurians used acoustical sciences (so advanced we might now view them as 'magic') to open the way to other dimensions is relevant.

In 1196 a congregation led by William Fitzosbert, a known murderer and a most wicked man, was found to be conducting black masses; that is, funeral masses for the living not the dead, at this church. All were hanged at Smithfield but the curse they left upon the church remains to this day. In 1284, a goldsmith named

Duckett was murdered in the church despite pleading sanctuary; his killers were also hanged and their mortal remains burnt.

§ St. Michael's, Cornhill (XI, 17L)

From John Stow's *Description of London* (1597):

'My father told me that on the night of St. James, certain men were ringing the bells of St. Michael's, in the loft, when there arose a tempest of thunder and lightning, and a thing of an ugly shape and sight was seen to come in at the south window, and it lighted on the north. For fear whereof, all the ringers fell down and lay as dead for a time, leaving the bells to ring and cease of their own accord. When the ringers came to themselves, they found certain stones of the north window to be razed and scrat as if they had been so much butter, printed with a lion's claw; the same stones were fastened there again, when it was repaired, and remain so to this day. I have seen them oft, and have put a feather or small stick into the hole where the claw had entered, three to four inches deep.

At the same time, certain maine Timber posts at Queen Hithe were scrypt and cleft from top to bottom, and the Pulpit Cross in Paul's churchyard was likewise scrypt, cleft and overturned. One of the ringers lived in my youth, whom I have oft heard to verifye the same to be true, and I have oft heard my Father to report it.'

§ St. Paul's Cathedral (XI, 15L)

St. Paul's is reputed to have an extraordinary number of secret tunnels and passages, including two passages in the north and south transepts and another running around the inside of the dome. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren, an eminent Freemason, the cathedral is also believed to have Masonic imagery encoded

within its architecture. Wren's tomb is located in the south east corner of the crypt. Engraved on a simple slab directly below the dome is inscribed his epitaph: *LECTOR SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS CIRCUMSPICE* ('Reader, if you seek his monument, look around'). Considering the great history of the building it is perhaps surprising that it has only one ghost. All Souls Chapel, at the west end of the Cathedral, is haunted by the spirit of an elderly clergyman. Some believe that the spot where he appears indicates the entrance to a secret staircase which links the Chapel directly to the Cathedral dome.

Legend has it that St. Paul's was built on the site of a Roman temple to Diana which, if true, would mean that worship has been going on at this site for almost two thousand years. Roman remains were discovered by labourers digging the foundations for Wren's church, but are not in themselves conclusive evidence of a Roman religious site. In the time of Edward I excavators uncovered hundreds of ox skulls in the churchyard. The meaning of this peculiar ossuary is unknown. Cromwell uprooted a venerated stone here called Pol's Stump that is reputed to have survived the fall of a holy Druidical oak. As late as Elizabeth's day, the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's practised the 'blowing of the horns', a ritual sacrifice of a doe in January and a stag in June with the head and antlers carried on a spear in solemn procession to the high altar.

§ St. Stephen's Walbrook, Queen Victoria Street (XI, 16L)

Nineteenth century discoveries in the nearby river Walbrook including a relief of the Persian god Mithras ritually slaying a bull and of a river god of some sort have led some to suggest that the Romans may have erected a temple to Mithras somewhere in the area of Queen Victoria Street. They will not be able to test this hypothesis, however, as the putative site is underneath other

buildings. Although Mithras is Persian, the Romans were known to appropriate gods of conquered nations and the cult of Mithras held particular interest for the military, being male-only and having especially bloody initiation rites.

§ Smithfield (XI, 15K)

Smithfield, bounded by the church of St. Bartholomew-the-Great, the famous Smithfield meat market and St. Bartholomew's Hospital, has long been a place of execution –Scottish nationalist William Wallace and English rebel Wat Tyler were both dispatched to their Maker here.

Smithfield became a significant site of Protestant martyrdom during the reign of Queen Mary. A pious Catholic, Mary sought to undo the harm she believed had been wrought by her father Henry VIII and declared England a Catholic nation again. She unleashed a terrible persecution of Protestant dissenters, with approximately two hundred being burnt, boiled alive or



RELIEF PANEL SHOWING A SACRIFICE BY MITHRAS

beheaded. The Protestant historian Foxe gives this account of three executions:

'And so these three godly men, John Hallingdale, William Sparrow and Master Gibson, being thus appointed to the slaughter, were, the twelfth day after their condemnation (which was the 18th day of the said month of November, 1557), burnt in Smithfield in London. And being brought thither to the stake, after their prayer made, they were bound thereunto with chains, and wood set unto them; and after wood, fire, in the which being compassed about, and the fiery flames consuming their flesh, at the last they yielded gloriously and joyfully their souls and lives into the holy hands of the Lord.'

A psychic of my acquaintance claims that if someone with certain sensitivities simply lays their hands upon the door of St. Bartholomew-the-Great, that person may glimpse images of these terrible trials and executions. She tells me she also saw that these poor souls had visions of the heavenly hosts taking them to their eternal rest which gave them hope to the last. If that is true then it is, at least, some consolation.

§ The Temple Church (XI, 15L)

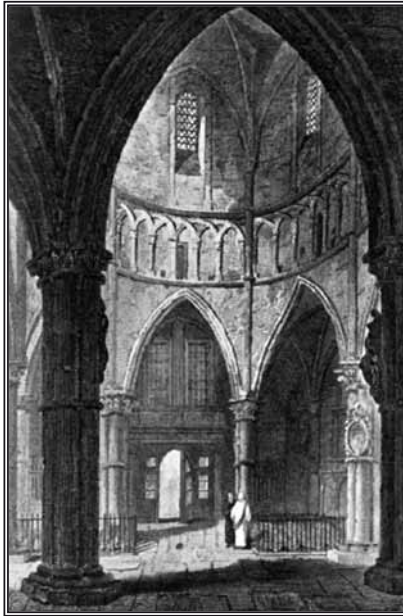
Although much rebuilt in the nineteenth century, the Temple Church continues to capture the occult imagination. The church is named after the Knights Templar, an order of warrior monks formed in 1118 to protect pilgrims on their way to the Holy Lands. By 1185 they were based in England and building this unusual round church, said to be modelled after the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Following the fall of the Templars in 1312, the Knights Hospitallers took over the church which, in 1608, was given by James I to a group of local lawyers in return for their commitment to maintain the buildings in perpetuity. Even today the Middle Temple and Inner Temple are synonymous with

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legal practice in London. The church contains a number of tombs of Knights Templar, in surprisingly good repair, and has some interesting stories associated with it. Walter-le-Bachelor, Grand Preceptor of Ireland, starved to death in a small cell in the church for the crime of defying the Master of the Order, while the crypt was the site of the Order's secret initiation rites. One bishop's effigy, dating from 1255, stands atop a dragon.

§ **Tower Hill and The Tower of London (XI, 17L)**

Tower Hill is the second of the three sacred hills of London's Druids and its history is inextricably linked to the Tower upon it.



INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE CHURCH BEFORE IT WAS 'RESTORED'

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A famous prophecy of disaster concerns the ravens at the Tower of London. Six of these large and somewhat belligerent corvids must be resident at any one time or legend has it that the monarchy will fall, and England with it. Perhaps fearing the truth of this prophecy, especially in the light of his father's untimely demise, Charles II ordered their protection in the seventeenth century. Today they have their quarters near the Wakefield Tower, where their day-to-day needs are met by the Ravenmaster. The word Raven in Welsh is *Bran*, which brings to mind another legend of the Tower.

Although the building is Norman, Tower Hill was of strategic importance for the Romans and Saxons and excavations have shown burials took place here as far back as the Iron Age. The head of Bran the Blessed, a Welsh giant, hero and god, is said to have been buried at Bryn Gwyn (the White Mount) to repel invaders. Perhaps it is this half-forgotten story that has led to the tradition of raven-keeping at the Tower? There is a story that Bran's head was disinterred by King Arthur, who then took the guardianship of Britain upon himself; others believe Bran remains there still. More recent legends tell of the ghosts of two British queens; Ann Boleyn, second wife of Henry VIII, who was beheaded for treason after alleged adultery and whose ghost now walks, carrying her head, around the Tower at night and Lady Jane Grey, queen for only nine days before the coronation of Queen Mary, who was beheaded for treason only after being forced to witness the execution of her husband in the same manner and whose phantom re-enacts her demise late at night on Tower Green.

§ The Viaduct Tavern, Newgate Street (XI, 15K)

This attractive Victorian public house is named after the nearby Holborn Viaduct. It is notable for its cellars, which are reputed to have once been part of Newgate Prison. Legend tells that the spirits of former convicts remain imprisoned in the place. Even

with modern electric lighting staff are reluctant to go into the cellars alone. Beertaps are turned on and off, lights ditto, and even the conveniences are flushed without human hand.

Westminster (X, 13M)

The 'West Minster' is the Abbey, compared to the 'East Minster' of St. Paul's. This district, although separate from London since the time of Edward the Confessor, only became a chartered City in 1900. It includes not only Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament and Whitehall, but Buckingham Palace, Hyde Park and the Apollonian and Dionysian *foci* of Greater London: Trafalgar Square, with Nelson's Column and the National Gallery; and Piccadilly Circus, where an aluminium Eros aims his arrows at cinemas and neon-lit pleasure-palaces.

§ The Café Royal, Piccadilly Circus (X, 12L)

I thoroughly recommend supper at the Cafe Royal to any visitor to London. Whilst dining one can enjoy the passing parade, including the infamous Aleister Crowley who frequently appears wearing a charming, if rather well-used, top hat.

The waiters here receive somewhat frugal pay and are much reliant upon tips. They will be more than pleased to discuss the great and the good for the price of a packet of Players No. 6. One particularly amiable chap, Charlie, reported that on a recent occasion Crowley's brandy and cigars were disturbed by the arrival of a young woman who proceeded to rant at him in a most unbecoming way. The Beast was taken aback, and gently admonished 'Verity, please calm yourself!' The maitre d' escorted the young woman from the premises, but incurred some injury as she grabbed a cheese knife and waved it in an indiscriminate fashion. Many of the diners opined that she should be sent to Colney Hatch or turned over to the constabulary, but Mr. Crowley simply

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returned to his conversation and the rest of the evening passed without further incident.

§ **Caxton Hall, Caxton Street (X, 12N)**

Caxton Hall has long been a meeting-place for social reform and new ideas. The Suffragettes regularly held meetings there and it has hosted lectures by the mystic Dion Fortune. In 1910 Aleister Crowley hired Caxton Hall for a public enactment of his Rites of Eleusis by his Order, the *Argentum Astrum*. He lived in nearby Victoria Street at the time. The Hall can still be hired and all manner of interesting lectures and events go on here. A notice-board outside lists the current programme.

§ **Cleopatra's Needle, Thames Embankment (X, 13M)**

Cleopatra's Needle is indeed Egyptian, dating from about 1475 BC, when it was erected at Heliopolis. Its original inscription commemorates Pharaoh Tethmosis III, but later inscriptions refer to Rameses II and to Cleopatra. Later moved to Alexandria by the Romans, Cleopatra's Needle was given to the British by the Turkish Viceroy of Egypt and took up its present position in 1878. Six men drowned in bringing it to London. Beneath the monument is buried a box containing topical items of the late Victorian period, such as a copy of *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*, various Bibles and photographs of society beauties of the day. Those with knowledge of these things may notice that the decorative sphinxes intended to guard the monument have been incorrectly installed and stand with gazes fixed at the column instead of facing approaching evil. A German Zeppelin raid bombed it in 1917, but only dinged one of the sphinxes.

In the fifty or so years since it was erected a strange legend has grown up around it. Those passing the monument late at night have reported that an overwhelming depression and hopelessness

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settles upon them, while eerie whispers encourage them to leap from the Bridge into the waters below. Cleopatra's Needle has thus acquired a reputation as a suicide spot, possibly associated with the legend of Cleopatra taking her own life. Further, there have been numerous reports of a tall, naked male figure seen jumping into the Thames at the Needle, but landing without a splash.

§ Coventry Street (X, 13L)

A recent book by the American collector of the unusual and inexplicable, Mr. Charles Fort informs us that:

'Upon April 16, 1922, a man was taken to Charing Cross Hospital, London, suffering from a wound in his neck. It was said that



CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE RISES ABOVE THE ICY THAMES

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he would tell nothing about himself, except that, while walking along a turning, off Coventry Street, he had been stabbed. Hours later, another man, who had been wounded in the neck, entered the hospital. He told, with a foreign accent, that in a turning, off Coventry Street, he had been so wounded. He signed his name in the hospital register, as Pilbert, but would, it was said, give no other information about the assault upon him. Late in the day, another wounded man was taken to this hospital, where according to the records, he refused to tell anything about what had befallen him, except that he had been stabbed in the neck, while walking along a turning, off Coventry Street.

In the pockets of these men were found racing slips. The police explained that probably all of them were victims of a turf-feud.

It is, considering many other data, quite thinkable that, instead of refusing to tell how they had been wounded, these men were unable to tell, but that this inability was so mysterious that the hospital authorities recorded it as a refusal.'

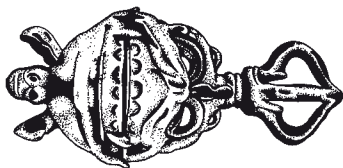
This tale, corroborated by the daily papers of the time, is ghoul-ish enough, but it pales next to one told me by J. L., a member of our Fraternity whose identity I may not reveal. This gentleman has some connection with the Special Branch, and he informed me that the rumour in Scotland Yard was that an American chap-pie, named Munro or Monroe, hunted down the creature responsible for these outrages, struck it down and sealed it up in a lead coffin in Highgate Cemetery during the last hours of April 30, Walpurgisnacht. My contact refused to describe the Coventry Street attacker in any way. I received the impression that, like Fort's witnesses, he was unable to describe it fully.

Whether these attacks are connected with the black, bat-winged creature seen near West Drayton church on April 8, 1922 –or, as some have hinted, with the nearby Harmondsworth Vampire of the 1890s –is unknown.

§ **The Geological Society, Piccadilly (X, 12L)**

Since 1825 the Geological Society has sought to make available all current thinking on the origins and history of Planet Earth. It holds programmes of lectures, has an excellent library and produces its own geological publications. At the time of writing Sir Roger DeCourcey is about to commence a series of monthly lectures where he will entertain and edify his audience with accounts of his recent excavations on the Tsang Plateau and will present a wide range of unusual artefacts including the much talked-about jade idol, photographs of which have appeared in recent editions of *The Times* and the *Daily Sketch*.

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O D E V*



ORNATE JADE IDOL, MOUNTED IN BRONZE RESTRAINTS

* This communication, apparently in cipher, appeared in Darcy's papers relative to Piccadilly. This copy was written in Darcy's hand, neither the original nor the plain text were found among his effects. A. G.

§ **Green Park (X, 12M)**

There is a tree in Green Park that has such an evil aura about it that birds will not nest in its branches and tramps will not sleep beneath it for fear they will not see the light of morning. Park keepers say they hear mocking voices and see man-shaped shadows in its vicinity. The whole park gives one a sense of eeriness. It was a lepers' burial ground in the fifteenth century, and a notorious location for theft, murder and rape for 300 years afterwards. It too has seen its share of suicides.

§ **The Little Theatre, John Adam Street (X, 13L)**

A delightful little place just off the Strand, with a cheerful Art Deco exterior disguising the dark doings within! I made my first visit there whilst on home leave during the War, dragged along by my younger sister Ethel. For some time The Little Theatre rather specialised in productions of an horrific or thrilling nature; Ethel and I went to see a most un-nerving piece about a soul fragmented into several parts. Ethel seemed quite pleased with the performance, especially as we had drinks with the cast afterwards. The notorious actress and suffragette Edith Craig was there and seemed to have taken rather a shine to Ethel, making the most shocking cows' eyes in her direction.

I visited again some years later, when there was a French chapie running the show. He had Sybil Thorndike squashed completely flat in one of those Grand Guignol productions, and most amusing it was! She certainly could scream, and did!

I didn't return until 1925 to see Gielgud in *The Seagull*, which was quite brilliant, but sadly no Sybil. I hear there is a new season of the Grand Guignol. One of our Brethren has some association with the Theatre and has procured tickets for a show next month. There will be four short pieces, including *De l'au-delà* from France. A late supper at the Strand Palace hotel should make a jolly evening out.

§ The London Library, St. James' Square (X, 12L-12M)

This is a private library, which one may join upon payment of a yearly subscription of £10. Books are never discarded due to wear and tear or becoming unfashionable in their ideas, so the reader may find works there dating back as far as the seventeenth century.

In 1906 one Bryan Courthope Hunt shot himself twice in the head with a Derringer in the Periodicals Room whilst researching the nature of human free will.

§ Pest House Fields, Vauxhall Bridge Road (XV, 13O)

The *Annual Register* of 1827 reports that excavations had recently taken place for a new municipal sewer to be sited under Vauxhall Bridge Road as part of Mr. Bazalgette's excellent sewerage system. The workmen unearthed a coffin containing five bodies and found numerous other bones, shoe buckles and scraps of clothing. They had been digging in what had been the area surrounding one of London's pest houses, or hospitals for plague sufferers, and had obviously discovered a genuine London plague pit. There are no newspaper reports of the labourers suffering any ill-effects from their gruesome discovery, which would have been approximately 150 years old at that time.

I have anecdotal evidence from the granddaughter of one of the workmen, however, that as the men broke into the coffins the bodies became animated and even tried to speak. The man thought one murmured 'beyond ye stars' (a phrase I am aware of, but I cannot remember its provenance). The labourers were understandably alarmed by the situation and sought to make the bodies still again. One man struck out in terror with his shovel, smashing two of the skeletons to smithereens instantly. All then fell silent and were in due course removed to an undisclosed location where, she believes, they were incinerated. The labourers swore never to tell anyone about this incident but the lady's

grandfather felt it was so long ago that no harm would be done by passing the story on. Even so, this now rather elderly and frail lady has asked for anonymity and I have respected her wishes.

§ The Petrie Museum, University College London (X, 13J)

Another museum within the precincts of the College, the Petrie opened in 1892 and houses the collection of one Amelia Edwards, a writer greatly fond of Egyptian antiquities, who had amassed several hundred before her death in the same year. The collection continued to grow through the efforts of Professor William Flinders Petrie, who energetically engaged in many excavations in Egypt including the Roman period cemetery at Hawara and Meydum, an early site of mummification. In 1913 the College bought his private collection, and thus the Petrie Museum was established in its current form. Petrie retired from the College this year, taking up residence at the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem. The collection of some 80,000 artefacts will remain and has much to offer the occultist, although it is open only to academics and students, not to the general public.

To access the Museum, go to Torrington Place where you will find a small door marked with an even smaller plaque. Go up the stone stairs and you will find the Museum at the top. A small office, usually occupied by a research student or two, is all that is between you and the Collection. The exhibits are displayed in glass cases in two rooms and comprise pottery, votive objects, fragments of stone engraved with hieroglyphics and a small number of mummies. What is most alarming, perhaps, is the large terracotta jar containing the skeleton of a young woman, not mummified. A thousand years or more have not diminished the sense of horror and of pity one feels in viewing this poor hunched creature *in situ*.

§ **St. Clement Danes Church, The Strand (XI, 14L)**

Built on a ninth-century foundation established by Danish invaders for some reason exempt from Alfred's orders of expulsion, the original stone church was erected around the year 1000 A.D. It was a Templar property until the fourteenth century; the architect Sir Christopher Wren rebuilt it in 1679 after the Great Fire rendered the Templar structure unsound. It was Samuel Johnson's parish church, and its crypt holds the poet Donne's wife, but it is best known as the subject of the famous children's rhyme 'Oranges and Lemons'. The oldest version that I have traced dates from the reign of Charles II, and goes as follows:

'Gay go up and gay go Down
To ring the Bells of London Town.
Two Sticks and Apple,
Ring ye Bells at Whitechapple,
Old Father Bald Pate,
Ring ye Bells at Aldgate,
Maids in White Aprons,
Ring ye Bells at St. Catherines,
Oranges and Lemmons,
Ring ye bells at St. Clemens,
Owe me Five Farthings,
Ring ye Bells at St. Martins,
When will you pay me,
Ring ye Bells at ye Old Bailey,
When I am Rich,
Ring ye Bells at Fleetditch,
When will that be,
Ring ye Bells at Stepney,
When I am Old,
Ring ye Bells at St. Pauls.
Here comes a Candle to light you to Bed.
And here comes a Chopper to Chop off yr Head.'

Our brother in the Society, Frater Audax, theorised that this

rhyme traces a ley line of subterranean force across London, one activated—his word was ‘awakened’—by the ringing of the bells of specific churches in a specific rhythm. He dedicated his last months to attempting to determine which churches (and which version of the rhyme) were the relevant ones: for example ‘Fleetditch’ above might also be ‘Shoreditch’, St. Martins might refer to St. Martin Onger or to the moneylender’s street St. Martin’s Lane, and one is probably more familiar with a version replacing ‘ye Bells at St. Pauls’ with ‘the Great Bell of Bow’. Indeed, the ‘St. Clemens’ referred to here might be St. Clement’s Eastcheap, although the verger of St. Clement Danes rejected that hypothesis with some heat when I was inquiring after Brother Audax following his disappearance.

Seven Dials (X1, 13L)

This district at the heart of the parish of St. Giles in the Fields took its name from an hexagonal obelisk raised at the intersection of seven streets in 1693. At its summit were carved six sundials, one for each face of the obelisk. The missing seventh sundial was, of course, the obelisk itself. Now the entire obelisk is missing, demolished by a mob in 1773 in the belief that some great treasure or power would come from its destruction. It has since been reconstructed and currently adorns the town green in Weybridge, Surrey, although the dials have been removed.) The neighbourhood rapidly became a byword for squalor and criminality, both as ‘Seven Dials’ and as the ‘St. Giles Rookery’.

Indeed, it serves almost as an example of the curious power of its *genius loci*. St. Giles is the patron of beggars, cripples and epileptics; a description in emblem of the St. Giles mob if ever there were one. Intriguingly, one may note that epileptics have long been considered ‘touched’ or otherwise in communication with higher Powers—this was as true among the Roman Caesars as it

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is today among Siberian fetish-workers. Similarly, Father Legba, the Voodoo god corresponding to the Opener of the Threshold, is commonly depicted as a cripple. So perhaps it should come as little surprise that Seven Dials has long hosted astrologers, palm-readers, clairvoyants, herbalists, dream-interpreters and other occultists; and doubtless mountebanks among them. The vast Irish population of the district may well have included numerous cunning-men and other heirs to the folk remedies and rituals of the Celtic past, not least because the dwellers in the Rookery could not afford doctor's bills.

Even after the clearance of the worst of the slums, the spirit of the Dials remains: foreign secret societies from the Mafia to the Bolsheviks have plotted in the myriad garrets and unlicensed taverns on these narrow streets. Freemasons, Swedenborgians, Theosophists and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn have



DUDLEY STREET, SEVEN DIALS

all been drawn to St. Giles' parish for their ritual centres and study halls. Certainly any sensitive soul who sleeps in the absent shadow of the sundial may find, as I have, their dreams turning toward landscapes and vistas pregnant with archetypal meaning. Although I have not depended for my own illumination on 'the sister of sleep', opium or hashish smoked in certain upper rooms in the Dials reportedly enjoys a vast enhancement of effect. With a modicum of discretion, and some effort at shedding outward forms of respectability, the querent may obtain such substances and the key to an appropriate attic room open to the moonlight and to the sendings of Hypnos, god of Dream.

**§ The Society for Psychical Research, 31 Tavistock Square
(X, 13J)**

How pleased I was to hear that Edith Lyttelton has recently been appointed president of this illustrious society. Originally set up in 1882, the SPR seeks to study the unexplained through scientific methods and is, I believe, currently engaged in a transatlantic correspondence with Professor Rhine's Parapsychological Laboratory in the United States. The SPR are happy to be consulted regarding any reports of matters spiritualist, mesmeric or psychical and can be contacted via the Secretary at this address, being their national headquarters. The interested correspondent can be easily connected via telephony during normal office hours, or may prefer to write should the matter be less urgent. The SPR publishes its *Proceedings* regularly, and other books and pamphlets from time to time.

Membership is open to all. The prospective member must simply submit an application form to the Secretary. A decision on his or her suitability for membership will be made at the next quarterly meeting of the SPR's governing committee and the applicant notified of the outcome of his application shortly afterwards.

There is a small annual membership fee. As one might expect, the SPR have excellent archives and a good library. As a member, I have thoroughly explored them and find the plaster casts of body parts materialised by spirit mediums to be the most intriguing. These are not on open display, as they are fragile, but are packed away carefully in boxes. The Secretary is pleased to show them to visitors, should he not be too busy. I would advise the interested gentleman or lady member to book such a viewing in advance.

§ Somerset House, The Strand (XI, 14L)

The eminent Parisian investigator Le Normand corroborates my late acquaintance Mr. Carnacki in this detail: a house whose builder and owner dies by violence before he takes possession is a house permanently open to necromantic Outside forces. Such a house was the original Somerset House, designed by an unknown architect and built in 1547 from the stones of desecrated churches (including the Dance of Death cloister from St. Paul's) on the site of a demolished charnel house.

The Duke of Somerset was executed for treason in 1552, and the house fell to the then-Princess Elizabeth. It remained 'yet unfinished' in 1598, forty years after her accession to the throne. During the years 1567 and 1568 the alchemist Cornelius de Noye and possibly the magus John Dee used Somerset House for occult researches. Charles I gave Somerset House to his wife Henrietta Maria, who wept at her loveless marriage and at the bizarre death of a court dwarf who fell from an upper window in 1627. The bodies of Queen Anne of Denmark, King James I, Oliver Cromwell, Henry of Gloucester (brother of Charles II), Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia, the Duke of Albermarle and the Earl of Sandwich all lay in state at this royal morgue. After the final departure of Henrietta Maria from England, Somerset House fell into neglect, a lodging of convenience for Crown dependents and impoverished nobility.

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It was at this low state that Somerset House became a meeting-place –and I would argue, the most important ritual centre –for the first of London’s Hell-Fire Clubs. Headed by the Duke of Wharton, this avowed society of dæmoniacks met in Somerset House from 1719 until the Crown suppressed the organisation in 1722. They had two other lairs: the Earl of Hillsborough’s house on Hanover Square in Westminster and on Conduit Street in the West End. There may be some connection between the Hell-Fire Club’s rituals and the mysterious 1810 fire in the Conduit Street house of Frederick North, former governor of Ceylon, and the even more mysterious ‘death by bruising’ of the statesman Windham while attempting to save the books in North’s library.

While my investigations tend to dismiss occult rumours about Lord Dashwood’s later incarnation of the Hell-Fire Club, being a society of antinomian orgiasts who met in provincial Medmenham; Lord Wharton’s Hell-Fire Club was an entirely different matter. Certain journals and privately printed books that



SOMERSET HOUSE AND ST. MARY-LE-STRAND, 1836

have come into my possession indicate that the original Hell-Fire Club intended something greater than mere rakehell posturing.

The Duke of Wharton was a born conspirator: a Jacobite in Hanoverian London, a founding Grand Master of Freemasonry who later founded the Order of the Gormagons to harry the Freemasons unto death. (In this connection I find the 1678 death of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, stabbed and strangled by three 'unworthy craftsmen' –two of whom worked at Somerset House – and dumped on Druidically significant Primrose Hill, suggestive in the extreme.) His right-hand man the Earl of Lichfield is well-known in certain circles as a patron of esoteric musical studies; the third main Hell-Fire figure, Viscount Hillsborough, had many contacts amongst Irish conspirators and within the renewed Order of Druidry emerging at that time. The other twenty to forty members have not come down through history, although again I must emphasise that my researches imply much greater influence and danger than such anonymity might suggest to the unimaginative.

The current Somerset House, designed by Sir William Chambers in 1776, was erected on the site of the original structure and retains the original basements and cellars. It was to house a number of government departments including the Admiralty and the Inland Revenue. Although some of my readers may feel the latter to be the most malevolent of the forces under discussion, supernatural phenomena at Somerset House are associated with the ghosts of the earlier murder victims –Godfrey and the duelist Woodall –and strangely perhaps with Lord Nelson, whose spare form appears surrounded by mist as he walks to some long-ago appointment.

§ The Suicide Circle, Pall Mall (X, 12M)

It is believed that a number of these Circles exist in large cities around the world. Their membership is restricted to twelve living

members only. A man may join in a fit of despair; perhaps he has been left at the altar or has run up an insurmountable debt at the gaming tables, but once one joins one may never leave. The foolish dabbler will be punished when his turn comes, for a pledge once made cannot be rescinded.

The next to die is decided either by their seniority within the society or, in the manner of their European counterparts on the throw of a die. While other deaths may take place from time to time, at least one member of the society dies each year by indulging in an act of ritual suicide at midnight on the 31st December, thus marking that liminal space between the old and the new year.

You may note that I said each circle had twelve *living* members. It also has many more Invisibles, members who have shrugged off this mortal coil but whose unhappy spirits live on in the Circle's meeting house. I have tracked the Circle to Pall Mall, but regret I am too timid to reveal the full address. The nature of the organisation might suggest that a room big enough for twelve people to meet is sufficient headquarters; no particular resources are required. Perhaps a psychic might be able to detect the lost souls hovering around the place and so locate the exact building?

§ The Temple of the Brotherhood, The Strand (XI, 14L)

To our brethren here in Great Britain I need hardly describe the beauty of our small Temple, tucked away in its small alleyway just off The Strand. Most of you have made a visit there at least once in your time in our illustrious Order. Our foreign brothers must look hard to find it as I will give neither address nor directions here, in case this book falls into the hands of our enemies. I suggest that if one makes the journey to London without first establishing the location of the Temple one should make the acquaintance of another Brother, make oneself known to him in the usual way, then request directions.

§ The Theosophical Society (X, 10K)

Founded in New York in 1875 by a group of mystics headed by Madame Helena Blavatsky, the London headquarters of the Theosophical Society are in Gloucester Place. Open to spiritual seekers of all faiths, past presidents include the social reformer Annie Besant and the occultist Dion Fortune. The Theosophical Society offers a wide ranging lecture programme on all manner of spiritual and occult matters and membership is open to all. It has a particularly good library, housing Madame Blavatsky's own private book collection, with much on mysticism, spiritualism, astrology, yoga and, of course, her most famous book *The Secret Doctrine*, the contents of which were revealed to her by Hidden Masters of Tibet.

Adherents to the teachings of Madame Blavatsky believe mankind to be evolving through a sequence of Root Races, the first being purely ethereal. Later races acquired physical bodies and lived in Hyperborea and Atlantis. We are, they say, of the fifth Root Race, the Aryans, at this stage in human evolution. There are two more stages yet to come.

To join one merely needs to write to the Secretary and pay the membership fee. The prospective member may be invited to interview by the Society's committee to assess his suitability for membership.



§ Tothill Fields (X, 13M)

Marked today by Tothill Street, Tothill Fields was an area of marshy land which once stretched from the Palace of Westminster to what is now Westminster Cathedral. Tot Hill was one of the Druids' three sacred hills in London, the others being Tower Hill and Penton Hill.

The name Tothill is most likely to be a corruption of Toot Hill, meaning a lookout hill, but some believe the name is evidence of local Druidic worship of the god *Teut*, also known as *Teutates*. Still other seekers derive the name from *Thoth* or *Teuth*, Egyptian god of writing and magic, or conflate Teut with Teuth.

Yet others think it is a corruption of Moot Hill, being a place of meeting or parliament—I believe the location of the Houses of Parliament here is no coincidence. Tot hill became a place of execution for those convicted of witchcraft and is the location of several plague pits and the mass grave of one thousand Scots taken prisoner at the Battle of Worcester in 1651. Westminster Abbey is built upon a portion of Tothill Fields.

Again from *Wild Talents*, by Brother Charles Fort:

'Upon Sept. 16, 1920, London newspapers told of three fires that had broken out simultaneously in different departments of the Government Office, in Tothill Street, Westminster, London. It was not said that papers of no especial value had been destroyed, but it was said that these simultaneous fires had not been explained. London Sunday Express, May 2, 1920—'Upon the night of April 28, fire of mysterious origin broke out at the War Office, Constantinople, where the archives are stored. The iron doors were locked and it was impossible to gain entrance to the building until afternoon. Many important documents were destroyed'.

It has been suggested to me that these fires were connected with the 1920 negotiations for the establishment of the British protectorate

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over Iraq, formerly the Turkish territory of Mesopotamia. I have been led to infer that the British Civil Commissioner in Baghdad at that time, who had extensive experience in India and Persia with Parsee and Magian fire-worshippers (and was connected in some mysterious way with Colonel Lawrence's more abstruse desert researches), directed these fires by means of Magian lore. This official was nonetheless removed from his post and given a knighthood and his retirement. He currently divides his time between Persia, where he represents the Anglo-Persian Oil Company; and London, where he agitates for Mussolini.

I cannot confirm this theory save by saying that more than one occult circle of my acquaintance has verified the existence of these flame spirits, or elementals, and that rituals do exist to call them up to a certain spot. Such a ritual, gone awry, might well have sparked the Great Fire of 1666!

§ Tyburn Stone, Edgeware Road (X, 10L)

Tyburn Stone in Edgeware Road, at the south-east corner of



TYBURN'S TRIPLE TREE IN THE 17TH CENTURY

Connaught Square, marks the former site of London's primary gallows, where perhaps 25,000 criminals were executed until the gallows was torn down in 1783. The builders of the Connaught Square uncovered numberless human remains, both whole and partial, when extending the roads in the 1820s. Even today grisly relics surface during road works and basement repairs in this area of Bayswater. The soil around Connaught Square and beneath Tyburn Stone may still possess the unnatural quickening qualities ascribed to the earth below a gallows, although I do not recommend attempting to raise a mandrake or mould a Hand of Glory with the present unknown admixture of clays and loam.

'Tyburn's fatal tree' sat on an older Saxon stone, *Oswulfstane*, excavated during the raising of the Marble Arch in 1851. The *Oswulfstane* disappeared in 1869.

§ University College London, Gower Street (X, 12J)

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) was the founder of University College, a social reformer and, perhaps above all, a staunch Utilitarian. Bentham was a leading supporter of the Anatomy Act of 1832 which sought to end bodysnatching by providing a legal method of providing medical schools with the cadavers they needed for anatomy lessons. Bentham became perhaps the first Englishman to legally will his body to science when he died shortly before the Act was passed. He believed that he should do so, to set a good example.

Once he had fulfilled his duty on the anatomy table, Bentham's skeleton was wired back together, his body padded with straw and, dressed in a good suit of clothes, he took up his new duties supervising the everyday activities of the College from his glass-fronted case in the South Cloisters. There are also reports of his posthumous attendance at various committee meetings. Not all of him did attend, however, as Bentham's head was not deemed

in good enough condition for display so was replaced with a wax replica. Bentham is said to still patrol the corridors of the College at night. Watchmen and students at their books in the small hours have reported hearing the 'click, click' of his walking stick.

Bentham has, over the years, become an embodiment of the rivalry between University College London and King's College London. His head was once, I believe, abducted and held to ransom by the opposition, and the case in which he resides was tampered with quite recently. It seems that someone had attempted to gain access through the wooden back of the box, but must have been disturbed, as little more than superficial grazing of the wood had occurred.

§ The Warburg Library (X, 13J)

The Warburg is a recent addition to the University of London, and a most welcome one from the point of view of the occultist. It seeks to support the study of the Classical period in European history, which its many thousands of books and artefacts do most admirably. My German correspondents have informed me that there are some excellent publications on the history of magic and religion in Europe from the classical period onwards, including a number of notable grimoires, although a catalogue of the collection is not yet available in English. The collection has only this year moved here from Hamburg because the gentleman who founded the collection, Mr. Aby Warburg, dislikes the National Socialists and does not wish them to appropriate the books.

To access the collection one should apply to the Librarian at Thames House, Millbank, where the Library has set up home. Be aware, though, that most of the books are still in crates on the premises, which are some distance from the Bloomsbury location of much of the University. A young man named Thomas Sheldon has been entrusted with the cataloguing and shelving,

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a task which is obviously most arduous as Sheldon can often be found slaking his thirst in The Speaker in Great Peter Street of a lunchtime. Perhaps the dusty books encourage a dry throat?

§ **Watkins Bookshop, Cecil Court (X, 13L)**

At its present site of 21 Cecil Court since 1901, Watkins has been patronised by Macgregor Mathers, W. B. Yeats, A. E. Waite and Aleister Crowley, all members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn; and by G. R. S. Mead, a leading Theosophist. The bookshop is also a publisher of esoteric works. The shop's upper floor sells books on Gnostic Christianity, Theosophy, Anthroposophy and works by modern writers such as Mathers, Waite and Fortune. Watkins also carries a good stock of magical journals and magazines, often privately published. The London Spiritualist Alliance's journal *Light* may be purchased there, alongside the new weekly newspaper *Psychic News* and Dion Fortune's *Inner Light* magazine. Finally, there is a small stock of magical tools including Tarot cards, candles and incenses. At the counter near the door, the knowledgeable staff delight in sharing their recommendations.

Downstairs in the basement one finds an extensive collection of books on Eastern religion, including yoga, those books perceived as darker and perhaps less appealing to the casual passer-by, such as the works of Crowley, the *Key of Solomon* and academic volumes such as that by Miss Margaret Murray. Here too are the antiquarian, out-of-print and other valuable tomes kept in three large locked glass-fronted cabinets. Although the spines of these books can be easily read, the glass panes are small so the would-be thief cannot simply break a pane and help himself.

Behind the counter in the basement is the door to the stock-room which is often left open to allow assistants to easily access books set aside for collection by customers. These are kept on

a shelf just inside. Once inside the stock-room, one can find the keys to the cabinets on a hook next to the reserved books. As this is also the room where books are packed ready for despatch by post, another shelf holds a box of index cards with the names and addresses of purchasers and a note of the books they have bought.

On my last visit, the assistant was delighted to show me a folio copy of extracts from the *Necronomicon* translated by Dr. Dee in the sixteenth century. Although the original is ancient, the volume is an eighteenth-century copy in good condition. The original Arabic text is shown, with translations and annotations by the Doctor. Interestingly, he draws parallels between the magical explorations of Al-Hazred and his own working with angels. I should note that another bookseller of my acquaintance warns against the great number of forgeries prevalent in that century; even if the copy is authentic, it may only be an authentic hoax perpetrated by some eccentric scholar or unscrupulous antiquarian..

§ The Wheatsheaf, Rathbone Place (X, 12K)

I recently called in to the Wheatsheaf following a visit to my aunt in Bloomsbury. It is, of course, Aleister Crowley's favourite watering hole and he was in his usual seat in the Saloon when I arrived. After a dram or two, Crowley was more than happy to engage in a wide ranging conversation encompassing yoga, chess and the most likely date for the upcoming apocalypse. As always with Aleister it is best not to ask questions. If one lets the gentleman lead the conversation, making appropriate encouraging comments from time to time, he will become more expansive as the evening wears on.

§ The Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, Wigmore Street (X, 11K)

This museum was founded twenty years ago by Dr. Henry Wellcome. Although the collection is invaluable to the science undergraduate, the museum is open to the public on weekdays and Saturday mornings upon advance application to the curator. Inside one finds the Hall of Primitive Medicine, a most intriguing room filled with shrunken heads, magical fetishes and all manner of trinkets and amulets pertaining to the cult of the dead. The next room is the Statuary Room, where one may admire figures of those well-known in the history of medicine from the ancient Greeks to the most modern British surgeons. Glass cases contain a selection of medical and dental implements from the earliest findings to the most recent technologies.

A portrait gallery leads to the Alchemy Room, illustrating how this medieval art became modern chemistry and, again, with many old artefacts on display. There is also a room on the history of War Surgery. I was able to see at first hand in the trenches of the Great War how necessity was the mother of invention, and this room admirably illustrates the point.

Finally, there is a replica of a seventeenth century London apothecary's shop, such as might have existed during the time of the Great Plague, with many accoutrements of the period such as bottles of physick and the alarming bird-featured doctor's mask worn as a prophylactic measure. One can clearly see from this excellent exhibit that these men had not yet abandoned the ways of Paracelsus, and indeed the practice of alchemy for the material, rational approach we see in today's physicians. A most remarkable collection, with much to engage the scientifically-minded gentleman.

§ **Westminster Abbey (X, 13N)**

The Collegiate Church of St. Peter, better known as Westminster Abbey, is one of the best examples of Early English architecture and has an association with British royalty going back some one thousand years. King Edward the Confessor built the church, which was consecrated in 1065. Shortly afterwards came the Battle of Hastings and the coming of William the Conqueror who was crowned here in 1066. Many of England's monarchs are interred therein, together with our most eminent scientists and poets.

In the course of my explorations, I have met at least two men who claimed to know of a body-snatching ring that trafficked in the remains of these great sons of Britain. Oddly, the more believable of the two men told the wilder story, of 'night crawlers', inhuman creatures of canine visage who dominate the trade. I have heard of these beasts –or beings –haunting other London burial places and had previously assumed the tales to be merely folklore, but my interlocutor provided such grimly precise details that I am tempted to abandon my habit of night-time rambles through



WESTMINSTER ABBEY

cemeteries and churchyards.

The occultist may wish to be aware that the Abbey is contained within the former Tothill Fields and was once known as Thorney Isle. The first church built here was in the first century AD by King Lucius. Like many Christian places of worship it was built on a pagan temple; this one to the Roman sun god Apollo. As we have already seen, the area is also linked to pre-Roman Druidry.

Inside the Abbey, look for evidence of demolition work between the transept and nave. This is where the Abbey's structure was modified during the Reformation. The only element of the older work that still survives is the Demon's Door. Intrigued by its name, I made enquiries of my guide, only to be told that the nomenclature is traditional and nothing more. He then directed my attention to the delightful stained glass windows.

The ghost of a monk is said to walk in the cloisters in the late afternoon, at around four o'clock. He is no typical revenant, being perfectly cognisant of his surroundings and perfectly amenable to a conversation with visitors, provided they are able to converse in Latin. It is always difficult to establish the historical period of a religious ghost given that their garb has changed little over the centuries, but I would imagine this gentleman pre-dates the Reformation.

Should you wish to visit the Abbey, it is open to the public daily unless a service is taking place. Guided tours cost sixpence.

The West End (X)

The West End, home of London's theatres, fashionable restaurants and major shopping streets. Bram Stoker managed theatres here in the last century and it is the haunt of many a glamorous socialite. Less savoury, perhaps, are the streets of Soho where supper clubs, bars and houses of ill repute abound.

§ **The Apokrypha Bookshop, Covent Garden (X, 13L)**

One of London's many small bookshops, Apokrypha has an extensive stock of mostly second-hand books on the occult, folklore, religion and history including the occasional rare and out-of-print tome. It is owned and run by the delightful Miss Florence Hamilton-Beech. A regular programme of reasonably priced evening lectures runs in the room above the shop on Tuesdays and these are open to the general public. The programme is printed some weeks in advance and may be obtained from the shop.

Florence is an engaging hostess and treats paying customers as valued guests. Sherry is served after the lecture and guests often remain in conversation for some hours. Although they may initially be rather guarded about their occult interests, regular visitors get to know each other well and even the casual caller may overhear something to his advantage. I have been a regular attender at Apokrypha for some years now and always enjoy the frank exchange of views and the informative talks.

Last week, that is 19th September of this year, however, something most untoward and unfortunate happened there. I hope I do not witness its like again. We were enjoying sherry following a talk by a Professor M. (as thus he was described in the programme) on astrology in ancient Babylonia when a heated debate turned into a violent altercation. A young man I did not recognise raised his fist to the learned professor, accusing the older man of 'not knowing what you are talking about' and 'meddling in matters you do not understand'. This was odd, as the Professor had just that evening left no doubt as to the immense depth of his knowledge. Another gentleman and myself handled the young man firmly and he soon found himself sat smartly upon the pavement outside. Florence was rather taken aback but quickly regained her composure and the evening continued without further incident, although I detected an uncomfortable undercurrent and decided to stay until the

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very end of proceedings to make sure Miss Hamilton-Beech shut up shop and caught the tram home safely.

§ **The Atlantis Bookshop, Museum Street (X, 13K)**

Opened in 1922, this bijou, dark and utterly charming bookshop rather resembles a Victorian parlour and is the haunt of many an occultist. The owner is a gentleman named Michael Juste, who I believe to be a practicing occultist. I cannot, however, substantiate the rumour that magickal rituals take place in its basement. The basement is accessible from the shop floor down a narrow staircase just by the counter. In the basement is a small kitchen and the usual facilities; beyond those a room which I found to be full of books in cartons. I noted, however, that these could be easily relocated should the space be required for pursuits other than storage. I also noted a strange atmosphere about the place. Not disquieting, by any means, but a sense that there was more to the place than normal human senses could perceive.

§ **50 Berkeley Square (X, 11L)**

Notable as being the most famous haunted house in London, but one may only speculate as to the nature of the haunting. A Miss Curzon owned the house until 1859 and reported apparitions and other manifestations as early as 1840. Upon her demise, the reclusive Mr. Myers let it and lived exclusively in an upper room; in 1873, during an action against Mr. Myers for failure to pay taxes, the judge summed up No. 50, saying 'the house in question is known as a "haunted house" and has occasioned a good deal of speculation amongst the neighbours'. Numerous visitors in the 1870s, from Lord Lyttleton to a pair of housebreaking, inebriated sailors, reported supernatural experiences in rooms 'saturated with electric horror'.

It is true that the house has remained largely empty for many

years now, with attempts to let it ending in failure as new tenants have so far vacated the premises extremely quickly. Many of the stories attached to the house refer to a room which engenders a feeling of dread in any who spend the night there. Some claim a madman lived and died there and his spirit remains; others maintain some monstrous creature, half human, half animal wanders the place after dark. Yet more accounts suggest the ghost of a little girl dressed in tartan frequents its gloomy corridors. Those brave enough to spend the night in the haunted room quit the place before dawn, driven half-mad. Certainly, they are in no fit condition to recount what they saw.

The house is presently available for lease. Apply to Messrs Springer and Barrett, Solicitors 133 High Holborn for particulars and to arrange a viewing.

§ The British Museum and Reading Room, Museum Street (X, 13K)

Given the extreme age of so many of the exhibits, and also their provenance, it is unsurprising that the British Museum is a magnet for the occultist. It is indeed a storehouse of mystical and magical treasures if one knows where to look. One of the founders of the Golden Dawn, Samuel MacGregor Mathers, was a frequent visitor to the Reading Room in the 1880s, where he took full advantage of the occult bookstocks and, apparently, irritated library staff with his abrupt manner. Both Mathers and Crowley drew upon original manuscripts held in the Museum to assemble their 1904 translation of the *Goetia*, or *Legemeton*.

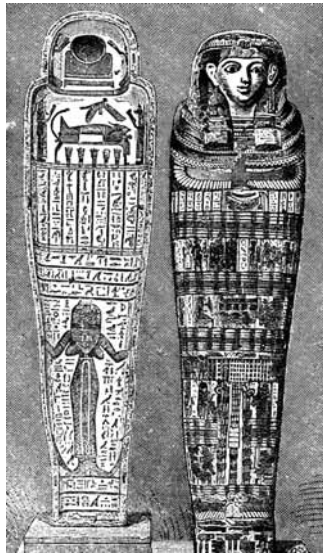
While pursuing my own researches in the Reading Room, I have often received, seemingly by accident, books that I did not request, but that imparted strange perspectives to my studies. Some of my fellow scholars jocularly maintain that a conspiracy of librarians maintains the world's true store of knowledge in the

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British Museum, allowing their true and mighty tomes to briefly manifest to seemingly random scholars, with the intent of building some arcane or occult structure by manipulating others' research. Certainly the occasional frustrating failure –all the more painful because of its rarity –to provide the correct tome requested is enough to make one believe a malevolent hand to be at work. On a more serious note, librarians absolutely refuse to allow access to certain works –or even to admit of their existence in the collection –to researchers they consider unable or unworthy to properly utilise them.

Only yesterday, whilst strolling in the Egyptian galleries, I nodded to Dion Fortune as she perambulated with a companion from the Company of the Inner Light. The Egyptian galleries are held by many occultists to be particularly significant. Indeed, some believe that ancient priests charged up funerary relics rather like a battery and that we can still tap into that stored power today if we have the skill. Perhaps too it is the sense of mystery that pervades Egyptian relics in particular, and the striking representations of their gods, that stirs something deep in what Dr. Freud would call our unconscious. Dr. Jung might go still farther, positing that we share in a collective unconscious, of which the Egyptian gods are the true rulers.

The most famous story of the Egyptian gallery is, perhaps, that of exhibit number 22542, an inner coffin lid for a mummified priestess of Amen-Ra from the 22nd



dynasty that came to the Museum in 1889. It is said that the lid exudes an aura of pure evil and has been responsible for the death of thirteen men. The *Empress of Ireland* was sunk by a storm of preternatural ferocity in the St. Lawrence River whilst conveying this cursed artefact to a museum in America. Some psychics of my acquaintance made a private arrangement to examine the coffin lid in 1921 and claim to have exorcised a shapeless form with a strangely flat face. This has not alleviated the sense of dread in the room, however, and museum attendants remain reluctant to be left alone with 22542. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, the well-known Egyptologist, translator of the *Book of the Dead*, and rumoured practitioner of Egyptian rituals, has reportedly told at least one journalist, 'Never print what I say in my lifetime, but that mummy case caused the War'.

It appears that the malefic influence of the priestess' coffin lid extends beyond her case. People using the nearby British Museum Underground station have reported seeing and hearing Egyptian characters in the tunnels late at night.

As an aside, the only other ghost story associated with the Museum is that of an African mask reputed to be cursed. Anyone who touches it will immediately find deep wounds opening up all over their body. The mask has no sharp edges.

The visitor will find much to interest him beyond the Egyptian galleries, however. I find the relics of Ancient Britain particularly engaging, and there are interesting Roman sarcophagi and gods and goddesses of all dimensions. If time is limited, I suggest viewing the Battersea Shield (a votive offering to a river deity), some charming Nordic chessmen of the twelfth century, the Magna Carta and the fourth century Greek Bible. And of course, whilst visiting the Egyptian gallery one would want to peruse the hieroglyphs, Demotic and Greek scripts etched onto the enigmatic Rosetta Stone.

§ **The Buckingham, Berwick Street (X, 12K)**

A fashionable supper club where one may dine and dance to the latest jazz music. The Buckingham has not been open very long, but has already garnered quite a reputation on the London social scene. I confess to being a regular at this club, which is especially famous for its cocktail menu. Archie the barman claims to be able to concoct any cocktail the customer can name, from memory. Speciality of the house is the Buckingham Fizz which contains Curaçao, lime juice, soda and a secret ingredient known only to Archie. Overconsumption of Buckingham Fizz has led to many a young rip waking up in an alleyway, his tie askew, his hat caved in and his wallet vanished.

Alas I have been forced to give up Buckingham Fizz, for now at least, following a most unpleasant experience last month. I had spent a pleasant night with friends at the Buckingham, dancing with a charming young lady and drinking a little more than was good for me. The young lady seen safely into a taxi to Belgravia, I had to wait some time for a cab for myself. Standing on the corner of Berwick Street and Oxford Street I was suddenly overcome with a feeling of absolute dread. Down the road towards me came a line of tall, thin men dressed identically all in black, with black top hats draped in black crepe, in the manner of an undertaker. The atmosphere turned colder and I drew my astrakhan coat closer, searching wildly for a cab. The men moved in a measured way, silently and without haste. As they drew closer I realised that they all had the same facial features –mine! Luckily, a hackney cab appeared at that point and the driver whisked me off to Pimlico. I decided the morning after that this must have been an effect of too much alcohol, but I was at that time unaware that I would meet these gentlemen again –*see the entry for Bank Station.*

§ 67–69 Chancery Lane (1X, 14K)

For a brief period in 1899 an apartment in this building was home to Aleister Crowley and fellow Golden Dawn member Allan Bennett. It is reputed to have contained two temples and to have been Crowley's home during a period of extremely black magick. There are reports that he kept a human skeleton there, which he fed with the blood of songbirds. During their time of residence he and Bennett conjured demons by the score. Unsurprisingly, resonances of the doings therein are embedded in the bricks and mortar.

The apartment is presently tenanted by a Miss Baker and several Pekingese dogs. I did visit to enquire whether it might be possible for myself and Miss Clare, a psychic of my acquaintance (a well-bred young lady, I might add) to visit the flat, but the lady declined most forcefully and, when I remonstrated gently, set the monsters to nip at my ankles, whereupon I left.

§ Charing Cross Hotel, Charing Cross Station (X, 13L)

It is believed that French occultist Eliphas Levi stayed at the Charing Cross Hotel during a visit to London in the 1850s. Some have speculated that this was where he stayed during his summoning of the spirit of Greek magus Apollonius of Tyana, an act of necromancy. Apparently Levi pointed a sword at the spirit which caused the said arm pointing the sword to be numb for some days. I wonder if, given his sudden incapacity, Levi was able to order the wraith back from whence it came? The summoning was unlikely to have been carried out in the room, as Levi advised that one should choose 'a solitary or prohibited place . . . such as a cemetery haunted by evil spirits, an avoided ruin in the country, the vault of an abandoned convent, the spot where an assassination has been perpetrated, a druidic altar or a former temple of idols'. It says much for London's dark past that Monsieur Levi

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would have been able to find many suitable sites within walking distance of his lodgings.

I decided to begin a psychic quest of sorts to try and find the location and, most importantly, to locate any residual energy which may have contributed to the current disquiet in London's magical field.

After several nights of nocturnal perambulations, I had explored many churchyards and found nothing. Then one night I was drawn to the Savoy Chapel, which has a somewhat neglected air. I could easily climb the crumbling wall and begin to test the atmosphere. Once settled, I set to my meditations in the hope of reaching into the Akashic record and viewing what had taken place that night seventy-odd years before. In my mind's eye I saw a man in white robes and there was a sudden cloying smell of incense. As my focus became sharper I thought I perceived for a brief moment a cloud of white vapour coalescing into human form. Then it felt like a thunderbolt had struck my third eye. Although I wanted to see more, I recoiled in pain; my sense of



THE SAVOY CHAPEL ROYAL IN FLAMES, 1864

self-preservation was stronger than my curiosity, and drove me from the Chapel. It was some time before I regained my composure. My sleep was most troubled that night, as the images I saw haunted my dreams. On the following morning, after the sun was well risen, I returned to seek tangible evidence of Levi's workings. Of course it was many years ago, but I fancied I saw a trace or two of markings on one of the tombs; perhaps a triangle or a portion of a pentagram.

§ The Fitzroy Tavern, Charlotte Street (X, 12K)

A short hop from the British Museum, the Fitzroy Tavern has been a public house since the 1880s, but opened under its current name in 1909 and has been run by popular landlord Judah 'Pop' Kleinfeld since that date. The hostelry has fast become a favourite haunt of London's bohemians after attracting the attention of socialite Nina Hamnett, a lady with more than a passing acquaintance with Aleister Crowley. Patrons tend towards the bohemian and include painters and musicians, notably the artist Augustus John. Another regular is Miss Betty May, an artist's model and disciple of Crowley who earned the sobriquet Tiger Woman following a knife fight in Paris. When so inclined, this lady crouches on the floor and laps her drink from a saucer in the manner of a prize Persian cat. Mr. Crowley himself has been known to take refreshment here after a day at his books in the Reading Room, although he is more likely to be seen at the nearby Wheatsheaf.

§ Freemasons Hall, Great Queen Street (XI, 14K)

I was delighted to recently receive an invitation from the Duke of Connaught himself to the opening of this grand building, which houses the United Grand Lodge of England. It opened in July and will be known as the Masonic Peace Memorial, to commemorate those brave Masons who died in the service of their

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country during the Great War. The Duke, as you know, is currently the Grand Master of this Masonic Lodge. I am not at liberty to disclose much of that contained therein, but I can tell you that the architecture is both ornate and expensive and will doubtless inspire awe in the new initiate. I was particularly drawn to the pentacle mosaic guarding the main entrance. In addition to various meeting rooms, this magnificent edifice houses an excellent library and a collection of Masonic regalia, including an apron which belonged to the renowned surgeon and Master Mason Dr. William Withey Gull, surgeon to Queen Victoria.

§ The Grant Museum of Zoology, University College London (X, 12J)

This small museum contains much to delight the antiquarian, including a box of dodo bones and an entire skeleton of the rare thylacine or Tasmanian wolf; a most singular hound with a bite that could take off a man's head! A glass case in room three houses a peculiar fossil collection labelled simply 'Dhole (Burma, 1817)'. This must be an accident of labelling as the strange vermiform relics therein bear absolutely no resemblance whatsoever to any specimens of the Asian dog. The Grant Museum is open to the public for a few hours each week, but its main function is as a research facility for zoology undergraduates and their professors.

§ The Hawthorn Tree, Wardour Street (X, 12K)

This is just one of a number of Soho drinking dens that attract a certain clientele. The Hawthorn Tree is not the abode of the occultist *per se*, but many dwellers in the demi-monde of occult London are also drawn to dabble in other forbidden areas. The Hawthorn Tree is best described as a public house where the outwardly respectable middle-class homosexual can, in relative anonymity, meet those working-class boys which I believe are known

as 'trade', although I cannot imagine that this place is unknown to the police. Crowley makes occasional visits here; as does Driberg, but rather more frequently. The landlady is the flamboyant and surprisingly tall Miss Mollie Danson who is noted for her deep voice, earthy sense of humour, acute business sense and fondness for London gin. Once tipsy, she tells a good tale about the regulars and is not known for her discretion.

I could not bring myself to visit more than once, and only, the reader will understand, for the purposes of research. I was greeted cordially enough, but felt rather as one does on visiting a foreign country for the first time. The conversation often lapsed into a form of slang, or colloquialism, which I could not comprehend. On my one foray I discovered that the drinks are somewhat overpriced, that there is vulgar entertainment where men dress as women and make lewd jokes and that they are not particular about licensing hours. Having satisfied my curiosity for the purposes of this book, I fetched my hat from the cloakroom and left around ten o'clock. Footsteps followed mine down Wardour Street towards the taxi rank. Turning around, I saw a heavily built man in a dark overcoat, his hat tipped down over his eyes. Fearing I had inadvertently misled the gentleman, given where I had spent the evening; and not wishing to engage him in conversation for fear of compounding the deceit, I strode out boldly and soon left my portly suitor behind.

§ Hobbes Court, Knightsbridge (X, 10N)

This middle-class island of flats and shops contrasts with the wealth and influence of its neighbouring district –indeed, there is a certain run-down quality to the buildings and streets here that more than explains the lowered rents. My attention was initially attracted to Hobbes Court by the wave of poltergeist activity reported here between 1925 and 1927, triggered according to local

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opinion by the digging of the Central Line Underground beneath the street. Hardly a house in the Court was without its knocking walls or thrumming floors, nightmare-plagued children or mysterious shadows seen in windows and mirrors; shadows inevitably followed by the shattering of the unlucky glass. My loquacious informant, a Mrs. Judd, said such happenings were not unknown in previous generations – she claimed her family lived in the nearby medieval village of Knight’s Bridge, as the district once was. (The name comes from a tale that two knights met on the bridge over the River Westbourne and killed each other in a frenzied duel to the death.) Mrs. Judd, who seemed to enjoy sharing local history with a courteous and well-read interlocutor, pointed out the house where the ghosts of three Italian children killed by an anti-Catholic mob in 1782 still ‘hum their Papist hymns.’ She also told me of the Hobbes Court Beelzebub, a shadowy, multi-armed figure with ‘devil’s horns and a fly’s head’ occasionally sighted by ‘those fated to commit murder most foul.’ Whether the Winged



BEELEZEBUB, DICTIONNAIRE INFERNAL, 1863

Head public house is related to this apparition, I could not say, although I can recommend their milk stout as a preventative for nightmares brought on by too much local history.

I subsequently confirmed many of Mrs. Judd's tales from contemporary broadsides and pamphlets and from a startling number of entries in the Newgate Calendar. I have approached Sir William Brinton, the eminent archaeologist of Troy who has lately thrown himself into British antiquities, with the theory that the 'Ulfs Tomb' mentioned in the Domesday Book as 'in the Marsh at West Bourne River' may have been somewhere in this area. I must admit that he has discouraged this line of research in terms that owe little to restraint and leave little room for further discussion on my part.

§ Hungaria Restaurant, Regent Street (X, 12L)

I recently passed by the Hungaria and spotted writer Dennis Wheatley engaged in an animated discussion over lunch with Aleister Crowley. Apparently Wheatley is known to indulge various of these chaps in the interests of research. I believe he has had similar assignations with the likes of the Rev. Montague Summers and Rollo Ahmed in the past.

The chef at the Hungaria, Monsieur Morel, is a small, excitable man who, even for one of his profession, takes food seriously. Despite working long into the evening, Morel is at the restaurant at seven each morning to personally receive early deliveries of food from the London markets. He spends up to an hour inspecting various crates and boxes in the alleyway behind his premises, admitting only first class produce to his kitchens. Many a delivery lad has gone away with his ears boxed for bringing inferior onions or on-the-turn fish.

§ The Hunterian Museum, Lincoln's Inn Fields (XI, 14K)

In 1799 the British Government purchased the private collection of eminent Scottish Surgeon John Hunter and presented it to the Royal College of Surgeons. This collection of specimens is used primarily for teaching medical students, but members of the public may view the collection on request. The museum is reached via a smart entry hall policed by a friendly and unusually observant doorman.

Once inside one is greeted by many exhibits pickled in alcohol. There are numerous freaks of nature: two-headed babies, prosections showing all manner of maladies and various surgical implements from a number of historical periods. I found myself particularly drawn to the skeleton of the giant, Charles Byrne, a man over seven and a half feet in height. An Irishman, he was exhibited as a freak in London in the eighteenth century and died at the age of twenty-two. Apparently surgeons flocked to his death bed 'like harpooners would around an enormous whale'. His wish to be buried at sea, so avoiding body snatchers, was ignored and his corpse ended up with Hunter who boiled away the flesh and preserved the skeleton. Mr. Byrne now rests in a glass box, and has resumed his vocation of freak, albeit in a more rarefied setting.

§ The International Psychics Club, Regent Street (X, 12L)

Both men and women interested in all aspects of psychic phenomena are eligible to join this club, in London's West End. It functions primarily as a meeting-place, and many esoteric discussions have taken place within its walls. Perhaps the most remarkable fact about this society is that, while it does not actively pursue secrecy, very little is known about it. It did produce a journal, the *International Psychic Gazette*, for a period early in the century, but this ceased publication in 1912. The *Gazette* contained articles of a parapsychological nature, applying the methods of the natural

sciences rather than those of the parlour medium. You may wish to be aware that second-hand copies of the *Gazette* are available for purchase at the Apokrypha bookshop. I have not been able to obtain a membership list or discover anything about its current activities. I do know that in 1925 it embarked upon an ambitious and extremely secret research project which I believe has a direct bearing on the threat facing London at the present time.

The Club meets at a Regents Street venue, but have no offices on the premises. The librarian at the Society of Psychical Research has intimated that interim reports have been placed with her organisation for safe-keeping, but they are in the Society's safe and not even she has access to them. The wife of one of the brothers of our Order was engaged upon missionary work in the slums of Rotherhithe when she overheard conversation of an occult nature between a group of bohemian gentle-folk and a gang of Norwegian sailors outside the Norwegian Seaman's Mission. Thinking these men might be colleagues of her husband, she approached them and was most unceremoniously rebuffed. From her account of the conversation and description of the party I believe them to be members of the IPC.

Kensington

Many of London's museums are here—the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, which houses many art and craft treasures. A number of institutions of interest to the occultist are in this borough and Kensington Gardens is a charming park.

§ Cambridge Gardens, Kensington (1X, 6K)

People travelling through Kensington late at night would be ill-advised to wait for a bus in Cambridge Gardens. They may see a Number 7 bus but it will not stop, for it is an apparition, a

'ghost bus'. Strangely, Cambridge Gardens has never been on the Number 7 bus route.

§ The London Spiritualist Alliance (XI, 9N)

Established since 1925 in its home at Queensberry Place, just around the corner from the famous Natural History Museum. Sir Alfred Conan Doyle was a former president. While its name is redolent of the darkened Victorian parlour séance, the LSA takes a rather more scientific approach. At one point Mr. Harry Price, the well-known ghost hunter and researcher into the paranormal, had his National Laboratory of Psychical Research in a flat on the top floor, a flat which I myself have visited (it has a very poky kitchen). Price's lease was terminated in 1925, but not before he had carried out various notable experiments including investigating Austrian medium Rudi Schneider and the popular Scottish medium Helen Duncan. Today the LSA not only investigates spiritualist phenomena but provides a training academy for would-be mediums. It produces a quarterly journal, *Light*, and houses a small but comprehensive library of spiritualist literature.

The library is at the front of the building and can be seen from the road. There are no other rooms on the ground floor, just an entrance hall where pamphlets and notices relating to spiritualist organisations and events are displayed. Teaching takes place in the basement and on the second floor (which our American brothers would describe as the third floor). On the first floor is a large meeting hall where public lectures and demonstrations of mediumship by both established spiritualist mediums and the LSA's trainees take place.

Membership is by application to The Secretary and a membership fee is charged. Members receive complimentary copies of *Light*, reduced price entry to events and free use of the library, which does allow borrowing.

**§ The National Laboratory of Psychical Research, 13
Roland Gardens, South Kensington (XIV, 90)**

After his lease on Queensberry Place was summarily terminated, Harry Price relocated his National Laboratory of Psychical Research to its current site in 1931. It was quickly business as usual and young author Dennis Wheatley has visited Price there, presumably as research for one of his shabby paperbacks. Price is at present investigating a young female psychic medium whom I know quite well and thus I have visited his premises on several occasions. On my last visit she was trying to move a glass under a cover with the power of her mind. She has also been engaged in thought-reading experiments. I was interested and amused by my observations of these activities, but neither Price's methodology or the talents of the young lady convinced on this occasion.

§ 89 Park Mansions, Knightsbridge (X, 10M)

As far as he can be said to be settled anywhere, this is the current abode of the Great Beast, Aleister Crowley. I would not advise the casual passer-by to call in, as Mr. Crowley is not always pleasant to visitors and is likely, in any case, to be out for much of the time. He is best found in one of the public houses close to the British Museum or in the Museum itself, but he is a great traveller and may well be abroad.

Vampires

From *Wild Talents*, by Charles Fort:

'Late at night, Feb. 2, 1913, the body of a woman was found on the tracks of the London Underground Railway, near the Kensington High-street station. The body had been run over, and the head had been cut off. The body was identified as that of Miss Maud Frances Davies, who, alone, had been travelling around the world, and, earlier in the day,

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had, upon a ship train, arrived in London. She had friends and relatives in South Kensington, and presumably she was on her way to visit them. But the explanation at the inquest (London Times, Feb. 6, 1913) was that she had probably committed suicide by placing her neck upon a rail.

'Dr. Townsend said that over the heart he found a number of small, punctured wounds, over a dozen of which had penetrated the muscles; and one had entered the ventricle cavity of the heart. These punctures had been caused in life, with a sharp instrument, such as a hat pin. They were not enough to cause death, but had been made a few hours previously'.

Upon December 29th, of this year, 1913, a woman, known as 'Scotch Dolly', was found dead in her room, 18 Ethan Street, S. E. London. A man, who had lived with her, was arrested, but was released, because he was able to show that, before the time of her death, he had left the woman. Her face was bruised, but she had seldom been sober, and the man, Williams, before leaving her, had struck her. The verdict was that had died of heart failure, 'from shock'.

Upon one of the woman's legs was found a series of 38 little, double wounds. They were not explained. 'The Coroner: 'Have you ever had a similar case, yourself?' Dr. Spilsbury: 'No, not exactly like this'.

It is a matter of criminological fact that certain deranged men derive pleasure from the ingestion of blood from a living human victim. It is a matter of anthropological fact that blood-drinking has been a common feature of many primitive religions and even the pre-Hellenistic rituals of Rome. Obviously, it exists symbolically today in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. I have it on excellent authority that certain Etruscan tombs depict blood-drinking as a common ceremony amongst the nobility and priesthood of that enigmatic people. Even the hardest-headed student, if he is

to keep a truly open mind, must therefore concede that 'vampire societies' are all too plausible in social conditions either conducive to degeneracy along the cultural scale, or among primitive societies not yet evolved to higher spiritual development.

The spiritualists, meanwhile, have presented further evidence of vampire phenomena –strange weakness, lassitude and even anaemia among the participants in numerous séances and inquiry circles. While not irrefutable to the sceptic and the materialist, to those of us who have perceived the supersensible world, the evidence is nonetheless clear. Note that I am not claiming that the creations of Sheridan Le Fanu or Bram Stoker stalk the streets of London, slaving for virginal flesh! The romances of Gothic fiction have no resemblance to the reality of vampirism in London, which is either a matter for the criminal alienist or the specialist in occult matters, as indeed it was (if my information is to be believed) in Coventry Street in 1922. But given the ability of the unscrupulous manipulator of spiritual forces to bend weaker minds to his will, one could certainly posit that a 'vampire spirit' might be implanted or invited into a human host, converting him into one of the unfortunate ghouls familiar from the criminal reports of Hamburg and Dusseldorf.

East End

The East End of London extends as far as Blackwall on the Thames, but begins at the edge of the City. The Bow Bells, which all true Cockneys must be born within the sound of, are in Cheapside in the City. The East End began as marshy ground outside the walls of the city proper, slowly drained by the original Black Wall of the Saxons. It has ever since been a place of chaos, poverty, death and foreign influence.

§ **Christ Church, Spitalfields (XI, 18K)**

This church, built between 1714 and 1729, is the clearest example of what its architect, Nicholas Hawksmoor, called the English Gothick. It combines Roman massing with sublimely disproportionate elements to convey a wholesale impression of a force not native to this Earth bearing or even rushing down upon the viewer. This impression is greatest at the west front of the church, where an immense steeple looms 200 feet above the street, crouching on a Tuscan-columned portico like the limbs of a great Sphinx. The east front of the church is scarcely more inviting, more reminiscent of a Roman temple than a Christian church. The interior is cramped and dim, a crypt-like airless space; which I believe to be the misguided work of one Ewan Christian, who redesigned the nave following a lightning-strike and fire in 1841.

Hawksmoor built five other churches in London and contributed similarly eerie and disturbing steeples for two more, all showing this blend of pagan and Gothic architecture. St. George's Bloomsbury, for example, takes its portico from the Temple of Bacchus at Baalbek in the Lebanon, and its tower from the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, one of the antique wonders of the world. In his time he suffered continuous obstruction by church and royal authorities; he was slandered as 'the devil's architect' and as a 'Sun worshipper' by those who preferred more restrained, Palladian designs as the century advanced to its Augustan, rational climax.

I have come upon an anonymous poem, printed in the 1880s or 1890s, that argues that Hawksmoor was the 'devil's architect' in truth, claiming his Roman designs and Egyptian pyramids and obelisks join in some dark pattern of forces, possibly akin to the ley lines of Mr. Watkins. One can, of course, join points on a map to any sort of design. The five (or seven) sites of Nicholas Hawksmoor's churches can be joined in a pentangle, a Troy-spiral,

or even an Eye of Horus. However, Hawksmoor was a devotee of 'holy terrour' and of Vitruvian, pagan architecture, itself created for ritual purpose. And he did site and align his churches precisely, even choosing land obstructed and otherwise inconvenient for ecclesiastical purposes. To the seeker after wisdom, the matter must remain open –and we cannot omit the possibility that Hawksmoor's pen and compass were manipulated by some Outside force that Hawksmoor knew nothing of.

§ Guinness Trust Building, Columbia Road (XI, 18I)

In 1924 a group of schoolboys reported a mysterious face appearing in one of the windows of the Guinness Trust Building. Despite investigations the identity of the face was never discovered. It was concluded that the boys imagined the face, possibly after spending too much time in the local picture house watching moving pictures rather inappropriate for their age, but that, to my mind, seems rather dismissive. Often children perceive things the narrow, jaded adult mind cannot. I have heard of a mysterious glass that enables one to see through time and space. These reports reached me at about the same time as the story of these boys appeared in the newspapers. I fear that someone may be experimenting with this glass, but perhaps it is all just childish imaginings.

§ The Isle of Dogs (XI1, 22–23N)

It is assumed that the Isle of Dogs got its name as the site of hunting kennels in medieval times. This may indeed be the most likely explanation, but some suggest a far darker origin. The area was a site of worship of the horned old god *Herne*, they say, and the Dogs are his white hounds with red ears that he leads through the sky inspiring terror in all who see them. Similar stories about the Wild Hunt are told about Windsor Great Park, the grounds

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surrounding Windsor Castle in Berkshire. This is, of course, one of the residences of His Majesty the King.

Such a psychic imprint as the Wild Hunt may explain why so many of London's werewolf sightings occur near the Isle of Dogs. The reports are generally similar: a 'hairy man' or 'large dog' is seen attacking some unfortunate soul out on the streets late in the evening. When a witness arrives or when aid is summoned a light reveals large canine prints in the mire or human hand marks on the throat of the victim, respectively. Records of the Holy Inquisition in France dating back to the Middle Ages discuss demons who possess humans and provide them with the illusion of lupine form; a purely ectoplasmic or spiritual being such as an egregore or guardian elemental might be summoned in such form by a human medium. In a conversation with the sensational journalist Elliot O'Donnell, he reminded me of the medieval historian



HERNE RENDERED BY CRUIKSHANK IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Gervase of Tilbury's mention of such spectral werewolves, and claimed to have seen one himself while investigating a Thibetan dope ring in Greek Street. But as it was a wet night, he admits that he cannot be certain of what he saw, although he can point out the Chinese restaurant where he saw it to any genuinely interested party.

§ Limehouse (XII, 21L)

The Limehouse area of London's East End grew with the coming of the docks and shipyards in the sixteenth century. By the nineteenth century, roads and canals bisected the open space while warehouses and chandlers' yards clustered around Limehouse Basin and the river. Now Limehouse and the West India Docks take up so much of the north bank of the Thames that there is scarce a tree or a blade of grass to be seen. Unsurprisingly, most of Limehouse's residents are connected with the maritime in some way. Cheap boarding houses are as common there as in Whitechapel, and the terms of rent are similar. Limehouse's notorious Chinese population arrived some fifty years ago.

A number of sailors from China settled and established small businesses, often serving mariners on the boats from their mother country as launderers, shopkeepers and, I am sad to report, on the other side of the law as operators of gambling houses, drug parlours and brothels. Mr. Conan Doyle writes of the Limehouse opium dens in his inestimable chronicles of Sherlock Holmes, consulting detective, and I believe these dens of iniquity have not much reduced in number since Mr. Holmes' time.

I was recently in correspondence with a tea planter from Ceylon, a brother of our Order, who has been keeping a watchful eye on the activities of the *Tcho Tcho*, a murderous cannibal race of oriental appearance whom he suspects of moving out of Asia along various Empire trade routes. He believes a number of

these people have set up a laundry on Limehouse Causeway to give a legitimate face to their nefarious business. Although street children do go missing from time to time, their unhappy bodies eventually found on waste land or in the dock basin, I am aware that several have disappeared without trace in the last eighteen months. I understand the local constabulary are investigating but have not yet established any leads. Local rumour does not settle for Asiatic cannibals, but argues for the return of the Limehouse Golem, a 'shapeless' bogey-man blamed for five unsolved murders in the district in 1880.

§ Pye Corner (XI, 15K)

A small golden statue of a cherubic boy marks where the Great Fire of London burnt itself out. Although popular belief lays the blame for this conflagration on an untended baker's oven in Pudding Lane, it may be that fate, or even divine judgement was the cause. At least two books published earlier in the year predicted a great fire. In his *The Coming of God in Mercy, in Vengeance, Beginning with Fire to Convert or Consume All This So Sinful City* Gostelo says "If fire make not ashes of the City; and thy bones also, conclude me a liar forever". And let us not forget the date of the fire, 1666, considered an unlucky year because of its association with the Great Beast of Revelation.

§ Ratcliff Highway, Stepney (XI1, 19L)

The city wishes perhaps to erase from memory this ill-famed street, which ran from East Smithfield to Limehouse Basin, the terminus of Regent's Canal. Now divided between St. George Street and Shadwell High Street it took its original name from the Saxon hamlet of *Ratcliff*, or 'Red Cliff' named after the local sandstone. It was a street where gin-mills and brothels sat cheek by jowl with warehouses and corders' yards. A fire of quite

impressive proportions took the place in 1794. The local worthies took their opportunity to construct more respectable housing and shops along its length.

John Williams, of peculiarly 'serpentine' appearance, was arrested at the Pear-Tree Inn in Wapping for the brutal hammer-and-razor murders of two families on the Ratcliff Highway in 1811. He was found hanged in prison, and was beheaded and buried at the crossroads of Cable and Cannon Streets with a stake through his heart. His skull currently resides at the Crown and Dolphin tavern, situated alongside Hawksmoor's towering St. George in the East.

§ Wapping Station (XII, 19M)

This Tube station, built in 1869 into the north terminus of Brunel's Thames Tunnel, has been discontinued for passenger use since 1905, although the former East London Railway track still carries goods trains. It sits on the former site of Execution Dock, once below the low-tide marker and thus under the jurisdiction of the Admiralty rather than the county of Middlesex. Here pirates were hanged from a short rope and left in chains until the tide had covered them three times. The last such execution was in 1830, but ghostly chains still rattle in the darkness of Wapping Wall Street, and in the mouth of the Thames Tunnel. I caution the curious in the strongest possible terms against entering the Thames Tunnel in its current disused state.

§ Whitechapel and Jack the Ripper

Only forty-five years ago a series of terrible murders happened in London's East End. Although serious crime, including murder, regularly took place in this poor area of London, the Whitechapel Murders and their perpetrator, known as Jack the Ripper, were to become a London legend.

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Whitechapel in the 1880s had an extraordinarily diverse population, even in comparison to other areas of England's cosmopolitan capital. Proximity to the docks made Whitechapel a staging post for many immigrants to Britain and it supported an itinerant population of sailors and dock workers. The extreme poverty of its residents meant many lived in run-down boarding houses where one paid rent by the day. This culture of itinerancy made it difficult to chart people's movements and even more difficult to track a killer. Unexplained deaths were not uncommon. Meagre wages were often spent in the pubs and gin palaces to escape reality for an hour or two, and corpses were regularly found in the Thames where they had fallen whilst walking home intoxicated. Violence was rife, leading to deaths in drunken brawls or, perhaps even more shocking, women and children beaten to death by drunken husbands and fathers.

On 7th August 1888 the body of a prostitute, Martha Tabram (or Turner), was found in George Yard Buildings near Whitechapel Road (XII, 19K). Her corpse bore multiple stab wounds. It is still uncertain whether she was the first victim of the Whitechapel Murderer, but her wounds bore significant similarities to the later victims, so it is very likely.

On the 31st August another prostitute, Mary Ann Nichols, was discovered in Buck's Row (renamed in 1928 to Durward St) (XII, 19K), similarly mutilated. Annie Chapman, a woman driven to prostitution to fund her drinking habit, was the third victim, found at the rear of a building in Hanbury Street (XI, 18K) on 8th September. Her throat had been cut, her abdomen slashed open and her uterus removed. At this point, the newspapers started to become excited. Murders of women of easy virtue happened from time to time, but three in similar circumstances and within a mile of each other? Could this be the work of the same man?

On 30th September the murderer (if one murderer it was, speculation varies) struck twice in one night. Liz Stride, a Scandinavian

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and another alcoholic and occasional prostitute, was found in a yard in Berners Square (XI, 18K). Her body had been cut about far less than the other women's, giving rise to the belief that the murderer had been disturbed. Perhaps because of the interruption, the fifth murder followed swiftly after. Catherine Eddowes was that night released from Bishopsgate Police Station where she had been charged with public drunkenness. Her much mutilated body was found in nearby Mitre Square (XI, 17K) the next morning. Again, the throat had been cut and both the uterus and the left kidney had been removed.

Newspaper coverage of these horrible crimes continued apace, with reports in both the daily papers and the lurid *Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Police News*. A letter dated 25 September 1888 and sent to the Central News Agency was purportedly written by the murderer and taunted police saying 'I am down on whores and I won't quit ripping them till I do get buckled'. The letter was



WHITECHAPEL HIGH STREET, 1905

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signed with the name that was to pass into East End history: Jack the Ripper.

The police investigation was entrusted to the newly formed Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Whitechapel Division. As Eddowes' murder was across the borough boundary in the City of London, the City of London police became involved as well. Despite extensive investigations by police including the use of dogs, house-to-house searches and mass interviewing of males in the area, the Whitechapel Murderer was never found. The London Police Commissioner, Sir Charles Warren, offered his resignation due to the lack of progress in the case following the murder of Marie (or Mary) Kelly on the 9th November 1888; a murder which stunned all London with its ferocity and gore, the newspaper reports forcing even the investiture of the new Lord Mayor of London off the front pages.

Marie Kelly was a widow aged 24 who lived on her own in a room at Miller's Court in Dorset Street, Spitalfields (XI, 17K). She was probably Jack's final victim. This was the only murder to have been carried out indoors, and the murderer had obviously used this to his advantage. When her body was discovered by a rent collector, it had been hideously misused. Marie had been eviscerated, her internal organs arranged around the bed where her body lay. In the grate were found half-burned remnants of female clothing. Had the murderer disguised himself as a woman in order to slip into the building unnoticed?

A number of later murders were linked to the same killer, but the evidence is inconclusive. Extensive rebuilding in the Spitalfields and Whitechapel area from the mid-nineteenth century onwards has all but obliterated the slums where Jack plied his trade, but there are still echoes. Late night visitors to Mitre Square have glimpsed what appears to be a bundle of rags on the ground which on closer inspection reveals itself as the body of a woman before disappearing into thin air. Many, myself included, believe that

Catherine Eddowes lingers there still. Some have drawn parallels between Eddowes' death and the murder of a woman on the same site over three hundred years earlier, when a monk killed a woman as she prayed at the altar of the priory after which Mitre Square is named. Certainly there are ritualistic elements to both murders.

I once heard Aleister Crowley recount the story of the discovery of Jack the Ripper's blood-stained cravats by a woman who claimed to have been the daughter of the murderer's landlady. This woman shared many stories of the old East End with Crowley, as well as the odd dose of the clap. A. C. appeared most knowledgeable on the ritual elements in the case, much speculated upon in the popular press of the time.

North London

North London has no precise geographical boundaries, and no very precise character either. It can be considered that portion of London between Regent's Park in the west and Victoria Park in the east. Although most of this area has become subsumed into the spreading city only in the last hundred years or so, the districts closer to the City and to the West End, such as Holborn, Clerkenwell and Finsbury, began to join up existing villages and private manors by the seventeenth century in many cases.

§ Camden Town (V1, 12H)

A north London neighbourhood built by the Earl of Camden on part of the old Kentish Town manor, it grew up around Regent's Canal, which runs all the way to Limehouse Basin on the Thames. It is presently the home of numerous immigrants from Ireland and the Levant. A gallows stood on at a crossroads here between 1776 and 1791, where now is located the Camden Town Underground station, dedicated on Midsummer's Day, 1907.

Also in 1907 the district received fleeting infamy as the locale

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of the Camden Town Murder of Phyllis Dimmick, her throat slashed by an unknown assailant in her lodging house on Agar Street. The visionary artist Walter Sickert painted a series of images inspired by the outrage, although they convey more ennui and despair than brutality. To the eye of the connoisseur, they are most remarkable for their blocky shapes and shadows and by the peculiar quality of the yellow-coloured light that fills the room.

Dr. Crippen, the murderer hanged in 1910 for the savage killing of his wife, lived in Kentish Town just to the north, but spent much time wandering aimlessly on a desolate stretch of waste ground in Camden Town. A shade can be seen dropping a package here on moonless nights; the head of Crippen's wife was never recovered.

The Mother Damnable or Mother Red-Cap public house is named after a local character, popularly considered to be a witch. She has been seen stalking the sharp-angled alleys and canal locks of the district ever since her death in 1676, wearing her red cap and peculiarly-patterned shawl.

§ Finsbury

On the edge of the City, adjoining Holborn, the small borough of Finsbury boasts some interesting churches and small cemeteries now turned into public parks, where one can share a lunchtime cigarette with the spirits of the long departed. The ghost of the great clown Joe Grimaldi haunts the **Sadler's Wells Theatre** (XI, 15J) here.

§ Gray's Inn Road (XI, 14J)

It is utterly true that he who cannot find wonder, mystery, awe, the sense of a new world and an undiscovered realm in the places by the Gray's Inn Road will never find those secrets elsewhere, not in the heart of Africa, not in the fabled hidden cities of Tibet.

Arthur Machen, *Things Near and Far*

In 1899 the wife of the writer Arthur Machen died, plunging him into the blackest of depressions. It was during this time that he discovered for himself a gold and silver city located in some liminal space between the dour buildings of this most unattractive corner of London. He called this place variously Baghdad, Syon or simply, and most mysteriously perhaps, N. For a time the man was of the belief that he had entered the world of his own fictions, in which secret orders and occult conspiracies dwelt behind the façade of modern London.

Machen was to find that this belief was not just the wanderings of a troubled mind. Machen had in some way made a psychical link with London's occult self as it stirred and drew to itself precisely the orders and conspiracies he had fantasised about. 'The young man with spectacles' from Machen's *Tale of the Three Impostors* became William Butler Yeats, who led Machin towards the Golden Dawn in, perhaps, more ways than one as the occult interests Yeats and Machin shared did, I hope lift Machin's mood at least a little.

Whilst walking just off Gray's Inn Road, in the old cemetery now preserved as a park and called St. George's Gardens, I met a bespectacled young lady, one Mrs. Margaret Baker, who introduced me to the Club of the Seven Dreamers. I cannot say more, for I have sworn a mighty oath while holding a certain agate-stone, but membership does not conflict with the beliefs of, or my loyalty to, our own Order. I found it necessary to undergo their initiation,

however, as part of my researches for this book. Without revealing too much, I can say that I now know the secret of the unknown tramp whose body was found broken below the Dover cliffs in 1918, and that many of the phenomena of the Seven Dials are no longer completely opaque to me. Potential members of the Club should be prepared for a rigorous interview on matters ranging from the theories of Jung to antediluvian geography. Mrs. Baker is extraordinarily well-read and like so many women of her generation loath to hide her light under a bushel, for all that she reveals it only to initiated seekers.

§ Hampstead Heath (V1, 9E)

There is a popular belief that the Queen of the Iceni, Boadicea or Boudicca, is buried on Hampstead Heath at the place now called Boudicca's Mound. After a mighty battle at Battle Bridge where the Iceni were slaughtered in their hundreds by the Romans (now underneath Kings Cross station, where some claim Boadicea was buried where she fell), the natives are said to have brought the lifeless body of their queen to Hampstead for burial. Another account suggests the mound has no association with Boudicca but is the burial place of a Bronze Age king. It is true that the mound was made by man and could date back to the Neolithic. It has never been properly excavated.

The ghost of the notorious highwayman Dick Turpin haunts The Spaniards public house in Hampstead Lane, riding up to the inn in a clatter of hooves on gravel.

§ Highgate Cemetery (V1, 9E)

Highgate Cemetery was built in 1839 in a style much influenced by the Greco-Egyptian style. A tunnel under Swains Road connecting the two sides of the cemetery was perhaps understandably abandoned in the later nineteenth century.

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In 1862 Dante Gabriel Rossetti buried the only copy of his poems in Highgate Cemetery with his wife the artist Elizabeth Siddal, this after her untimely death from taking too much laudanum, after finding herself pregnant shortly after giving birth to a still-born child.

Rossetti later regretted his act and charged his friend and agent Charles Augustus Howell with recovering the book, an act which meant the exhumation of Elizabeth's body. Contrary to accounts elsewhere, the appropriate paperwork was obtained before the poor woman was dug up. Howell reported to Rossetti that she was as beautiful and uncorrupted as she was on the day she died, but worms found in the manuscript may indicate otherwise. Distraught at her death and with his own behaviour and infidelities, Rossetti continued to paint Elizabeth's likeness for many years afterwards. As Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* Elizabeth Siddal finally achieved immortality.



BEATA BEATRIX

**§ The Museum of the Order of St. John, Clerkenwell
(XI, 15J)**

Known now for the St. John's Ambulance Service, which does sterling work at important social and sporting events such as cricket matches, the Order of St. John was originally the Knights Hospitaller, a twelfth-century Order founded to take care of crusaders and pilgrims on the road to Jerusalem. The museum holds much of the treasure of the Order including many books and manuscripts. Although closely associated with the Crusades, the Knights Hospitaller have avoided many of the occult connotations which have become attached to the Knights Templar.

§ Primrose Hill(VI, 10H)

In the nineteenth century the artist and visionary William Blake was walking on Primrose Hill when he saw a 'spiritual sun, not like a golden disc the size of a guinea but like an innumerable company of the heavenly host crying "holy, holy, holy"'.

This delightful beauty spot is also associated with two prophecies by the fifteenth-century seer Mother Shipton. There is no evidence that Mother Shipton ever visited London, but she saw all from her cave in Yorkshire. She said 'When London surrounds Primrose Hill, the streets of the metropolis will run with blood'. This may cause some anxiety for those that take these things seriously, as London long ago encircled Primrose Hill. Shipton foresaw further misery in London's expansion: 'Carriages without horses will go, and accidents fill the world with woe, Primrose Hill in London will be, and in its centre a bishop's see'. Mother Shipton is also said to have prophesied the Great Fire of London. Samuel Pepys wrote in his diary that Londoners knew of her prediction and the household of Charles II commented upon it on the night of the fire. It may be that some thought fighting the fire was futile as the prophecy showed that London's doom was inevitable.

As you may be aware, many editions of Mother Shipton's prophecies have been published over the years, most in penny pamphlets and probably of more interest to the folklorist than the serious occultist. Much was made of her prophecy that the world would end in 1881, which clearly proved to be flawed, but one of our brethren confided in me that he had made a close study of her predictions and formed the view that events taking place in 1881 set in train processes leading to the extinction of life on this planet. Would that he could have elucidated, but he met a sudden end under an omnibus at Cambridge Circus only last summer. At his funeral his widow told me he had been verging upon madness in the months before his demise and she had felt it necessary to burn all his 'nonsense writings'.

§ St. Pancras (V1, 131)

Reportedly the oldest site of Christian worship in London, St. Pancras Old Church is a Victorian construction on a Norman foundation. In its churchyard lay John Polidori, author of *The Vampyre*, and Sir John Soane, the eminent architect. Mary Wollstonecraft was buried here until her reinterment in Bournemouth. While she rested in St. Pancras her gravesite was a trysting place for her daughter Mary and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Many other residents of St. Pancras churchyard found themselves less ceremoniously disinterred as this was one of many churchyards haunted by bodysnatchers, or Resurrection Men who dug up bodies and sold them to hospitals or private individuals for dissection and heaven only knows what else.

Labourers and machinery disinterred still more bodies during the construction of the Midland Railway and the London Underground, but the callous treatment of the remains caused some protests, leading to temporary suspension of the work, often for years at a time. For the better part of the decade 1866-1876

the churchyard was cluttered with upturned tombstones and open burial pits. I am of the view that the many sightings, even to the present day, of thin, shadowy figures in the area may not all be attributed to the local population of vagrants and prostitutes.

This discussion of the Underground may be a good place to note the theory propounded by an energetic young socialist agitator of my acquaintance, Giovanni Turco, a dweller in the cramped new flats in Chalk Farm near St. Pancras, and a fervent believer in the ancient gods, who he thinks have a new form of manifestation in the structures of modern cities. Perhaps his views have influenced by seventeenth century freemasonry, or by the strong tobacco he enjoys of an evening? I cannot say. He tells me that the Inner Circle Line of the London Underground is 'a modern Karnak', dedicated to the 28 days of the ancient Egyptian calendar. When I remonstrated, saying that the Circle line has only 27 stations, he claimed that the 'hidden station is the true Temple of the Nameless God of Nameless Days', and can only be reached by the worthy. Recently, he has taken to studying the Arabian and Chinese lore of the 'mansions of the moon' which also number twenty-eight. He is always grateful for any new information or books on those topics, and eager to debate the contents thereof, often late into the night.

**§ The Zoological Society of London, Regents Park
(VI, 11I)**

My nephew, a rather bookish lad, has recently begun research into the breeding cycle of the fruit bat which entails rather a lot of work observing the bat colony of London Zoo during the hours of darkness. He is not someone who is easily discouraged, nor is he prone to fantasy, but he claims to have witnessed mysterious persons on the Zoo premises after closing. They are generally seen running away from enclosures and keepers have found

the perimeter fences damaged on occasion. Most worryingly, two capuchin monkeys were recently abstracted from their sleeping quarters after trespassers sawed through a sturdy lock. The Zoo have not publicised this, as the creatures are perfectly tame and are not uncommonly kept as pets. My nephew says that privately there is great concern as the intruders had also attempted to break into the enclosure housing the Asiatic Lion. Keepers are maintaining an around-the-clock watch on the premises, with the help of the local constabulary, until the offenders are arrested and brought to justice.

South London

The districts south of the river Thames have their own character. Some, like Bermondsey, are industrial; Dulwich is a charming leafy suburb; Camberwell the former home of Ruskin; while William Blake saw angels on Peckham Rye. South East London does not have Underground trains, but there is a good tram network and a train runs regularly in a loop from London Bridge to Victoria via South Bermondsey, Peckham and Denmark Hill in Camberwell. South West London has much greenery, with commons at Clapham, Barnes, Wimbledon and Tooting and the rather overgrown but charming Putney Heath.

Battersea

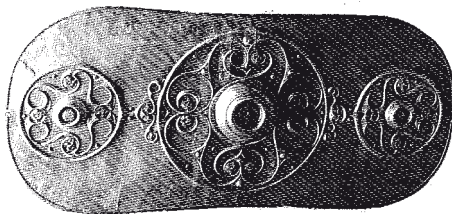
An industrial landscape, its main railway station, Clapham Junction, has regular trains to the South Coast. Battersea has some pleasant residential areas, but is largely comprised of small factories. A powerstation large enough to generate electricity for the whole of London is under construction on the banks of the Thames.

§ **Battersea Dogs Home, Battersea Park Road (XV, 12P)**

This laudable institution for the strays of the metropolis sits in close proximity to the works for the new Battersea Power Station. With it comes a story as charming as its four-legged residents. The Dogs Home was founded in 1860 by a Mrs. Mary Tealby, who sadly died before the Home moved to its current site in 1871. Kennel hands have reported seeing an elderly woman moving amongst the new arrivals late at night, well after the Home has closed to the public. They also report odd feelings, including sudden coldness. Perhaps the lady still visits?

§ **The Battersea Shield, River Thames (XV, 11O)**

In 1857 labourers working on a new bridge between Battersea and Chelsea discovered a startling object. What was to be known as the Battersea Shield was a shield of the Celtic La Tene style and dating back to Roman times, if not earlier.



THE BATTERSEA SHIELD

The shield is too small for use in battle, however, leading historians to postulate that it was a votive offering thrown into the Thames to appease some river deity. The shield is now housed in the British Museum but Miss Verity Dyse has begun a campaign to restore the shield to its former resting place. Miss Dyse and her supporters argue that the shield and a number of other artefacts

(some yet to be discovered!) were placed where they were placed for good reason by our ancestors and should not be disturbed. While attempting to reconstruct the beliefs and thinking of those long-gone, Miss Dyse and Co. also seem to be resurrecting, or some would say, inventing the superstitions of bygone ages. If in the past the Shield were thrown into the Thames to appease some angry aquatic deity, as Miss Dyse stated most vociferously in an open letter to the British Museum's curators recently published in *The Times*, why then is the Thames today no more or less peaceful than usual?

§ Eland Road, Lavender Hill (XV, 10R)

A plain terraced house in Battersea conceals an interesting poltergeist case. About six years ago the Robinson family found themselves bombarded by small objects such as coins and lumps of coal, which landed on their conservatory roof. Investigations by the man of the house revealed not local urchins but rather emanations from the ethereal realms. Most interesting, perhaps, were the notes discovered by Mr. Robinson composed of letters picked out in tiny pinholes and purportedly written by Tom Blood and his sister Jessie who claimed to have been resident on the site at the time of the Norman Conquest. After furniture was toppled and various servants left, Harry Price felt drawn to investigate and made his first visit in 1928 accompanied by a gentleman of the press. Narrowly avoiding a large cigarette lighter that crashed onto the kitchen floor from nowhere, Price made his inspection and concluded that this was indeed a poltergeist, probably attached to a fourteen year old boy living at the property. After the boy's removal to the country and various other family members leaving, albeit temporarily, the phenomena did eventually cease although some reports indicate the poltergeist moved with the family to their next abode.

§ **Lavender Hill (XV, 10R)**

Lavender Hill was named after the market gardens on its north side, in which lavender was grown until the mid nineteenth century, when the area was cleared for housing.. Lavender was, of course, used in the pomanders carried to ward off the noxious effluvia believed to transmit plague. It is extensively used in the perfume industry.

There was a strange occurrence in the fields in 1734. A group of young women were at work gathering lavender. They were Nora Mitchell, Elizabeth Johnson, Elizabeth's younger sister Edwina, Jane Cousins and Ann Day. It was late summer and approaching noon. Nora Mitchell, later told the *London Evening News* that it was ' . . . like the sun had gone out. A big thing appeared in the sky, so big it covered the sun. And it went dark like it was midnight. It was like that for a little while, and then sun came back all of a sudden, and we saw that Ann was gone. And we've never seen her no more since'. Miss Mitchell's account would seem to indicate a solar eclipse, but astronomical records for the time show that no such event had taken place. And how could Ann have disappeared so totally? The mystery of the Battersea Lavender Girls has never been solved. There were no witnesses other than the young women concerned and the last 'girl', Jane Cousins, died in 1791. The 200th anniversary of this event will, of course, take place in August 1934.

Bermondsey

South of the river lies this heavily industrial area of docks, tanneries, factories and the like. At the time of the crusades the land between Tooley Street in the area known as the Borough and Jamaica Road in Bermondsey was once owned by the Knights Templar. Today Bermondsey is a working class area where entertainment tends to be earthy –the pubs and taverns overflow

on a Saturday night and a drunken brawls are not uncommon. Football matches at nearby Millwall FC start fifteen minutes later than all other matches in Britain, at 3.15, to enable workers at the local jam factory to get to the game after their shift.

§ **Abbey Street Churchyard, Bermondsey (XI, 17N)**

In 1868 crowds of people gathered in the Abbey Street Churchyard to witness the appearance of the ghost of a man who had drowned in the Thames some days earlier and whose mortal remains were still awaiting inspection by a coroner in the morgue adjacent to the church. The ghost first appeared following the regular Sunday evening service, attracting over a hundred locals. One, James Jones, was arrested for assaulting a Police Constable as he pushed his way through to catch a glimpse. The ghost continued to appear up until 1895 and, in common with many spirits, chose twilight and midnight for his manifestations.

Blackheath

An area of common land adjoining Greenwich Park and sharing its tunnel network. Originally a killing ground where Danes martyred Saxon priests and Henry VII slaughtered Cornish rebels, it was mostly waste ground, a home to highwaymen and footpads, until the late eighteenth century, when speculators began to build here. The Blackheath Village shops built in the 1820s along the edge of the Heath reflect the growing gentrification of the area. On a Sunday afternoon the Heath is much frequented by families enjoying ices, roller-skating and donkey rides after church. The Heath is surrounded by charming Georgian houses; the Green Man public house on Blackheath Hill brews and serves a beer with a uniquely dry, almost astringent flavour.

Camberwell

An area rather more genteel than nearby Bermondsey. The Camber Well was a healing well dedicated to St. Giles and a site of pilgrimage in medieval times. Now elegant Georgian houses abut factories and tenements, all clustered around Camberwell Green. The borough of Camberwell encompasses leafy Dulwich with the first public art gallery in Britain and a delightful park.

Some visitors to the Camberwell Palace music-hall (which became the Palace Cinema only this year. A. G.) hear immense footsteps treading softly behind them, feel a cold rank wind on their neck, and smell a distinct odour of rotting meat and lime. This is popularly ascribed to the ghost of a lion-tamer mauled to death on stage in 1902, but local reports of *The One Who Walks Behind* can be found far pre-dating that year.

§ St. Giles' Churchyard, Camberwell (XVIX, 17Q)

A narrow path to the right of the Church cuts through the churchyard, which is now kept as a garden. A former vicar of St. Giles, the Reverend Kelly, was the father of Rose Kelly, first wife of Aleister Crowley. There are reports that a long-deceased vicar of St. Giles still takes the evening air in the churchyard, many years after his death.

§ Dulwich College, Camberwell (XXI, 17V)

A curious story is attached to the origin of one of England's famous public schools. The history of Dulwich College says that its founder, the actor Edward Alleyn (1566 -1626), had purchased the manor of Dulwich and decided to set some of the land aside for charitable purposes, creating a school for poor boys of the area. The College of God's Gift at Dulwich and the Foundation which administers much of the land in the environs of the College still exist today. The Foundation has done good work in protecting

Dulwich Village from the worst excesses of modern developers.

But the history books do not tell the whole story. Alleyn is best described as a worldly man. He had been James I's Master of the King's *Games of Bears, Bulls and Mastiff Dogs* and had amassed a goodly fortune through his ownership of many bear pits, brothels and playhouses, including the Rose Theatre where Shakespeare performed. Alleyn was also a leading actor of his day and it was on stage one evening, when he was playing Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, that Alleyn was to repent of his wicked ways. Like Shakespeare's Macbeth, the play is reputed to contain actual magical incantations which Alleyn recited before a number of actors dressed as demons joined him on stage. One night Alleyn counted one demon too many. . . Terrified by his experience and convinced it was an omen that he was bound for Hell, he took up good works and used some of his considerable fortune for founding the school, which eventually became known as Dulwich College.

Like most schools, the modern day Dulwich College seeks to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities for its pupils. There are teams for rugby and cricket, a lively tennis club and a cycling club. Of interest to us, however, is a clique of boys known as the Neddy Boys (Ned being short for Edward, of course). Some old boys believe involvement in this group was the reason the writer Dennis Wheatley was expelled from the school. Membership of the Neddy Boys is by invitation only and is restricted to those in Upper School (sixteen to eighteen years old). The boys take an active interest in the legend of the creation of the College and meet at midnight at the start of the Autumn term to re-enact Dr. Faustus in the College Library.

Unlike their esteemed founder, however, the boys actively hope to conjure up demons to bring them success in their Matriculation examinations; many an evening at Cambridge University has ended with a toast to 'good old Ned!' Masters know of this tradition, as many of them are Old Boys, but turn a blind eye. Usually

the re-enactment passes as an occasion for drunken revelry, but since this September's activities strange shadowy figures have been sighted on College property. The librarian recently found all of the Religion section strewn on the floor of the Library and a valuable Bible shredded. Even more worryingly, a first-year boy disappeared from his dormitory one night to be found, much distressed, in Dulwich Woods the following morning. He claimed that he had been abducted to be sacrificed in some form of ritual but made his escape when the procedure was disturbed by a late-night dog walker. The school dismissed this as the childish imaginings of one away from home for the first time, and did not think it necessary to inform parents.

§ King's College Hospital (XVI, 16R)

King's College Hospital moved to Camberwell some 20 years ago, from Lincoln's Inn Fields. Shortly after the beds, patients and all, were established in place, a strange ceremony occurred. A van had earlier in the day delivered two plain wooden cabinets that the porters collected and hastily took inside to be installed in the consulting room of the surgeon Mr. Townley. After sunset all the Hospital's surgeons gathered, the hospital chaplain led them in a brief prayer and the cabinets were opened. Inside were relics of King's darker days, when surgeons paid resurrection men to dig up corpses for the anatomy tables. Some of the more interesting body parts have been preserved to this day, and it was these that the men were viewing. Townley took down one large jar. Inside, picked in alcohol, was a section of a tentacle; like that of an octopus but considerably thicker, implying a large creature. The jar was labelled 'Taken from the corpse of woman, 35, died Autumn 1830'. The men then placed their hands on a Bible and took a solemn vow that 'this shall not happen again if God gives us the grace to fight it!'

I believe this ceremony had taken place up to the 1880s and was revived by Townley when the Hospital moved. It takes place annually on 30th September and is, perhaps, taken more lightly today, when it is followed by a commemorative supper. Quite what should not happen again I have not been able to establish. Indeed, I would not know anything of this business were it not that my niece Amelia is married to a surgeon at King's, one Charles Bassett, who brought this custom to my attention. As a man of science, he considers it of curiosity value only.

Greenwich

Greenwich claims to be one of London's most historical areas and is indeed rich in naval history, being the site of the Royal Naval College and a hospital for indisposed seamen. The Royal Observatory is located in Greenwich Park and is the home of Greenwich Mean Time, upon which the whole of the world's time is calculated.

The Hawksmoor church in Greenwich, St. Alfege's, is built on the site of its namesake's martyrdom by the Danes in 1012.

§ Greenwich Park (XVII, 24Q)

There was a Roman settlement in Greenwich and the remains of a Roman villa have been found in Greenwich Park. Beneath the Park runs a network of tunnels, although many have collapsed in parts because of the marshy ground. These are thought to be Roman in origin and their original purpose is unknown. Local legend suggests they were the home of smugglers, or a place of refuge for outlaws on the run from the law, but there is no factual *evidence to substantiate this*. *A recent report in the Woolwich Gazette* suggests recent activity in the tunnels, causing a small collapse near the Blackheath entrance to the Park. A quick telephone call to the Borough Clerk confirmed that no applications for either

building or archeological work have been made in the last eighteen months.

§ Maze Hill, Greenwich (XVII, 24P)

Only ten years ago, the delineations of an ancient earth works could still be seen in the landscape of Maze Hill, where a path once wound down the hill to a turf maze at its base. This is obviously a processional site of some antiquity. Earlier this year I visited Maze Hill to make observations for the purposes of this guide. I spent some time searching for the remains of the path, but could find no tangible evidence. It was early March and past dusk as I concluded my business. As I was returning to my motor car, however, I heard voices behind me. There had been no mist just five minutes before but now the Hill was shrouded in white fog. The voices grew louder and the ground shook beneath me. Although my vision was obscured by the sudden inclemency of the weather, I am almost certain that a door opened up in the hill and figures emerged. Their forms were indistinct, but they looked rather smaller and paler than the average human and the chanting was in no recognisable language. I gained the Bentley rather more quickly than is usual and didn't draw breath until I reached a hostelry on the other side of Greenwich, where I paused for a medicinal brandy. Some thirty minutes later I left the pub and came out to a clear, starry night with no trace of fog or mist.

§ Peckham Rye (XVI, 18Q)

Aged eight, poet and artist William Blake looked out of a window and saw a host of angels in an oak tree on Peckham Rye. For those unfamiliar with the area, Peckham Rye is an area of common land and a public park abutting the River Peck in Peckham, South East London. Blake's vision remains a popular local story and imparts not a little romance to the area.

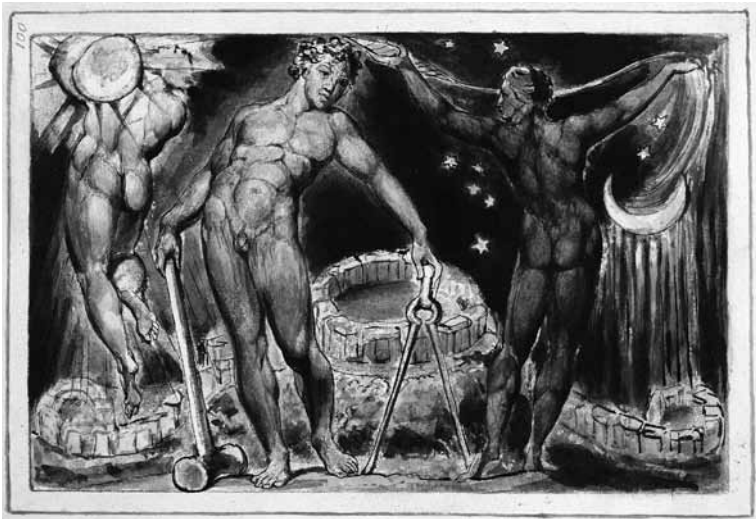
THE OCCULT MISCELLANY OF AUGUSTUS DARCY *Dec'd*

*'I behold London; a Human awful wonder of God!
He says: Return, Albion, return! I give myself for thee:
My Streets are my, Ideas of Imagination.*

*Awake Albion, awake! and let us awake up together.
My Houses are Thoughts: my Inhabitants; Affections,
The children of my thoughts, walking within my blood-vessels,
Shut from my nervous form which sleeps upon the verge of Beulah
In dreams of darkness, while my vegetating blood in veiny pipes,
Rolls dreadful thro' the Furnaces of Los, and the Mills of Satan.'*

William Blake, *Jerusalem: The Emanation of The Giant Albion*

William Blake, like Arthur Machen, felt there was a higher reality existing alongside the mundane London. Blake sought to replace the filthy streets and grinding poverty with 'the spiritual



LOS AND ENITHARMON. PLATE 100 OF
JERUSALEM: THE EMANATION OF THE GIANT ALBION

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four-fold London', with the holy Jerusalem and with his city of revelation, Golgonooza, being built by the giant Los in violation of the patterns of Creation.

Like much of the symbolism in his poetry, Blake's visionary London shifts and alters its state over the years, but he very definitely identified various London landmarks with their spiritual counterparts. For instance, Los' 'seven Furnaces' include Muswell Hill, Hampstead, Highgate, Finchley, and Hendon; his seventh Furnace is on the Tower of London, and Primrose Hill is "the mouth of the Furnace & the Iron Door'. The gates of the 'four-fold London' are Highgate (North), the Tower (East), Bedlam (South), and Westminster and Marybone' (West); the golden pillars of Jerusalem come down mostly in North London: 'Islington to Marybone, to Primrose Hill and Saint John's Wood'.

I have, sadly, had no vision of Golgonooza, though I sometimes worry that Blake's Babylon is closer than we know.

**§ The Shooters Hill Road Leopards of Blackheath
(XVII, 24Q)**

In Sierra Leone, Africa, exists a most secret and peculiar cult. Its adherents try to imitate a leopard or panther as closely as possible, including clothing themselves in animal skins and rehearsing the feline pounce to the best of human ability. As in many primitive religions, they believe eating the flesh of their totem animal transfers its powers to their own bodies, so big cat flesh is eaten as part of their ritual. The metropolis that is London attracts peoples from across the globe, and some, regrettably, bring their unsavoury practices with them.

I am aware of a group of these Leopard or Panther People being resident in Shooters Hill Road, a pleasant suburban street in Blackheath, South East London, where they practice ritual human sacrifice in the dead of night under the guidance of their

female high priestess. Further, they are reported to hunt in London's woods and green spaces and to eat the flesh of their quarry, which is man! The writer Elliott O'Donnell has suggested that the gruesome murder of Gerald Griggs, an eleven-year-old boy whose wretched corpse was found in a field near Westerham, Kent (within easy travelling distance of Blackheath) was the result of an interrupted hunting expedition by one of these extraordinary creatures due to the scratch marks on the victim's face. The cause of death was given as strangulation. Do not big cats crush the windpipes of their prey?

Southwark

Archeological evidence has led some to posit that Southwark is as old as the City. Roman remains have certainly been found within the borough boundaries. In Elizabethan times the area along the river bank opposite the City of London was renowned for its bear pits, brothels (known as stews) theatres and other entertainments, all conveniently situated close enough to the offices of the gentlemen working in the City and the Government buildings on Whitehall, but not so close as to engender office gossip.

§ Bankside

The Winchester Geese (XI, 16M)

Part of the Diocese of Winchester, this is the area around the Church of St. Mary Overie along the south bank of the Thames. Prostitution was legal in the Bankside area, which was described as 'being in the liberty of the Clink', the Clink being a small prison. The working girls were licensed by the Bishop of Winchester and were known as Winchester Geese. There has been a suggestion that the 'goose' in the name comes from the honking cough many of the prostitutes developed, as their health was poor due to neglect and secondary infections associated with the syphilis and

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other social diseases with which they were afflicted. Not surprisingly, many of these women died relatively young, and because of their profession were not permitted burial in consecrated ground.

There is antiquarian evidence of mass graves in the area, wherein are buried not only Winchester Geese but centuries of paupers and itinerants. Indeed, some of these cemeteries closed only in the last century. Further, local cemeteries were frequently plundered by body snatchers who sold the corpses to surgeons at nearby Guy's Hospital. It is hard to imagine that the dead rest in peace and some claim the shades of these poor unfortunates haunt the area still.



‘THE HUMOURS OF THE FAIR’
18TH CENTURY SOUTHWARK DEPICTED BY HOGARTH

§ **Bankside**

***The Rat-People* (XI, 16M)**

This story is common to much of London, but was told to me in Bankside, so I will situate it there. In Victorian London there were men known as *toshers*, who would journey into London's sewers and pick through the detritus and worse therein in the hope of finding something accidentally dropped down a drain that might be worth a bob or two. This unpleasant occupation resulted in frequent contact with London's rat population. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, a mythology has grown up around these creatures. There are tales of crowns of rats comprising several tied together with their own tails; but best of all is the story of the Queen of the Rats.

In the guise of a beautiful woman, the Queen of the Rats seduces toshers who stray into her realm whilst about their business. Should the tosher please her, he would have good luck in his treasure hunting. She is difficult to please, however, and often quite rough in her manners, biting her lover most severely. It is likely that following such an encounter life would continue relatively normally for the tosher, who would, in good time, take a wife. The children of his union would be born with one grey eye, like a rat's, a living memorial to the tosher's brush with the supernatural.

§ **G. Baldwin & Co., 77 Walworth Road, Elephant and Castle** (XVI, 16O)

Baldwin's is London's oldest established herbalist, and has been trading since 1844. It sells a variety of herbal medicines, essential oils and ointments, many of which are extremely useful to the magician. It is, for example, one of the few stockists of the resin known as Dragon's Blood. Customers at Baldwin's can expect a friendly welcome, knowledgeable staff and discreet service. The company also has a reputation for good quality products at reasonable prices, so the occultist can reassure himself of the purity

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of the herbs or oils he buys –so important for a successful outcome in one’s magical workings. If one has time, particularly on a hot day or following a long journey to South London, I can recommend pausing at the shop’s soda fountain for some refreshing and medicinal sarsaparilla, modestly priced at 3d a glass.

§ Kent Street, Southwark (XI, 16N)

Kent Street is now known as Great Dover Street and is south of the river, just a short walk from the Elephant and Castle. Visitors to The Ship Inn in that road in 1664 may, for a small price, have viewed a woman who had undergone a very odd experience. Mary Dudson, a maidservant, had been found so soundly asleep in her master’s garden that she could not be woken. She remained ill for a long time, until her symptoms were both explained and alleviated when she vomited up ‘about fourteen young Adders and one old Adder, on the 14th August 1664, about fourteen inches in length’. Although she survived, Mary’s health continued to be poor but she consented to be exhibited as a warning to the unwary not to fall asleep in a garden with one’s mouth open. The Ship, incidentally, still exists, although there have been no later reports of unnatural serpentine activity in the area.

§ Rogers’ Wax Museum, Southwark Street (XI, 16M)

This basement gallery in Southwark Street offers not merely the conventional parade of horrors which might scare a young lady at Madame Tussaud’s—Jack the Ripper, Lady Jane Grey, Gilles de Rais—but a parade of monstrosities that bespeaks a considerable knowledge of more esoteric teratology. This last is in an alcove separated from the vault-like main museum floor by a canvas screen. Here are monsters and demons sculpted by a devil, or a genius: a Cyclops, a Gorgon, a Kraken, a Hindu elephant-demon, an Eskimo *angakok*, and other yet wilder forms from the most

obscure mythologies.

The proprietor, a Mr. Orabona, is a dark-complexioned, slender man who rebuts all questions about the figures by saying they were made by the museum's founder George Rogers. I met Rogers several months ago, and found him certainly eccentric and egocentric enough to be as great an artist as his sculptures indicate. Mr. Orabona tells me that Rogers is now on an extended trip to America, looking for more models and material for the Museum.

Potential visitors to this odd attraction may wish to be aware that Mr. Orabona is himself no stranger to eccentricity. During our last conversation in the Museum I noticed an automatic pistol that he held in a shoulder-holster like an American detective from the penny papers. Although the neighbourhood is far from salubrious, the Museum is hardly profitable enough to make it a target for thieves.

§ The Temple of Isis (XI, 17M)

The exact location of this Roman temple has never been found, but its existence is inferred from a wine jug found in Tooley Street, in the Borough area of London within walking distance of the former Bankside stews. The jug carried the inscription *Londini ad Fanum Isidis*, 'at London at the Temple of Isis'. A weight carrying a representation of the goddess was discovered in 1825 at nearby London Bridge. There is evidence that the Romans appropriated the gods of those they conquered and spread various cults along trade routes.

§ The Walworth Road (XVI, 16O)

For as long as anyone can remember, there has been a flourishing street market in East Street, Walworth, where all manner of odd things surface. Anything may appear on a market barrow; books, antiques, strange household items, jewellery, clothing of all

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sorts, taxidermic specimens, Oriental weapons, South American flowers, and a hundred and one other oddities from all manner of exotic locations. East Street market puts me in mind of nothing so much as the Dunsany tale *A Shop in Go-By Street*, in which the proprietor must grant you a miracle if you ask for something he cannot provide from his stock. If seeking a miracle one could do worse than start at East Street market.

Collectors in search of trifles in East Street should take a short stroll down the Walworth Road to the Cuming Museum, which specialises in subjects of great interest to our Brotherhood—antiquities from home and abroad and the strange collection of Edward Lovett, folklorist, who took a particular interest in local superstitions. Most notable is his collection of lucky charms, so numerous that very few are on show, but more may be viewed if one applies to the curator prior to making a visit.

Wandsworth

A largely residential South West London borough which follows the banks of the Thames along one of its boundaries. The most attractive properties are close to Wandsworth Common, a large patch of open land that can be surprisingly eerie in the early morning mist.

§ Wandsworth Prison, Heathfield Road (XX, 9T)

The former Surrey House of Correction is a Victorian panopticon of some size, concealed by trees from the rather more genteel Wandsworth Common. Executions began in 1878, originally in the chillingly-named (please excuse the pun) *Cold Meat Shed* and now in a newer execution chamber between E wing and F wing. Given its bloody history, readers may be surprised that the only reported ghost is the spectre of a woman.

Sightings of Wandsworth Annie report a shabby figure in grey

clothing and wearing a veil. There have been suggestions that this is the ghost of a suicide or of a former prison cook, but Annie is most likely to be the wraith of one Kate Webster, the only woman to be hanged at the prison and for some years a popular attraction in the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussauds. Webster murdered her employer, a Mrs. Thomas, after a violent row fuelled by Webster's drinking. She then dismembered the corpse and disposed of the body parts. The landlady of a local hostelry was offered jars of what Webster said was dripping. I will draw a veil over the rest of that story as I do not wish to offend the sensibilities of my readers. I have visited the prison on a number of occasions; for humanitarian reasons, you understand, as I do respect the rule of law at all times. I regret to say I have not seen Wandsworth Annie, but she would be most distinctive as the Surrey House of Correction closed its women's wing many years ago.

Woolwich

Another South London suburb on the border with Kent. Woolwich is best known for its dockyards and the Woolwich Arsenal. There is a strong link with the military, as an army camp is located nearby. It is an area of working-class men and women; dockers, factory workers and the like. A free ferry service links Woolwich to the sugar refinery at Silvertown.

§ Woolwich Polytechnic Automata Club (XXIV, Eb)

The Woolwich Polytechnic was the second polytechnic, or technical school, established in London; the first being the Regents Street Polytechnic in 1873. Woolwich received its charter in 1895, with the objective of 'the promotion of the industrial skill, general knowledge, health and well-being of young men and women belonging to the poorer classes'.

By then it was teaching a wide range of commercial, technical,

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scientific and art subjects. Because of its proximity to Woolwich Arsenal it was intended that the Polytechnic should be particularly strong in engineering, and this was an area that continued to grow with the institution, the most recent development being the introduction of electrical engineering this year.

I hope that I paint a picture of a sober and studious institution, where the working man (and, increasingly, the working woman; I'm sure I shall grow accustomed to that phrase one day) might improve their minds, their technical skills and their career prospects through diligent study and hours of hard graft in the workshops and laboratories. There are, however, some who choose to subvert the efforts made by their betters to establish these excellent facilities for their edification. Such men are the Woolwich Automata Club.

I believe these gentlemen have been in business now for some ten years, new members replacing old as they graduate, mature and take up a proper place in working life. These men labour late in the workshops with the aim of producing more and more life-like mechanical creatures and even people. If they put half this effort into their studies, I am sure they would achieve greatly in the world of commerce, but they yawn into their textbooks or snore at their machines because of their clandestine activities after dark. Ten years of trial and error have borne fruit, however.

In December of last year local urchins were enchanted by the arrival of an automatic Father Christmas in the nearby market. Said elf was clad in velvet and furs and carried a large sack containing sweets and small toys for the juvenile populace of this poor area of South London. No sooner had the children clustered round, their grimy faces shining with gleeful anticipation, than his reindeer malfunctioned, taking Mr. Christmas on a speedy tour of Powys Street before plunging into the Thames, being struck a glancing blow by the Woolwich Ferry and sinking without trace. The disaster would have been much worse had it not been for the

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intervention of a young clerk at the Arsenal, one Charles Waters, who snatched a little girl from the path of the rampaging mechanical in the nick of time. The lass's winsome appearance guaranteed them both the front page of the *Daily Sketch* and Mr. Waters was presented with a certificate by the Town Hall for his trouble.

Recently two members of the WAC appeared before the magistrate accused of theft and affray. It appears that they had caused some disturbance in the cloisters of University College London. The arresting constable attempted to open a Gladstone bag they had in their position and was violently pushed over, before the two young rips bolted. They were quickly apprehended whilst boarding an omnibus in the Tottenham Court Road and the bag was found to contain some form of clockwork electricity generator, a number of wires, a small tool kit and, very strangely, a small book which was found to be a fourteenth-century Latin grimoire abstracted just the day before from Apokrypha Books. It is to be hoped that this brush with the law and the resulting fine causes these gentlemen to behave in a more restrained fashion in the future. Miss Florence Hamilton-Beech informs me that the police have yet to return the grimoire, which causes her much vexation.

Outer London

The following places are of occult interest, but fall outside London's Metropolitan boundary.

§ Alexandra Palace, Muswell Hill (XXIV, Db)

Alexandra Palace and Park currently serves as park, cricket-ground and restorative ground for North Londoners. The Palace has a number of theatres and concert-halls in addition to the main hall; the grounds include stalls for flowers, fruit and similar attractions. A racecourse at Alexandra Park offers flat racing during the season.

Opened in 1873, Alexandra Palace has had a chequered history. It had to be rebuilt in 1875 following a devastating fire sixteen days after its original opening and never achieved the popularity of the original 'people's palace', the Crystal Palace in Sydenham, South London. This may be because when a group of Gypsies were forced to move from the site when building commenced, they left a curse behind: 'May death and destruction befall this place and everything associated with it!'

§ The Bethlem Royal Hospital, Beckenham, Kent (XXIV, Ec)

One of London's largest mental hospitals and perhaps its most notorious, Bethlehem became abbreviated as 'Bethlem', later corrupted to the original Bedlam. The Priory of St. Mary Bethlehem was first described as a hospital in 1329 and was looking after 'distracted' patients as early as 1377, but it was in 1403 that the first reference was made to its specialising in patients who were 'men deprived of reason', that is, who suffered from what today would be known as mental illnesses. At its inception the hospital was located near Bishopsgate, on or near to what is now Liverpool Street Station. It later relocated to Moorfields in 1676 and to Lambeth in 1815 before moving to its present site in Beckenham, Kent in 1930.

Treatment remained unchanged for many years, consisting largely of bloodletting, purging and cold baths, although 'distrac-tion', or occupational therapy was also found to be efficacious in distracting patients from worrisome or melancholy thoughts. Originally open to all, in the mid-nineteenth century a number of local asylums opened up around London taking the pauper class, leaving the Bethlem as a singularly middle-class institution. About that time, too, treatment improved. There were more activities to occupy the patients, including excursions beyond the

hospital walls.

Perhaps the most well-known inmate of the Royal Bethlem was the artist Richard Dadd, who painted exquisite pictures of the realms of faerie. Dadd murdered his father in 1843, convinced that the man was the devil. After being committed to the Bethlem he continued to paint and produced his most famous work, *The Fairy Feller's Masterstroke*, commissioned by George Henry Hayden, the then-steward of the hospital, as well as a series of watercolours: *Sketches Depicting the Passions* that vividly illustrated various aspects of mental illness. Dadd was transferred from the Royal Bethlem to the newly opened Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum in Berkshire and died there of lung disease in 1886.

Dadd's personal records were not destroyed, as is usual after the death of a patient, but were transferred to the War Office and are there still, marked Top Secret. During my wartime service I spent a short time as a clerk at Admiralty Arch and gained access to these files, but beg my readers not to pass on this information as, even now, I would be liable to prosecution and imprisonment for disseminating it without appropriate clearance.

The files reveal that Dadd claimed to have seen the fairy folk regularly during his time at Bedlam and had kept a diary of his encounters with them. After Dadd's death the superintendent of Broadmoor discovered the diaries and thought their contents significant enough to pass on to the authorities. Certainly the extracts I was able to read out of hours in the War Office archives did not seem to me to be the rantings of a madman. I saw in his writing many similarities with the intelligence reports from British agents working across enemy lines that I was collating at that time.

Dadd wrote that the fairies disliked most human beings, but talked to him because he shared their fondness for Nature and because they thought he was so mad that no-one would believe him. They feared the damage that humans were doing to the world, in the factories of the Midlands but especially the bombs

and trenches of the Crimea and in Northern Virginia, and were considering whether it would be best for fairies to oust humans and rule in their stead. Quite how the fairies were to accomplish this is unclear, but it is obvious that the War Office thought the threat serious enough to look into the files and keep them securely certainly up until 1918 and perhaps even now. I have not found any Government statements or policies on the reality of fairies, by the way.

Given the great age of the institution it is unsurprising that there is a ghost story attached to the Royal Bethlem Hospital. A young woman, Rebecca Griffiths, who was a patient when the hospital was at Moorfields, was most disturbed by the loss of a golden guinea, possibly taken from her by a member of the staff. The money had been a gift from the master of the house in which she had been in service and may have been given with a guilty conscience, as young women who fall pregnant outside wedlock can sometimes find themselves put out of the way in such places as these. Sadly the young lady died in the hospital and her ghost was often seen wandering the corridors still asking if anyone had seen her guinea. What is unusual, however, is that when the hospital relocated to Lambeth the ghost went with it. As it is only recently established in Beckenham, I have not yet received any reports as to whether she has chosen to move to the country or to remain in town.

§ The Croydon Aerodrome (XXIV, Dc)

I imagine that most of our brethren will reach London by sea, but the more modern and, dare I say it, the more well-to-do may charter an aeroplane. If so, they will land at the Croydon Aerodrome. The Aerodrome is some miles out of London, in Surrey. Onward transportation is by means of motor coaches, which run regularly via South London to the BOAC terminal next to Victoria railway station.

§ **The Horniman Museum and Gardens, Forest Hill**
(XXI, 19V)

This handsome building of 1901 houses the ethnographic collection of wealthy tea merchant Frederick Horniman, left in trust for the residents of South London to enjoy in perpetuity. Visitors may marvel at the cabinets of curiosities from across the globe, including a magnificent collection of musical instruments. Children especially enjoy the stuffed animals and other biological specimens, while all will relish a picnic in the well-manicured gardens and a visit to the wallabies, rabbits and other small creatures in Pets Corner.

This attractive venue may, however, harbour a secret collection less suited to family education and edification. Horniman's daughter, Annie, was a leading light of the Order of the Golden Dawn. Like her father Annie was a collector, her interest being in occult and erotic artefacts from many countries. Annie disliked her father's willingness to admit visitors to his house to see his collection, this being before the museum was built, and moved from the family home to live nearby in Forest Hill. It is believed that after her death Annie's collection passed into the care of the Horniman Museum but is now safely stored elsewhere, or in the museum basement where it cannot cause offence or be used for magical purposes.

Scholars of the Golden Dawn may be aware that S. L. MacGregor Mathers worked as Frederick Horniman's personal librarian for a time, and curator of the Horniman Museum from 1890 to 1891. He was recommended for this position by Miss Horniman partly because of their fellowship in the Golden Dawn and partly because of his constant penury and demands upon her personal income, which Annie bore patiently because of her friendship with his wife, Moina Bergson. While overseeing the Horniman collection, Mathers reputedly attempted to re-animate

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one of the mummies, with what success I cannot say.

There is also an interesting ghost story attached to the Horniman Gardens, which are kept as a park and securely locked at night. People lingering in the twilight before closing have reported hearing the sound of a waltz coming from just behind the Museum. There have also been sightings of a couple in evening dress dancing to the invisible orchestra. If one attempts to date the phantoms by the style of their clothes then they are of this century, but no-one knows who they are and, therefore, what their association with the Museum might be.

§ Epping Forest, Essex

A dark and sinister place, long associated with outlaws and nefarious doings. Within the forest there lie the remains of two Iron Age hill forts, one of which, Ambresbury Banks, is reputed to be both the home and the burial place of Boudicca (as are Hampstead Heath and Platform 10 at King's Cross Station). The forest itself was until recently the home of a traditional 'cunning man' or white witch, Old Dido, who dispensed herbal remedies from his tent to those who could not afford a doctor.

The forest has long been associated with death through legends including the story of the Suicide Pool. The tale is that a young girl used to meet her sweetheart at a pool in the forest until her untimely death at the hands of her father, who was enraged that she met her lover behind his back. Death did not stop her keeping her nightly rendezvous, but when her lover went to embrace her she dissolved into mist. Three hundred years later the pool imparts a feeling of dread in all who approach it and has been avoided so assiduously over the years that few now know its location. Locals claim evil spirits lurk there and the water is black and foul. You would not profit from searching for it.

To my knowledge, various small occult groups use the forest for

their rituals from time to time. A group who claim to be Satanists say they have carried out human sacrifices in the Forest, but there is no corresponding evidence for local people disappearing. In London, however, people vanish every day, so I cannot deny their claims. The forest is certainly large enough to conceal nefarious activity, and no sound would be heard if one was far enough away from the road. More worrying to the occultist are their claims to have summoned up eldritch forces through their dark magic. I have attempted to find out more about this group and consulted the local constabulary upon the matter. They could tell me very little, but added that another gentleman had been making similar enquiries a few days before my visit. He had, apparently, made a great many notes and had with him a camera. The police assumed he and I were associates and showed me his business card. He was a Mr. Simmons from the International Psychics Club and the address was a GPO box in WC1.

§ Petts Wood, Kent

This is an area on the Kent / London border, near Bromley. Petts Wood's most famous son is William Willett, a man much given to early rising who, when out on his horse early one summer's morning, thought it a pity that so few people were awake to enjoy the sunshine at that hour. He proposed that clocks should be moved forward an hour in the summer, so that people got the maximum hours of daylight. This was finally done in 1916 as part of the war effort, to give farmers more time in their fields and to allow artificial lighting to be used more judiciously. It is known as British Summer Time.

In 1924 a memorial to Willett in the form of a sundial was erected in a sunny glade in the wood where he used to ride. The sundial was set to show the time according to British Summer Time and could not, being stone and fixed, be reset in any way.

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But shortly after its arrival in the wood, a strange phenomenon was noted. Some visitors to the glade between late September and late March, when we keep British Standard Time, notice that their pocket watches move forward an hour of their own accord. This phenomenon proved most annoying to those catching trains from the nearby station, or those with an appointment to keep. When leaving the glade, locals recommend that one should walk slowly. It also helps to state one's intention for leaving out loud, such as 'I am departing now to catch the 19.30 train to Sidcup'. I am not sure why this helps, but this account from the Bromley Messenger of 23rd February 1928 explains why it should be done:

'Mr. Laurence Porter, a shop assistant from Beckenham in Kent, recently recounted a most remarkable incident to your reporter. Last Sunday afternoon was an unseasonably pleasant day, perfect for an outing. Porter was in Petts Wood with a group of young friends, visiting the famous sundial whilst on a day's bicycle tour of the area. As the party prepared to leave Porter realised his bicycle had a puncture and bade his companions go on, saying he would join them once the problem was fixed. After plying his puncture repair kit, Porter rode off at some speed. As he left the grove, he was astonished to find that he had rode into nothingness! The sun could not be seen, nor were there any landmarks. Porter paused in confusion. As he looked over his shoulder he could see the wood slowly move towards him. Confused, he decided to wait and see what happened. Eventually the wood moved past him and the landscape unrolled like a carpet. Porter saw ahead of him a wicket gate and, beyond, the main road. As he mounted his bicycle to ride off he glanced at his watch. The time from fixing the puncture to seeing the gate had been exactly one hour.'

PERSONS

Rollo Ahmed

'It is impossible to approach black magic and not risk the loss of judgement and reason.'

Rollo Ahmed

Rollo Ahmed is a clearly recognisable figure in the London occult scene, but somehow he remains aloof. He is acquainted with Aleister Crowley but has little of his notoriety. He is close in Dennis Wheatley's circle but is not a published writer, although I understand he entertains ambitions in that direction and is engaged in writing a history of black magic. Perhaps Ahmed's acceptance into the occult 'mainstream' (if that is not a paradox) has been somewhat stultified by him being a black man. Those with closed minds may disregard him. Those whose minds are more open may find it hard to make a friend of a man who slips away into the demi-monde of the immigrant for weeks at a time and has also had a sojourn as a guest of His Majesty.

Ahmed has invented a suitable fiction for himself, making the man yet harder to know. He claims to be fashionably Egyptian and so sits comfortably in the cabinet of curiosities alongside the Rosetta Stone or a mummy in the British Museum. My contacts inform me, however, that he is in fact from Guyana and took up the role of the exotic mystic magician and purveyor of herbal concoctions as a way to earn a semi-respectable pound or two. Alluding to this chequered background may get you a private conversation with Mr. Ahmed, but it will not gain you his long-term friendship.

Annie Besant

News has reached me of the recent death of Annie Besant, for some years now a resident of India, where she ran a school. Annie was at first a social reformer, much involved with the Fabian Society, as was her friend George Bernard Shaw, and with the trades unions. In 1890 she met Madame Helena Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society, and thus became engaged in Theosophy spiritual matters. Both she and Madame Blavatsky wished to prepare humankind for the arrival of the next World Teacher and Annie began this work with her usual focus and energy. By 1893 Mrs. Besant had moved to India. In 1908 she became President of the Theosophical Society and was also involved in co-freemasonry, that extraordinary offshoot of the masonic brotherhood that admits women and, were it not for the efforts of Mrs. Besant, would remain confined to continental Europe from whence it originated. In India she adopted and championed as a spiritual leader the boy Krishnamurti and returned to politics, through involvement in the Home Rule movement. Although she has not lived in London for many years, Mrs. Besant has been greatly influential in the city, setting up two co-masonic lodges and leading the Theosophical movement. Without her endeavours the path of the free-thinker in London would be the more difficult.



Lucinda Clare

A young medium creating some interest in London's spiritualist circles. Miss Clare has been investigated by Harry Price and has accompanied me in a number of inquiries into supernatural activity in London. She has assisted me greatly in my research on Spiritualist matters, of which I know very little. She is a charming and amiable character, and surprisingly intelligent. Miss Clare regularly takes to the platform at the Battersea Spiritualist Church and demonstrates her abilities at the London Spiritualist Alliance's regular public events. A modicum of pleasant and respectful conversation is generally all she requires to make herself helpful to fellow investigators of the Other Side of the Veil.

Aleister Crowley

Readers of the popular press will doubtless be well acquainted with this gentleman, who has for some years been a major figure in British occult circles and whose activities have been well-documented in the newspapers. Indeed, the Daily Express has dubbed him 'the wickedest man in the world'! For those of more refined taste, who may not have followed the streams of purple prose, I present a potted biography in rather more sober language:

Edward Alexander Crowley was born in 1875 in Leamington Spa. His parents belonged to the Plymouth Brethren, a puritanical Christian sect, but his father accumulated enough wealth through the family brewing business to leave young Alick a good private income. An enthusiastic mountaineer and chess player, demonstrating a keen intelligence, in 1895 Crowley took up a place at Trinity College, Cambridge. There he set about not only academic study in the field of English Literature, but also the study of occult and mystical matters. He equally vigorously pursued intimate relations and, eventually, sexual magick rituals with partners of both sexes, in defiance of this country's laws prohibiting

homosexuality. It was around this time that he changed his name to Aleister, partly to distance himself from his family. Ironically it had been his mother who supplied the sobriquet 'Great Beast', from the Book of Revelation, which Crowley has enjoyed using throughout his adult life.

Leaving Cambridge in 1897, Crowley became involved in Buddhism and became adept in the art of yoga. In 1898 he returned to London and joined the Order of the Golden Dawn, although he was later to fall out with one of its most senior members, Samuel MacGregor Mathers. Although he had bought Boleskine House on the shores of Scotland's Loch Ness, Crowley did not settle there but travelled widely over the next few years, to Mexico, India, Ceylon, Burma, China and throughout Europe. His magickal workings continued. During this period he married his first wife Rose Kelly, sister of the artist Gerald Kelly and daughter of a Camberwell vicar. It was whilst they were travelling in Egypt in 1904 that Rose acted as a channel for the *Book of the Law*, dictated by the supernatural being *Aiwass*, which was to become the cornerstone of Crowley's own religion, Thelema. In 1906 he extended his occult experiments further by contacting his Guardian Angel through the rites set down in *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra Melin the Mage*.

Crowley had left the Golden Dawn and founded his own magickal order, the *Argentum Astrum*, by 1907. He was also involved in the *Ordo Templis Orientis* or OTO. Divorced from Kelly in 1909 he embarked on many years of continued experimentation in sex magick (he added the 'k' to differentiate magick from stage conjuring) with various partners. He was looking for the biblical Whore of Babylon, who would bear him a child and bring about the dawn of the age of Horus.

Crowley continued to travel extensively and spent some years in Sicily where he founded The Abbey of Thelema with some OTO members including the artist Leila Waddell. He was expelled

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from Italy by Mussolini in 1923 after an incident in which one of the Abbey's residents died. Some have attributed this to black magic, others to the gentleman picking up some form of infection. I should not like to speculate upon the truth of this matter.

Whilst visiting Leipzig in 1929 Crowley met and married Maria de Miramar, but this marriage was no more successful than his previous one. Although I understand they are still married, this unfortunate lady is now an inmate of Colney Hatch Mental Hospital.

I believe Crowley continues to travel, although even his extensive inheritance must be somewhat depleted by now. The newspapers inform me he recently faked his own death in Portugal before popping up again in Berlin some weeks later. He has, during his long career, authored a number of books and articles on magick including the *Book of the Law* (1925, published privately in Tunis), the *Book of Lies* (1913) and *Magick in Theory and Practice* (1929), all riddled with traps for the casual dabbler. He has also produced some poetry of a pornographic nature. An extraordinary man who, I'm glad to say, I do not know well. Nor would I encourage others to seek his company. It seems so many whose paths cross Crowley's end up either mad or dead.



John Dee of Mortlake

Somewhere under the nave of St. Mary-the-Virgin Church in Mortlake (XIV, 3Q) lies a most remarkable magician. Although he was said to consort with demons he was a Christian to the end of his life, with a career encompassing ritual magic, espionage, cartography, astrology and some rather progressive views on marital relations.

John Dee was born in Mortlake in 1527. He showed an early talent for mathematics and studied at Cambridge University, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1544. He taught at Cambridge for a while before spending four years travelling and studying in Europe. He became adept in the arts of alchemy, mathematics, navigation and cartography during this period, spending some time working with the well-known mapmaker Mercator. He returned to Mortlake with two of Mercator's globes, which he installed in his house there. It was whilst travelling in Europe that Dee became interested in the conjuration of spirits.

Back in England by 1551, Queen Mary imprisoned him at Hampton Court in 1553 on charges of trying to kill her by sorcery. Although he was acquitted of all charges, the allegation that he practised sorcery was to dog him for the rest of his life. The next notable event in Dee's magical career was when he was asked to cast a horoscope to find the most auspicious date and time for her coronation as Elizabeth I. This earned him the soubriquet 'The Queen's Astrologer'.

Dee remained a favourite at court, partly because of the clandestine activities he undertook for the Crown abroad. Dee's frequent travelling and command of foreign languages came to the attention of the Queen's spymaster, Sir Francis Walsingham. Dee became a spy, taking the cipher signature 007, and brought Her Majesty's Government intelligence from throughout Europe.

Dee married three times: Katherine Constable in 1565, another

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woman whose name we do not know in 1577 (the marriage was short) and Jane Fromond in 1578, twenty-two years old to Dee's fifty, who bore him eight children. Only two survived their father.

Dee wrote extensively on many topics, authoring a preface to Euclid's Elements of Geometry and producing his own General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Arte of Navigation. The occultist will be most interested in his *Monas Hieroglyphica*, an abstruse work of occult philosophy and ontology attempting to unify all pursuits under one emblem. He also produced papers on mechanics, optics and astronomy.

In 1582 Dee made the acquaintance of Edward Kelley, who claimed to have already made the kind of contact with discarnate entities that Dee was himself seeking. Together they experimented with a method of contacting angels who communicated using



“EDW[AR]D KELLY, A MAGICIAN, IN THE ACT OF INVOKING THE SPIRIT OF A DECEASED PERSON

Kelley as a medium, while Dee recorded the communications. Messages were received in the angelic language of Enochian, which was to intrigue the Golden Dawn almost three centuries later; Aleister Crowley is believed to have used the Eighteen Enochian Calls in conjurations. Dee wrote in his diary: 'Now the fire shone out of EK, his eyes into the stone agayne. And by and by he understode nothing of all, neyther could reade any thing, nor remember what he had sayde'.

The two men continued to travel widely in Europe and spent some time in Prague at the court of Emperor Rudolf II, whom Kelley convinced of his ability to turn base metal into gold. Dee's relationship with Kelley disintegrated after the angels suggested, through Kelley, that the two men should keep their wives in common. This suggestion did not sit well with Mistress Dee. In his latter years Dee returned to Mortlake to find his library ransacked and that he had fallen out of favour at court. The old queen was dead and her nephew, the new king James I, had no interest in anyone who had dealings with the occult. Dee lived on in Mortlake on a small pension and died there in 1608.

At one of Miss Florence Hamilton-Beech's sherry parties, a young woman confided to me that she and her friends dabbled in ritual magic and, together with a friend who purports to be a spirit medium were planning a late night visit to St. Mary-the-Virgin to conjure and materialise the spirit of Dr. Dee. They hope for personal instruction in the Enochian language and, perhaps more importantly to them, to find the location of a buried hoard of gold supposedly produced by Kelley's alchemical process and secreted somewhere near the site of Dee's Mortlake home. I remonstrated, saying everyone knew that Kelley was a charlatan and there surely was no treasure. The young lady was most argumentative, pointing out that the Emperor gave Kelley a knighthood, so I chose to curtail the conversation in favour of a quiet smoke on the pavement outside. This was my first encounter with Miss Verity Dyse,

a vocal and somewhat misguided woman who has been a thorn in the side of many historians, occultists and scientists for some time.

I believe this foolhardy and no doubt fruitless escapade has now taken place. The Mortlake Gazette reported that the church of St. Mary-the-Virgin was recently broken into and an attempt made to pull up the stone slabs comprising the nave floor. These are, of course, extremely heavy and little headway was made. The vicar did find what he described as 'runes' chalked on the floor. These were cleaned away after the police had concluded their inspection, but the sketches the vicar most sensibly made for himself showed me that these were not runic, but Enochian letters. Further, he had found traces of blood on the stones. I faced a dilemma as I talked to the Reverend. Should I voice my suspicions, assist the law and have this troublesome creature taken into charge? Or should I extend to this lady all the courtesies I would give to my fellow occultists? I decided on the latter course, for now.

Miss Verity Dyse

The previous entry brings me neatly on to this potted biography of Miss Verity Dyse, which will be short partly because the lady herself has not yet spent many years on this planet. Miss Dyse is the oldest daughter of wool magnate Sir Roland Dyse who is most indulgent of his three girls, providing all of them with generous annuities. Verity has taken up residence in Blackheath and invested much of her income in an extensive occult library. She has a small group of loyal acolytes; earnest young women and young rips with private incomes and little else to do who, I think, are much taken with Miss Dyse's looks. She is certainly charismatic but also inflammatory, naïve and dangerous.

A young gentleman who is a member of my club drew me aside after luncheon one day, saying he had vital information

on this lady to impart before he fled for France that evening. He had accompanied Miss Dyse and other young people up onto Blackheath late at night, where she had led them in wild dancing and chanting, with no pretence at modesty. When they collapsed with exhaustion, Miss Dyse arose, her manner much changed. She ripped off what remained of her clothing and stood naked, although it was winter. Her eyes glowed and her whole body seemed illuminated. In a deep, guttural voice, quite unlike her usual girlish manner, Miss Dyse commanded her party but although they understood her tone they could not understand the words. A wave of pure horror swept the group. In the months since some have clung to the young woman with fierce loyalty. My young friend, however, was utterly terrified. His attempts to extricate himself from her group have so far failed. He has had sigils painted on his front door and has received numerous death threats, but is too frightened to go to the police.

Tom Driberg

A columnist on the *Daily Express*, where he has recently begun to record London gossip under the already established name of William Hickey. Driberg's occupation necessitates an encyclopaedic knowledge of the London social scene, so it is unsurprising that he is often seen in the most fashionable places. Wherever this gentleman goes, however, rumour and scandal follow. He is reputed to be a frequenter of what are vulgarly known as 'pansy clubs' and to have amongst his inner circle one Aleister Crowley. Some say his acquaintance with Crowley is more than friendship and that Driberg is enmeshed in Crowley's magical work. Now, how does that fit with debs doing the season and tea at Claridges?

Driberg does, however, recognise the journalistic code of 'one for one', and if you can provide him with a juicy lead or social scandal, he becomes the soul of informativeness

Chaim Jacob Samuel Falk

Known as the *Baal Shem* of London, Samuel Falk lived at Wellclose Square, just north of the west end of the Ratcliff Highway, between 1742 and 1782. He was greatly engaged with working kabbalistic magic and studying alchemy and is thought to have initiated William Blake into mystical Swedenborgianism. Certainly, the Baal Shem counted Swedenborg, Cagliostro and Saint-Germain among his visitors and confidants. He is said to have extinguished a fire at the Great Synagogue in Dukes Place by inscribing the four initials of the great name of God –*YVHV*– on the door post, whereupon the wind changed direction and the fire abated.

Falk had an alchemical laboratory at London Bridge and it was there he was said to have created the infamous Limehouse Golem, presumably using London clay. Many lingered near this building hoping to see the creature venture forth, but either the Golem had a cautious nature or Falk's magic was strong as none but the Baal Shem himself was ever seen leaving the building.

Falk is believed to have left behind a great treasure, supposedly buried in Epping Forest.

Nandor Fodor

Hungarian by birth, Fodor now divides his time between London and the United States. Whilst in London he is much involved with the centres of psychical research in Kensington and is writing and researching for the Society for Psychical Research at present. Fodor is deeply interested in the emerging science of psychoanalysis and has posited that much supernatural phenomena is due to repression in the individual manifesting externally in an alarming and forceful fashion. For example, Fodor believes poltergeists are the product of an agitated mind, often belonging to a young person, which produces a kind of nervous energy resulting

in strange effects usually attributed to a malicious spirit.

Dion Fortune and the Community of the Inner Light

Born Violet Mary Firth in 1890 in Llandudno, North Wales, Fortune has lived in London for much of her life and is now a resident of Queensborough Terrace, Bayswater. At the age of twenty Violet was sent to an agricultural college, but left her training early after experiencing severe bullying by the college principal, to which she later referred in her book *Psychic Self-Defence*. Violet then began studying psychology and psychotherapy at the University of London. She was practicing as a lay psychotherapist at the Medico-Psychological Clinic in Brunswick Square, Bloomsbury when she discovered the works of Dr. Theodore Moriarty, who was to become her first spiritual teacher.

Membership of the Theosophical Society followed and Violet was initiated into the *Alpha et Omega* Temple of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1919. It was at this time that Miss Firth took the magical name *Deo non Fortuna* (God not Fate), also her family motto, which soon became contracted to Dion Fortune. She became disenchanted with existing occult orders, however, finding that the Golden Dawn presented not enlightenment but rather a group comprised of 'widows and squabbling greybeards'. Fortune discovered that quite instinctively she was able to function magically at a level much higher than would be expected of her grade in the Golden Dawn. She was able to create thought forms and once 'formulated a werewolf accidentally'. Thankfully she was also able to work out how to dismiss it.

Perhaps because of Fortune's precocious talent, her relationship with the Golden Dawn's leader at that time, Moina Mathers, became strained and Fortune found herself the victim of a series of psychic attacks. In *Psychic Self-Defence* she says 'Very soon curious things began to happen. We became most desperately afflicted

with black cats. The caretaker next door was engaged in pushing bunches of black cats off doorstep and window-sill with a broom, and declared that he had never in his life seen so many, or such dreadful specimens. The whole house was filled with the horrible stench of the brutes'. After an attack by a tabby cat 'twice the size of a tiger' Fortune exorcised the building and the cats departed.

When journeying on the astral plane, however, Fortune frequently encountered a woman dressed 'in the full robes of her grade, which were very magnificent and (she) barred my entry, telling me that by virtue of her authority she forbade me to make use of these astral pathways'. Most commentators agree that this woman was Mathers. After a battle on the astral plane which saw Fortune's physical body hurled across the room, Fortune managed to overcome Mathers and left the Golden Dawn to found her own Order.

Fortune founded the Community of the Inner Light in Glastonbury in 1928. It is a Mystery School in the Western Esoteric Tradition and teaches the initiate to extend his or her consciousness and, by doing so, become able to view the Inner Planes. After changing its name to the Fraternity of the Inner Light the Order later moved to its current headquarters in Bayswater, where there is a temple, office space and accommodation for various members, including Fortune herself. The Fraternity has recently attracted many prominent members. Fortune has taken up trance mediumship and now channels messages from Masters on the Inner Plane. She writes extensively and has produced both esoterica such as *The Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage* (1924) and *Psychic Self-Defence* (1930) and occult fiction such as *The Secrets of Dr. Taverner* (1926) and *The Demon Lover* (1927). The Order also produces its own *Inner Light* magazine.

Florence Hamilton-Beech

Lady occultist and owner of the Apokrypha bookshop. Florence is the younger daughter of Lord Maurice Hamilton-Beech, M. P. for North Winthrop, and began a lifelong interest in the occult while attending a private convent school in South London. As Florence showed an early talent for art, the school arranged private tuition for her with local artist Austin Osman Spare. Had Mother Superior made her enquiries, she would never have placed the child with this gentleman, for he is also an occultist of some note.

A small inheritance from an aunt enabled Florence to start up her shop, which she has run for some six years now to considerable success. This is due mainly to Florence's genial and inclusive approach—all genuine seekers are most welcome to the shop and Florence ensures that the views of all are respected. You will never hear a voice raised in anger whilst Florence is present. Providing a similarly calm, reassuring and mature voice when controversies do erupt will earn one her attention and respect. Perhaps unsurprisingly Florence prefers to confine her social life to the shop, but occasionally has small tea parties at her home in Dulwich Village, overlooking Dulwich Park and an easy tram journey into town.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

This is probably the best known magical Order of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The story of the Order begins when Dr. William Wynn Westcott, a coroner and member of the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia*, a group of Rosicrucian freemasons, discovered a manuscript written in cipher by German occultist Frau Sprengel. Translated into English it gave the finder permission to found their own lodge of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Westcott wrote to Frau Sprengel who conferred upon him the grade of *Adeptus Exemptus*. Westcott was to become the head of

the Golden Dawn's Isis-Urania Temple in London, but was counselled and directed by the Secret Chiefs, mystical adepts who governed the Order from afar, perhaps even from a different plane of being. After communicating with Sprengel, Westcott contacted an acquaintance, Samuel MacGregor Mathers, and asked for his help in translating the cipher and writing it up into a working magical system.

Some historians of magic have disputed this story, however, and say that the origins of the Golden Dawn lie in the writings of Kenneth Mackenzie, a leading Freemason, who had studied with the nineteenth-century occultist Eliphas Levi and some of whose writings were given to Westcott after his death. The debate continues.

The date of 1st March 1888 was chosen for the formal founding of the Order because it marked the end of a Neptune cycle in astrology which was believed to also mark the decline of the monopoly of Christian faith in Britain, although the Golden Dawn was more Gnostic Christian in its thinking than anything else. There were, however, planets in the Golden Dawn's natal chart which were inauspicious. The positions of Uranus and Mars should have provided forewarning of the disputes and conflicts that were to affect the group in years to come.

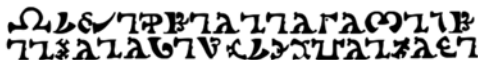
The purpose of the Golden Dawn was to study the occult sciences and the magic of Hermes in order to unite the Will with the higher self. Golden Dawn rituals used elements of the then-fashionable Egyptian mythology, kabbalism and, unsurprisingly, Freemasonry, from whence came the idea of grades. Initiates were taught to perceive the universe in new ways by using symbolism from the Kabbalah, astrology, alchemy, Rosicrucianism, Tarot and the Enochian language of Dr. John Dee. Progression through the grades was by examination.

Prominent members of the Golden Dawn include Mathers' wife Moina Bergson, who was to lead the Golden Dawn in its latter

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years, the actress Florence Farr, the society beauty and Irish nationalist Maud Gonne, the poet W. B. Yeats, Arthur Machen (for a brief period), Algernon Blackwood, the artist Pamela Coleman Smith, who was to collaborate with fellow Golden Dawn initiate A. E. Waite on his Tarot deck of 1909, and of course the ubiquitous Aleister Crowley. Dion Fortune joined the Golden Dawn during its latter years but did not find it to her taste and left to found her own Community of the Inner Light.

In 1897 Westcott departed, leaving Mathers in charge. By that time there were a number of Golden Dawn temples in England but the London one, the Isis-Urania, sought greater autonomy. By 1899 the other members had tired of Mathers' autocratic style. They wanted to speak to the Order's Secret Chiefs themselves, not through him as intermediary. In addition, Florence Farr had founded her own order-within-an-order called The Sphere. The history of the Golden Dawn is littered with struggles and schisms. Those preferring to use Egyptian mythology in their workings conflicted with those using Judeo-Christian symbolism; Mathers fell out with Westcott; Crowley caused many members to question why he should have been allowed to join – 'A mystical fraternity is not a moral reformatory' said Yeats. Later Moina Mathers and Dion Fortune's differences led to a spectacular magical war on the astral plane. By 1920 the Golden Dawn had fragmented. Mathers had been expelled in 1899 and Yeats had departed in 1901. Yeats later gave up his occult interests, turning instead to politics in the new free Ireland, whilst Crowley and Fortune established their own occult orders. The Golden Dawn still has a number of lodges around the world, but its glory days are over.



THE ENOCHIAN ALPHABET

Margaret Murray

A former student of University College London, Miss Murray was an associate of Sir Flinders Petrie, frequently accompanying him on his excavations in Egypt. During a period away from archaeology, Miss Murray spent some time in the New Forest where she lodged with two women who claimed to be modern-day witches. Inspired by what she had heard Miss Murray published a most singular book in 1921; *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*. In her book Miss Murray posited that a pre-Christian nature religion had not been superseded by Christianity but had gone underground. Adherents of the cult had maintained their faith secretly, meeting in covens of thirteen to honour their deity. The Church was anxious to stamp out pagan belief and sometimes resorted to the most extreme measures. To Miss Murray's mind, the European witch-hunts in which many thousands of people, mostly women, were hanged, burnt and horribly tortured was not just a black period in world history but explicitly an attack on these cultists. The cult had, however, survived and practitioners exist to the present day.

In her most recent book, *The God of the Witches*, Miss Murray describes the horned nature god and explains how Christians began to associate him with their own Satan. Further, she speaks of a pattern of divine sacrifice, where at key points in history kings and other significant figures gave up their lives for their country. William Rufus and James I are mentioned in a long list of monarchs.

Since the publication of Miss Murray's books, a number of groups have come to public attention claiming to be these 'covens'. I cannot say I was aware of this cult until reading the works of Miss Murray, but if the cult has remained hidden all these years, then why should it have been known to me?

Miss Murray is currently engaged in research for her next

book, which I am told will deal with Egyptian antiquities, and has an office at University College London, on the floor above the Petrie Museum. My recommendation is to approach her as you would any serious academic, and only question her theses if you have legitimate historical research to support your point. Any mention of lurid modern cults will likely have you dismissed as a journalist or other weak-minded person.

Elliott O'Donnell

Speaking of which, Elliott O'Donnell is one of the hardest-working and most sensational free-lance writers in modern London. Educated at Clifton College, he spent some time on the road in America before returning to Britain as a schoolmaster and part-time actor. He began writing occult thrillers in 1904, becoming a full-time writer soon after. After his War service, he acted in films and continued to write; his byline appears in all the popular newspapers and magazines, and his books emerge regularly on all manner of topics: *Haunted Houses of London* (1909), *The Meaning of Dreams* (1911), *Werewolves* (1912), *The Sorcery Club* (1912), *Haunted Highways and Byways* (1914), *The Menace of Spiritualism* (1920), *The Banshee* (1926), *Strange Disappearances* (1927), *Strange Sea Mysteries* (1927), *Great Thames Mysteries* (1929), *Famous Curses* (1929), and *Ghosts of London* (1932). In all cases, he accumulates far more research than he can (or than his editors wish him to) fit into the books.

O'Donnell often volunteers his services as an amateur ghost-hunter, and his sharp eye for detail makes him no less fitted for the task than many of his more delicate and imaginative colleagues in the field of spectral inquiry. He is currently researching a book on secret societies and hidden cults of London, and has in his way become something of an expert on the topic. Since he is both a

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writer and an Irishman, he can be encountered at any number of Fleet Street pubs, and his attention may be purchased with a scotch and soda. He has a great fund of conversation and anecdote, and the most difficult task for any interlocutor may be simply to keep him addressing the topic you seek to discuss!



“FOR HEAVEN’S SAKE KEEP OFF!” KELSON SHRIEKED’
FRONTISPIECE OF ‘THE SORCERY CLUB’

Benjamin Pilgrim

One Sunday afternoon last July I was boating at Putney with a young lady of my acquaintance when I noticed a man on the bank. That he was taking copious notes of something was of no import; the gentleman could have been a birdwatcher, perhaps.

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What attracted my attention was that he suddenly flung down his notebook and, rushing into the Thames, decanted from a large rucksack a number of thin copper rods which he proceeded to insert at regular intervals along the shoreline.

Curiosity forced me to curtail our leisurely scull along the river. I pulled into the bank and enquired as to the gentleman's business. He was a tall, thin man in his early fifties, smartly dressed in a gaberdine Mackintosh and happy to engage in conversation. Over tea and scones at Lyons Corner House he confided that his name was Benjamin Pilgrim and his mission was to heal London. He then produced a book on the singular Chinese art of Feng Shui and explained that an uninterrupted flow of energy was necessary for the healthy functioning of any organism. As he viewed London as a living being, with its rivers forming the circulatory system, Pilgrim was inserting these rods to redirect the energy flow and restore the river, rather as the oriental inserts his acupuncture needles to benefit his patient.

Pilgrim opined that London is unwell, literally ill-humoured, and this is his small effort at a restorative. Furthermore, he likened this illness to an infection which, left untreated, would spread and become even more virulent. One could not help but be impressed by his earnestness. I would have dismissed his comments as delusional had I not other evidence of London's present lack of equilibrium. As her magical field waxes and grows ever out of our control I pray God that Mr. Pilgrim's healing rods help stem the tide that is to come!

Harry Price

As our story starts, Harry Price is a young man living in New Cross, South London and attending the prestigious Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham Boys School where he has developed a keen interest in drama and story-telling some say has served him well

throughout his life thus far. He appears to be an inquisitive young man who, once developing various passions, then keenly pursues them for a considerable time.

After completing his education, Price moved to Sussex and started work as a journalist on local newspapers. He married and commenced the study of archaeology, at which he excelled. In fact, his ability to find antiquities in superb condition was frequently remarked upon, often by Price himself in his newspaper articles. Unfortunately, in 1910 a silver ingot from Roman times found by Price was denounced as a fake by Professor Haverfield of Oxford University, which rather curtailed Price's career as an archaeologist.

Price then turned his attention to stage magic and conjuring (not to be confused with the ceremonial magic which concerns most of the people in this guide). He joined the Magic Circle in 1922, and his skill in detecting magic tricks would prove most useful as he started his investigation of psychical phenomena. One of his first achievements in psychical research also occurred in 1922 when Price exposed spirit photographer William Hope as a fraud. Later that year he went to Germany to investigate the medium Willi Schneider. This research later appeared as the book *Revelations of a Spirit Medium* (1922). While in Germany Price dabbled in black magic and tried to turn a man into a goat. This was, of course, an experiment. Price is an appropriately sceptical investigator and does not sit on either side of the fence when it comes to belief in magic.

In the early 1920s Price joined the Society for Psychical Research and became involved with the London Spiritualist Alliance, which had recently set up home in Queensberry Terrace, South Kensington. Price established his National Laboratory for Psychical Research in a flat at the top of the large Georgian house and set about various investigations including work with the medium known as Stella C. and exposing Rudi Schneider, brother of

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Willi, as a fraud. It was also during this period that Price engaged a secretary, a Miss Kaye, who, and I speak confidentially to you dear reader, I believe to be his mistress.

In 1929 Price began his most famous investigation, that of Borley Rectory, reputed to be the most haunted house in England. This is still ongoing and if he is not in his laboratory, Price may well be undertaking the next phase of his fieldwork. Price is now located in Roland Street where he continues to beaver away. I understand he is currently trying to interest the University of London in moving the study of psychic phenomena onto a more academic footing, presumably with himself at the helm. He displays professional courtesy to fellow investigators of the unknown, although making grandiose claims of one's abilities or experiences will not be taken well. Polite, respectful treatment as an equal is the proper caper with Price, in my experience.

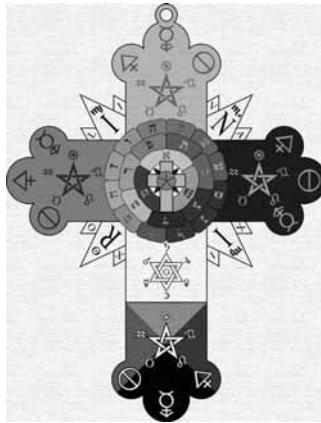


BORLEY RECTORY

Israel Regardie

Formerly Aleister Crowley's secretary, Mr. Regardie displayed his own occult credentials when he published *The Garden of Pomegranates* last year. Perhaps he is even more qualified to write this commentary on the Kabbalah than Crowley, given that he is fluent in Hebrew and shares his culture with the originators of this renowned symbolic system. Certainly, Regardie has wisdom enough to draw a discreet veil over his years with A.C. and to align himself more with the Golden Dawn *per se* than with its most notorious Frater.

A Londoner by birth, Regardie relocated to Washington DC with his parents as a child and returned to London in 1921 following a postal correspondence with Crowley leading to the aforementioned offer of employment. Despite what can only be termed a 'falling out' with his former employer, Regardie remains domiciled in London. Being a private kind of chap he has never invited me to visit his home. Indeed, I do not know where it is.



THE ROSY CROSS OF THE GOLDEN DAWN DESIGNED BY REGARDIE

I consider him to be a rather quiet man of temperate habits who avoids public houses and the like. He is, however, an avid reader and is most likely to be found haunting the bookshops of the West End, especially Apokrypha, where he gives occasional lectures.

Austin Osman Spare

Austin Osman Spare was born at Snow Hill, near Smithfield Market in 1886. He showed an early talent for art and by his teens was enrolled at Lambeth Art School and later obtained a scholarship to the Royal College of Art. His first gallery exhibition in 1907 brought him to the attention of our old friend Aleister Crowley and the two men exchanged correspondence for short while. It is possible that Spare was, for a time, a member of Crowley's *Argentum Astrum*. They did not remain friends for long, however, and Spare was damning of his fellow magicians in his *Book of Pleasure* (1914): 'These Magicians, whose insincerity is their safety, are but the unemployed dandies of the Brothels'.

Spare has been a resident of Southwark for some years now, living in and using as a studio a small flat in The Borough, near London Bridge. He lives among ordinary working class folk in a simple tenement block and it is evident that Spare places little monetary value on his work.

Although he exhibits much artistic skill, Spare's pictures have been criticised as being difficult to understand, an impenetrable forest of ideas, shapeless and confused. Perhaps his critics may understand him better if they, like we, take an occult perspective. Spare's magic is much concerned with the energy that comes from the intentional repression of thoughts and memories. These thoughts go into the subconscious where they well up, become powerful and transform into that which can be expressed through sigils –magical glyphs encapsulating and symbolising an entire thought. The complexity and symbolism of Spare's magic must

also be present in his art and, to the layman, is equally difficult to understand. Let us conclude then that Spare's magic is, like his art, both eclectic and challenging. Approaching Spare for even a commission, to say nothing of a favour, is delicate work best left to a fellow artist –ideally one not too well respected either by the stodgy British establishment or the smug avant-garde.

Spring-Heeled Jack

I hardly dare include the figure of Spring-Heeled Jack in this selection of august people. Not because his tale is uninteresting, for it has great interest. Not because his occult credentials are lacking, for they are not. In short, I hardly dare include Spring-Heeled Jack because I am not sure he is a person at all! Jack is a legend not only in London, but across Great Britain. Indeed, the last sighting of Jack was in Bradford only seven years ago. Here is a strange tale of a man with strange powers. . .

In 1837 stories circulated around London about a man able to leap great distances and great heights due to remarkable boots with inbuilt springs. Some say the first sighting of this peculiar fellow was in Peckham, others say it was in Barnes, but it seems Jack began as a South London phenomenon. Originally Jack's talent was limited to his extraordinary leaping ability, but as Londoners saw him more frequently we learned more about him. As well as his special boots Jack wore armour, a devil costume or dressed as a white bear. He accosted young women in the street, blew goutts of blue flame at them and caused them to collapse in a fit of the vapours. In the dark, Jack glowed with vivid luminosity. And Jack was never caught. Initial reports said Jack was a prankster, some young buck frightening girls for a bet, or just for fun. In later tales Jack metamorphosed into an unearthly ghost, a fire-breathing demon and even a space-man.

Of course the penny dreadfuls fell upon this extraordinary

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tale and the name 'Spring-Heeled Jack' was bestowed upon the character by journalists. Jack had his own weekly paper, and two plays were written about him. Later Jack expanded his territory, with reports coming in from Sheffield, Liverpool and the aforementioned Bradford.

Vigilante mobs were set up to search for Spring-Heeled Jack, as they were for that other elusive Jack, the Ripper. A number of men were suspected of being the Spring-Heeled individual and one poor gentleman wandering the streets of Yarmouth, Norfolk

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A 'PENNY DREADFUL' OF 1886

in a state of delirium was badly beaten by the mob. In Sheffield a group of men searching a cemetery where a tall man dressed as Spring-Heeled Jack had been rumoured to be hiding out and scaring women clashed violently with police. Army barracks in Aldershot, Hampshire got two Jacks for the price of one when sentries saw two glowing figures 'making tremendous springs of ten or twelve yards at a time' in 1877. The legend of Jack has lasted for almost one hundred years now. If he is or was a mortal man, what unearthly powers enable him to leap now as he leaped when the old Queen was on the throne? Perhaps he is not a mortal man at all. What an enigma is Spring-Heeled Jack!

Arthur Edward Waite

An early member of the Order of the Golden Dawn, A. E. Waite was born in the United States in 1857 but moved to London as a child. He became interested in psychical research and was another haunter of the British Museum's Reading Room, where he read widely on occult matters. Waite has lived in London most of his life and worked primarily as a journalist on such publications as the magazine *The Unknown World*. After leaving the Golden Dawn, Waite founded his own order, the Society of the Rosy Cross, in 1914. In 1909 he collaborated with the artist Pamela Colman Smith and the publisher Rider to produce a delightful tarot deck which was, I believe, the first to fully illustrate the symbolism of the Minor Arcana. Prior to Waite, cards of the Minor Arcana simply bore pips in the fashion of playing cards. Waite produced a book, *The Pictorial Guide to the Tarot*, to accompany this deck, which makes a charming addition to any occultist's collection.

Waite writes extensively on esoteric matters including the kabbalah, tarot and freemasonry, having become a freemason in 1901. His works include a number of translated and edited grimoires,

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two books on the Rosicrucians (a faithful work and a sceptical volume) and biographies of Saint-Martin, Lull and Fludd. He is currently at work on a history of the Holy Grail intended for the occultist and quester. He is impatient with fools, the credulous who will join any cult they encounter, and time-wasters, but responds instinctively to those doing genuine spiritual work or engaged in any sort of serious quest, be it magical or literary.

Dennis Wheatley

This year's *The Forbidden Territory* is Mr. Wheatley's first published novel although he has been known to me as a writer for some time. He was born in 1897 in South London and as a schoolboy he had the distinction of being expelled from Dulwich College. Wheatley then spent some time in the Merchant Navy and saw military service (including a gas attack) in the Great War. After the War he was engaged in running the family wine business before deciding to become a full-time writer. He enjoys scribbling in the crime and occult genres, to which ends he has carried out research with such notaries as Rollo Ahmed, Montague Summers (on one of his visits to London) and, of course, Mr. Crowley. He is open to such discussion with those who share his elevated palate but he only picks up the tab for those with suitably lurid tales of occult danger that he can adapt for one of his lurid thrillers.

Some say that Wheatley's fascination with the dark arts goes beyond obtaining grist for his writer's mill. I can neither confirm or deny that rumour, but Wheatley's life does mirror Crowley's in many ways: the black sheep of a wealthy family with a public school education and a need to kick over the traces takes an interest in black magic. It is only a question of degree.

Frances Yates

Whilst on a visit to a friend who was, at that time, a professor at the University of London, I was introduced to a young woman who was in a rather excited frame of mind, having been awarded her Master of Arts degree by the University that very day. Over a cup of tea, she told me her name was Frances Yates and her interests rather mirrored my own, including spiritualism, mysticism, the occult and occultists including Ramon Lull (of whom she hopes to write a biography at some point) and Giordano Bruno. She was also very fond of Italy, a country I myself toured some years ago. We had a most pleasant tea party and I was happy to recently receive a letter from Frances telling me she had continued her career as a private scholar since leaving university and was continuing her writings whilst seeking an academic role in a university. She often visits London for the purposes of research and has been making extensive use of the library of the Warburg Institute since its relocation from Germany to London earlier this year. She enjoys sparkling conversation of an elevated nature, especially delighting in literary or artistic history.

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