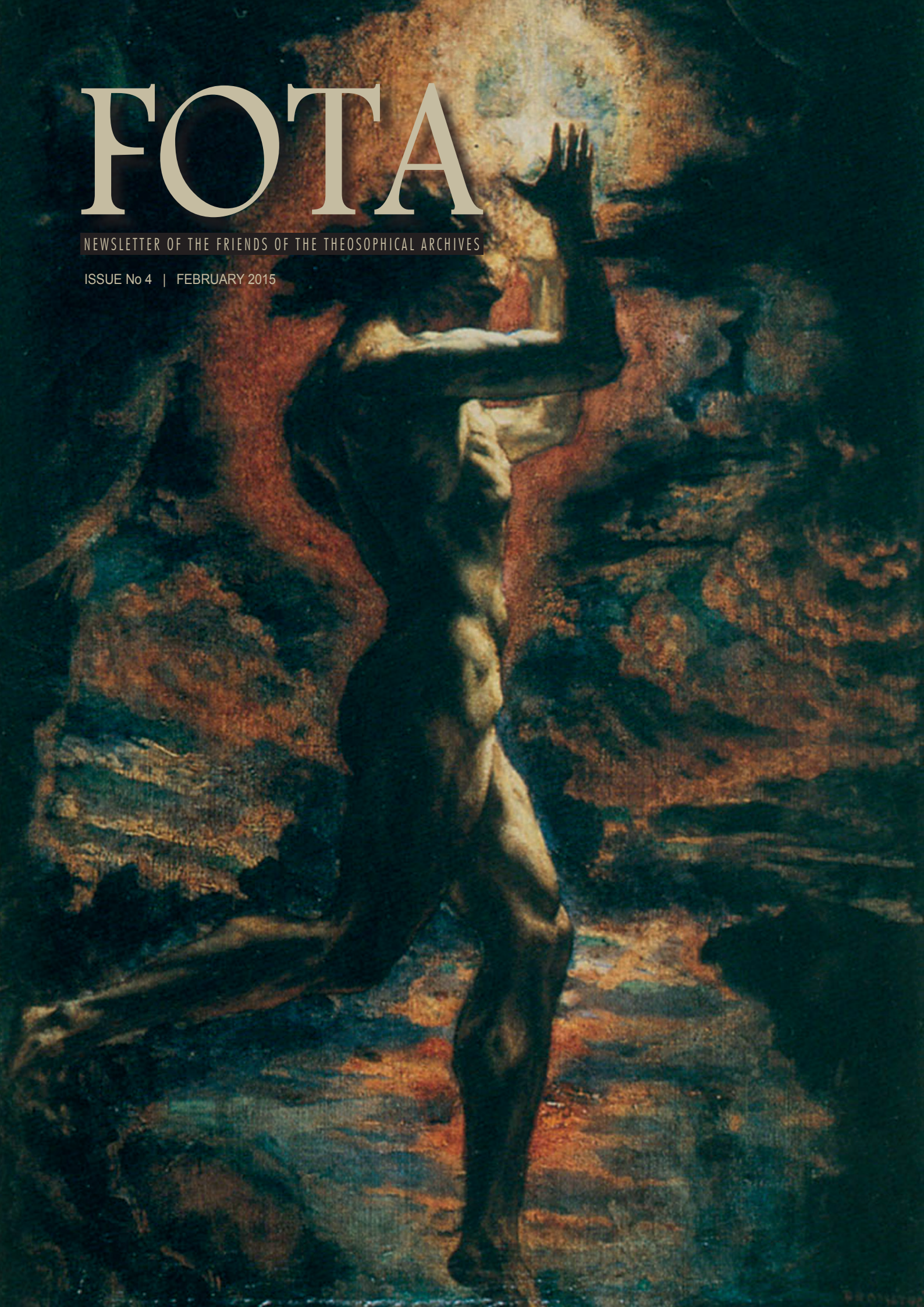


# FOTA

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL ARCHIVES

ISSUE No 4 | FEBRUARY 2015



*Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*

George Santayana



# FOTA

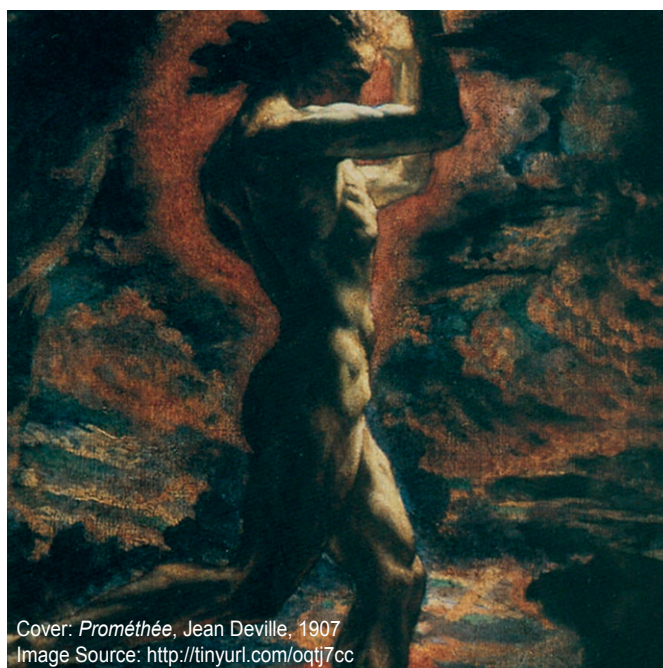
The Friends of Theosophical Archives

## Newsletter n°4

### In this Issue

FEBRUARY 2015

- 05 • Editorial
- 06 • English FOTA News  
by *Leslie Price*
- 07 • Theosophical Art Auctioned  
• Collection Guide to the Jiddu Krishnamurti Papers
- 08 • *Theosophical History Journal* Editorial  
(Issue Vol. XVII, Issue 2 April, 2014)  
by *James Santucci*
- 11 • A Tribute in Memory of George Duguay
- 12 • Environmental Conditions in Adyar Archives  
by *Janet Kerschner*
- 17 • Digitization Initiative at Theosophical Society  
in America
- 18 • Hidden in Plain Sight  
by *Robert A. Gilbert*
- 22 • Research on Theosophy in Poland - an outline  
by *Karolina Maria Hess*
- 26 • Cabinet of Curiosities  
by *Leslie Price*
- 34 • Updates from IAPSOP
- 35 • A Review - Adyar Library and Research Center
- 36 • The H.P. Blavatsky Museum Center



Cover: *Prométhée*, Jean Deville, 1907  
Image Source: <http://tinyurl.com/oqtj7cc>

FOUNDER: Leslie Price | EDITOR: Erica Georgiades

Graphic Design: George Georgiades

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position FOTA.

#### ABOUT FOTA

FOTA (The Friends of Theosophical Archives) is a charitable organisation being formed to promote knowledge of, and support for, the Theosophical archives across the world. For this purpose, "Theosophy" is defined in the same way as in the editorial pages of *Theosophical History*, and is not restricted to any one tradition or country. For more information visit this link: <http://www.hypatia.gr/fota/>

To unsubscribe from FOTA NEWSLETTER send an e-mail to [erica.georgiades@gmail.com](mailto:erica.georgiades@gmail.com)



*Poetry Tunes the Violin*, Nikolaos Gyzis  
Image Source: <http://tinyurl.com/ou6tccg>

## Editorial



To locate and access primary sources is one of the greatest challenges of research in the academic field of Western Esotericism. In addition, few researchers know that the Adyar Archives is one of the most important in this field. It stores thousands of unpublished primary sources from esotericists of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. There, we can find original material from Dion Fortune; Eliphas Levi; Helena Petrovna Blavatsky; Rudolf Steiner; Alice Bailey; Maria Montessori; Leadbeater, Annie Besant; William Q. Judge and the list goes on *ad infinitum*.

The Adyar Archives are the historical archives of the international Theosophical Society, Adyar, located within the international headquarters of the Theosophical Society, in Chennai, India. This issue of our Newsletter features a report, written by the archivist of the Theosophical Society in America Janet Kerschner, about the Adyar Archives. Her report outlines the present environmental conditions of the archives and closes with a call for trained volunteers and funding.

In April 2015, Janet sent a question form to the volunteers who had worked at the Archives of the Theosophical Society Adyar. As I was one of them as well, I received the form which included questions such as: what was the period of time we worked at the archives; what sort of work we did; the collections we worked with; if research requests were handled; if paradichlorobenzene was being used and so forth. This initiative, was the first attempt to systematically organize the history of the Adyar Archives from 1990 to 2007.

Additionally, she informed me that “no records were kept of who worked in the Archives after 1980”. This makes her research very difficult, because she depends on the memory and accuracy of information provided by previous workers. Nonetheless, in lieu of the absence of recorded data about who worked at the archives, and what they did while working there, Janet managed to put together a great deal of information. She is also writing a paper about the history of the Adyar Archives that will be published on the *Theosophical History Journal*.

I am looking forward to read her paper and know more on how the Adyar Archives were organised and handled over time. Also, I would like to suggest to the international direction of the Theosophical Society Adyar, that perhaps, a way to begin raising funds to the preservation of the Adyar Archives would be to publish and sell the catalog of the archives in booklet format. In this manner, the importance of the Adyar Archives would be emphasized in the academic field of Western esotericism and research facilitated.

Furthermore, in this issue Dr. Gilbert raises some questions about what is a Theosophical Archive and shares with us some of his experiences illustrating how the personnel of archives and libraries can, sometimes, overlook important historical material. Karolina Maria Hess, currently conducting a research on the history of Theosophy in Poland, shares with us a brief outline of some of Theosophical activity in Poland. The Theosophical Society in Ukraine informed us that they are organizing an event to restore and repair the H.P.B. Museum Center. Also, I've compiled Leslie Price's posts in FOTA's Facebook page and organised them in chronological order. His notes, presented here in the article The Cabinet of Curiosities, provide a variety of interesting, and sometimes curious, information related to Theosophical history. This issue also contains a number of different items related to international conferences; libraries and archives collections; Dr. Santtuci's editorial to the latest issue of the *Theosophical History Journal* and the latest news of FOTA England. Finally, we dedicated a page in memory of George Duguay, a Theosophist and friend who organised in the early 2000s the largest, at that time, online Theosophical Library.

*Erica Georgiades*



# FOTA

...news

## FOTA England Meetings

by Leslie Price

**March 18, 2015**

The meeting was attended by Kevin Tingay (in the chair), Janet, Lynda and me, with new member Sarah Turner from *Enchanted Modernities* (<http://tinyurl.com/pqroq8p>).

Dr. Robert Gilbert came with Kevin Tingay. They were both in London to attend a committee meeting of the Churches Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies, of which Kevin Tingay is vice-chair (that is why we meet on such dates – to take advantage of Kevin Tingay being already in London.) (<http://tinyurl.com/pwncqud>)

Dr. Robert Gilbert edits their journal “The Christian Parapsychologist” but he is also an expert on Masonic history and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

On the proposal of Janet, we decided to set up a web site for FOTA England. At present the TS has a new person working on their own website, and it is hoped to take advantage of his skills.

It is already intended to use Paypal for TS transactions via the expanded TS web site, and the plan is to enable FOTA transactions like membership fees to be handled the same way.

Much appreciation was expressed for the continuing work of Erica Georgiades on the Newsletter and on the FOTA pages at Hypatia web-site.

**June 9, 2015**

FOTA England met on June 9, with Kevin Tingay in the chair. It was decided not to seek paid members for the present, but to build up an emailing list of those interested in our activities. Forthcoming improvements in the English TS website should permit the establishment of a FOTA presence linked to it, and the loading of digitised material.

Meanwhile, Erica Georgiades had kindly created a Facebook presence for FOTA, and this was making known archival treasures and new discoveries.

A report had been submitted to the *Foundation for Theosophical Studies* on the nearly-completed scoping project on the English TS HQ archives. At their next meeting, the FTS will be invited to consider conservation and cataloguing priorities.

Dr Sarah Turner drew attention to the forthcoming *Enchanted Modernities*’ New York Conference on 9-10 October 2015: <https://www.york.ac.uk/history-of-art/enchanted-modernities/conferencecolumbia2015/>; she was congratulated on her new appointment to lecture at the Courtauld Institute, while alongside her continuing role at the Paul Mellon Centre.

It was hoped that the next *Theosophical History Conference* in London would be in summer 2016, and that FOTA England could again help in the display of archives.



## Theosophical Art Auctioned

Hours before the FOTA England meeting on June 9, Bonhams in London held a successful auction of the work of Theosophical artist, **Olive Hockin**.

<http://www.blouinartinfo.com/artists/85969-olive-hockin>



From the left in the photo are Dr Sarah Turner, Irene Cockcroft and Janet Lee. Janet is holding Olive Hockin's *The Woods at Night*, which she bought. Sarah bought *Two Moorland Views*.

Irene bought *A Dryad* (two paintings), Olive Hockin's Bookplate, a *Suffragette* drawing and *Cairo*; Irene already owns two other OH paintings. She is an independent exhibition curator, author and lecturer specialising in the story of women's involvement in the late 19th, early 20th century Arts & Crafts and Suffrage movements. Irene later attended the FOTA England meeting. All three buyers are keen that Olive Hockin's work is not lost to scholarship and are willing to lend to exhibitions – contact through Janet Lee at the TS in England.



## Collection Guide to the Jiddu Krishnamurti Papers

Govert Schuller informed us that the Huntington Library houses 40 boxes of the Rajagopal/Krishnamurti collection.

See: <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt767nf1ps/>





*La Rue du Monde*, Jean Deville, 1940  
Image Source: <http://tinyurl.com/npaycga>

# *Theosophical History Journal*

Editorial Issue Vol. XVII, Issue 2 (April 2014)

---

by James Santucci

---



**Dr. James A. Santucci** is Chair and Professor of Comparative Religion at California State University, Fullerton and Editor of the *Theosophical History Journal*.

*The Theosophical History Journal* was founded in 1985 by Leslie Price and edited since 1990 by James A. Santucci. *Theosophical History* is now in its 30<sup>th</sup> year. *Theosophical History* is an independent scholarly journal devoted to all aspects of theosophy (with and without a capital T). It is unaffiliated with any Theosophical organization.

To subscribe to the *Theosophical History Journal* visit this link: <http://www.theohistory.org/>

Interest in the Theosophical and esoteric impact on the arts has been ongoing for many decades, culminating with the milestone publication and exhibit of *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*.<sup>1</sup> More recently, the University of York's History of Art Professor Liz Pettejohn initiated a project entitled "Enchanted Modernities: Theosophy, Modernism and the Arts, c. 1875–1960," in 2012. Since its inception, the University of Amsterdam sponsored a conference in 2013, with a future conference to be held at Columbia University in New York entitled "Theosophy and the Arts" (October 9-10, 2015). The first article in this issue, "Zöllner's Knot: Jean Delville (1867–1953), Theosophy, and the Fourth Dimension," reflects author Massimo Introvigne's continued interest in the relationship of Theosophy with art. As a participant in the 2013 conference, he presented a paper entitled "Čiurlionis' Theosophy: Myth or Reality?" followed by "Painting the Southern Border: New Religions, the Mexican Revolution, and Visual Arts," which was presented at the 2014 American Academy of Religion at San Diego.

"Zöllner's Knot" is an especially significant article because of Delville's extensive connections with the esoteric subculture. Delville was a Theosophist, no doubt, but he also had connections with esotericists Joséphin Péladan, Papus (Gérard Encausse), and Édouard Schuré among others, and organizations and movements such as Rosicrucianism, Martinism, Spiritualism, and Freemasonry, a reminder that Theosophy was not the only influence in his life illustrating his esoteric eclecticism. As a Theosophist, however, Delville is perhaps the only painter, with the exception of Nicholas K. De Roerich, to appear in the 1937 and 1938 International Theosophical Year Book of The Theosophical Society (Adyar), and this because of his active involvement in the Society as Organizing Secretary and first General Secretary of the Belgian Theosophical Society from 1911 to 1913. The controversy surrounding the World Teacher Movement and J. Krishnamurti damaged his relationship with the

Theosophical Society, although he continued on good terms with its president, Annie Besant.

Delville barely was mentioned in *The Spiritual in Art*, but with the greater understanding of the role of Western esotericism as an integral part of Western culture and not simply as an aberration, Delville deserves to be reexamined as a major artist. The article provides an excellent argument for this view in the context of the major forces governing the art world during Delville's active years.

Massimo Introvigne is the Director of the Center for the Study of New Religions (CESNUR). For more information, go to [http://www.cesnur.org/2008/mi\\_20.htm](http://www.cesnur.org/2008/mi_20.htm).

"P. C. Mukherji and Theosophical Archaeology" is a fascinating insight in the colonialist view of archeology in India and in the Theosophical perspective. Furthermore, the value of *The Theosophist* from its inception in 1879 to the end of the nineteenth century cannot be overstated. Aside from archival material, many of the activities and interests of its leaders are chronicled in the pages of the journal and its Supplements, which serve as a veritable goldmine for historians. This was somewhat evident in Professor Baier's article, "Mesmeric Yoga and the Development of Meditation within the Theosophical Society" (Vol. XVI, No. 3-4), and even more so in the present article. Keeping in mind the third reason for founding *The Theosophist* ("the necessity for an organ through which the native scholars of the East could communicate their learning to the Western world, and, especially, through which the sublimity of Aryan, Buddhistic, Parsi, and other religions might be expounded by their own priests and pandits, the only competent interpreters"), it is no wonder that the policy of the Theosophists, especially its leaders Blavatsky and Olcott, was what Dr. Huxley describes as "*Indology for the Indians*," a view that was in direct opposition to *Belittle and conquer*. How the Babus and pandits fared vis-à-vis government agencies such as

<sup>1</sup> The publication with this title was organized by Maurice Tuchman for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (N.Y.: Los Angeles County Museum of Art/Abbeville Press, 1986).

the Archaeological Survey of India, is illustrated in the example of

Rājendralāla Mitra and Purna Chundar Mukherji.

Of the two, Mukherji takes on added importance for those interested in Blavatsky's erudition concerning Indian archaeology and history, for instance the controversy over the Buddha's dates. Her response is pertinent today, especially with the varying opinions appearing in Heinz Bechert's edited collection entitled *When did the Buddha Live?: The Controversy on the Dating of the Historical*

*Buddha* (1996).

The author, Dr. Andrew Huxley, is Emeritus Professor in the School of Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies (London).

Two book reviews on Annie Besant's *Esoteric Christianity or the Lesser Mysteries* and a series of essays compiled by Kurt Leland is the final offering. The reviewer, Rev. Kevin Tingay is a retired parish priest in the Church of England.



## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

### Theosophy and the Arts: Texts and Contexts of Modern Enchantment

October 9-10, 2015  
(Friday & Saturday)

Columbia University, New York

<http://tinyurl.com/of29zp4>

### Theosophy Across Boundaries

September 24–26, 2015

Heidelberg Center for American Studies  
Hauptstraße 120, 69117 Heidelberg

#### Organiser

Interdisciplinary Research Group MC7  
"Political Legitimation"

The conference is open and free for everyone.  
Please send a short and informal registration to:

[julian.strube@asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:julian.strube@asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de)

<http://tinyurl.com/qgzpmf7>

## A TRIBUTE In Memory of George Duguay 1932 - 2008

On January 29, 2008, George Duguay, a key leader and worker for the Canadian Theosophical Association, passed away at the age of 76 in Brampton, Ontario.

George was born and raised in Montreal and spent all his life there until 1988 when he moved to Toronto. He joined the Theosophical Society in 1957. During the past fifty years George was active in various positions and lodges. In the late 1950's he served as Treasurer of the Montreal Lodge. He later became a member of Isis Lodge in Montreal where he was active as a lecturer and arranged for publicity for that lodge. In the early 1970's, at the suggestion of the then International President of the T. S., Mr. John Coats, that in Canada there should be some Theosophical activities for French speaking members, George helped establish what eventually became Christos Lodge in Montreal. He served there as President for a number of years.

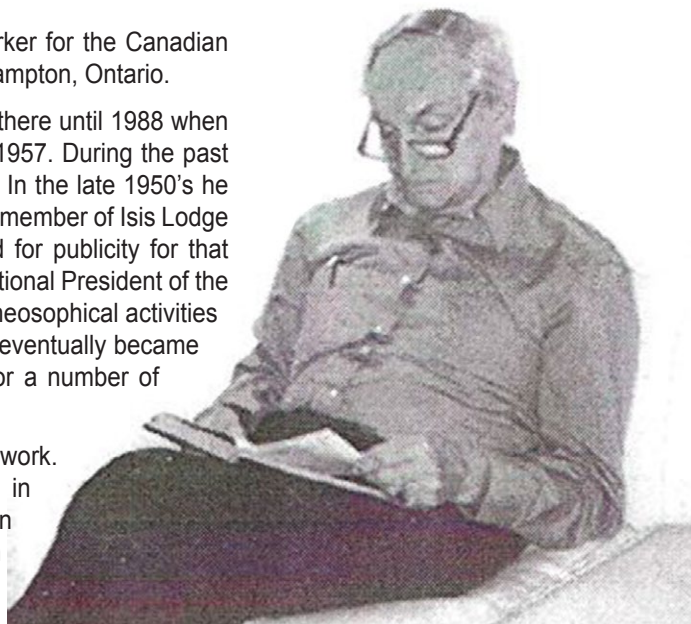
In 1988 George was transferred to the Toronto area for his work. And it was then that he joined York Lodge in Toronto. Also, in 1988 George served as Regional Secretary for the Canadian Federation for a one-year period. In 1993, the year of inception of our national magazine, The Light Bearer, he helped in its production.

The year 2000 was a significant one for George, when he took retirement and was elected as Regional Secretary of the Canadian Federation of the T. S. (a forerunner of the Canadian Theosophical Association.)

Not only his involvement in Theosophy, but also his years in the work force, provided George with a wide range of experience. He worked as an accountant for an insurance company, as well as holding various supervisory positions in the fields of import and transportation. One of the most challenging aspects of his work in transportation would certainly have been negotiations in labor agreements with the teamsters unions and in dealing with labor grievances.

In 2001, George played a key role in writing the By-laws and overseeing the Incorporation of the CTA (Canadian Theosophical Association) when he became the CTA's first President.

George did much fine work for the CTA, and continued to serve until he drew his very last breath. During the last few months of his life, when he was ill, he continued on with his responsibilities as National Treasurer, as well as doing most of the work of the



CTA Secretary while in the process of training a new officer to take on that role. George was our Webmaster, and he had created a very sophisticated and complex website with over 800 online documents, which is utilized by universities and Theosophical organizations from around the world.

Furthermore, right until his death George looked after the printing and distribution of The Light Bearer as well as continuing to serve as Secretary/Treasurer of York Lodge.

From Canadian Theosophical Association  
FEBRUARY 2008 NEWSLETTER

**Anton Rozman**, Slovenia, April 2008

George Duguay gave decisive and fraternal assistance and support to the webmaster of the present website Theosophy in Slovenia, as well as to many other webmasters and translators around the world. We all express our profound gratitude for everything he has done...

(to read more, visit [http://www.teozofija.info/Adm/Duguay\\_Tribute.htm](http://www.teozofija.info/Adm/Duguay_Tribute.htm))



**Konstantin Zaitzev**, Russia, 2015

Most American Theosophical Lodges, as they were untouched by the world wars, have good libraries with rare books in Europe.

But it was George who started to scan and digitise, extensively, this rare material. His online library was one of the main sources for my translations, so I had a back up of it in a CD, as my internet connection wasn't fast at that time. After his death, by unknown reason, the Canadian association removed the online library. Later they renewed it but in not so suitable form.

George was very helpful, and it was he, who helped me to join TS. Something that few people know about him, is that he was also a priest of LCC.

Today, we have a free hosting in Russia with unlimited space, and I have uploaded there Duguay's original library (<http://hpb.narod.ru/lib.htm>). Later, I also uploaded in there the TPH twilight archive (<http://hpb.narod.ru/tpb>) which also ceased to exist due to the death of its owner.

# Environmental Conditions in Adyar Archives

by Janet Kerschner

Archivist, Theosophical Society in America

Image of a Cabinet with original Scrapbooks by H.P.B.  
Adyar Archives, Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai, India



*Janet Kerschner has been working in the TSA Archives for eight years. Several of her articles have appeared in Quest magazine and in Theosophy Forward. She is active in the Academy of Certified Archivists, the Society of American Archivists, and other professional organizations. Contact her at [archives@theosophical.org](mailto:archives@theosophical.org) or 630-668-1571 extension 353.*



Early this year, Tim Boyd, President of both the Theosophical Society in America and the international TS in Adyar, sent me to Adyar for a month to assess the state of the Archives. We were concerned with the condition of the archival materials and with the preservation methods, access, and policies of the department. Since health issues had been reported by Archives workers, we particularly wanted to determine whether the space was a safe environment for people working and visiting there.

### Introduction to the Archives

I found the Adyar Archives located in the majestic Headquarters Building on the Adyar campus. This building was present when Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott purchased the Huddleston Gardens estate late in 1882. The original structure has been expanded several times. The Archives department occupies a suite of rooms on



**C. Jinarajadasa's travel desk**  
Adyar Archives, Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai, India

the ground floor of the north side of the building, a few feet from the Adyar River. Like other residences of the British colonial era, the building has high ceilings and numerous windows. Archival materials are stored in a large room filled with steel cabinets and wooden bookshelves. Air conditioning was installed there some years ago although the offices and work rooms must rely on ceiling fans and windows for cooling.

Tim introduced me to the team of four talented people who are working to bring the Archives back into a usable state after several years of inaction: Mrs. Kusum Satapathy, formerly the International Secretary; Ms. Jaishree Kannan who has worked in the Adyar Library and part-time in the Archives for many years; Dr. T. P. Alagathantham, a physician and skilled photographer; and Dr. Isaac Jauli, who has taken special training in conservation of papers and art works.

### The condition of the Archives facility

Entering the main Archives, called the "AC room," for the first time, I was struck by the overwhelming odor of the chemical paradichlorobenzene (pDCB). This is a



**Cupboard filled with presidential correspondence, with little bottles of pDCB on the shelves**  
Adyar Archives, Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai, India

very simple compound commonly used in many countries in mothballs as an alternative to naphthalene, and in deodorant blocks toilets and trash containers. It is an insecticide and deters growth of mold and mildew very effectively. While it is harmless to natural fibers such as paper, it is potentially harmful to humans. Since the Archives in Adyar have developed a reputation among researchers as being unhealthy, Dr. Alaganantham and I reviewed medical histories of four Archives workers and medical information from several agencies. The workers' illnesses were unquestionably serious, but we could see no pattern. In all of these cases it is possible that pDCB was a causative factor. However, other people such as Pablo Sender and Pedro Oliveira have worked with the archival materials for much longer periods without ill effects, so

removed all sources of pDCB. After ventilating the room and all the cabinets thoroughly, the chemical odor was completely gone within two days. I cut some samples of paper that had been exposed to pDCB over a long period of time and took them back to the United States with me for testing. Chemist Anna Pavlovic volunteered to examine the papers, and could not detect pDCB. That corresponds to the views of Dr. Ralph Hannon, a chemistry professor with whom I consulted. He believes that the chemical sublimates so readily that it would be unlikely to remain on papers that had been ventilated. He said, "As long as you have good ventilation and you cannot smell pDCB, it strikes me as safe."

The air conditioning unit is working again, and the facility is being cleaned and aired regularly. Since the AC room cannot be effectively sealed against insects, the team began using leaves of the neem tree, a natural insect repellant, in a few cabinets as an experiment. The leaves were tucked between layers of shelf paper, not touching archival materials. Workers and visitors who remain concerned about the history of insecticide use, or who are sensitive to mold and mildew, could consider wearing a face mask and gloves. Personally, I would not feel the need for those protections, but I do wash my hands very often around mildewed surfaces. **For a more detailed report about the medical cases and pDCB, send me a request by email.**



**Cupboard filled with reports and convention proceedings**  
Adyar Archives, Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai, India

it may be that individual sensitivities and predispositions are very important in how exposure to pDCB affects people. Other factors that cannot be overlooked are the presence of mold and mildew in the Archives and in south India generally, and the stress of heat and humidity on people coming from other climates.

The Archives space had not been ventilated in several years. We conducted massive cleaning and

### **The condition of archival materials**

I spent most of my time in India conducting a survey of the AC room, assessing the condition of each storage unit and its contents. My lengthy reports to Tim Boyd and the Archives team identified noteworthy items and made recommendations.

Considerable effort has gone into preservation over the years. The primary method used was lamination. The quality of that process improved greatly over the years, but early efforts resulted in pages that have ripples on the surface and are very difficult to scan or photograph. Acidic papers are continuing to degrade and darken within the laminant, and the damage is not reversible. On the positive side, these papers have been protected from mechanical damage and insects, and are still mostly legible as much as 70 years after the preservation effort took place. Most correspondence and other documents are stored in large envelopes lined with acid-free cloth, providing effective mechanical support and protection. I did see a bit of bookworm damage on a few bound volumes, but certainly no recent infestations. Correspondence, HPB's scrapbooks, Olcott's diaries,



Page from a TS scrapbook (not one of HPB's)  
Adyar Archives, Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai, India

Annie Besant's political papers, the Ralston Skinner manuscript, and photographs are certainly showing their age, but I believe that almost all pages could still be – and should be – scanned successfully for permanent preservation.

Artifacts are generally in very good condition. I was stunned to open a cabinet and find myself facing the portrait of Stainton Moses that HPB had precipitated on satin in 1876. The image was fresh and vibrant in blue and gold. Framed certificates and smaller art works are carefully wrapped in clean paper. One group of mostly unframed paintings did not fare quite as well. The huge wooden shelving unit built for them was infested with

“white ants” (termites). All the paintings were moved to a safe location, but a few had been damaged. Carpenters removed the massive cabinet, and the infestation ended. The only other category of archival items that suffered significant damage was a very small group of films in rusted canisters.

Since I left Adyar, Kusum Satapathy has recruited two local volunteers, recent graduates of the Olcott School who are pursuing computer studies. They have scanned over two thousand documents. A large flatbed scanner is being purchased to supplement the two smaller ones.

## Moving forward

My first recommendation to President Tim Boyd was to **move the archives** to another location where a suitable environment could be maintained, farther away from the Adyar River and the threat of flooding. Much as I love the Headquarters Building, it cannot be adapted to archival storage. I would like to see all the mildewed folders replaced with clean new ones. Many of the archival materials such as scrapbooks, diaries, and manuscripts should

be scanned from overhead to minimize damage in the digitization process, so a planetary-style scanner is needed. Adyar could apply for a grant from the British Library or another agency to equip the Archives for digitization and to train (and pay) workers. Researchers should have access in person or digitally. I would love to see a fulltime director in the Archives to provide the vision, professionalism, and continuity this facility deserves.



## Adyar Archives ~ Call for Volunteers



**Volunteers** from all over the world should be welcomed to share their talents. Those who cannot physically go to the beautiful Adyar campus might be able to translate or transcribe documents, or could seek out grant funding opportunities. There are many ways to serve. FOTA members who would like to consider volunteering for the Archives or another department should write to International Secretary Marja Artamaa for details at [secy.hq@ts-adyar.org](mailto:secy.hq@ts-adyar.org).

## Adyar Archives ~ Funding

**Funding** is necessary to re-create the Adyar Archives. A new building is needed; supplies and equipment must be purchased; and staff members need support. Monetary donations should specify "Adyar Archives" and can be addressed to:

**International Headquarters, The Theosophical Society Adyar, Chennai 600 020 INDIA**

or

**Theosophical Society in America, P. O. Box 270, Wheaton IL 60187-0270 USA**

This is a window of opportunity for the Friends of Theosophical Archives to take concrete action toward establishing a 21st-century facility for preserving the heritage of H. P. Blavatsky. Please help to make this vision a reality!



## Digitization Initiative at Theosophical Society in America



The Henry S. Olcott Memorial Library and the Theosophical Society in America Archives Department are delighted to announce that we have acquired a planetary-style scanner that will enable us to tackle digitization projects that were previously impossible. We have long used various flatbed scanners to scan photographs and documents, but could not do justice to the preservation needs of books and bound periodicals with that technology.

We have wanted a planetary scanner that would capture images from above. In this configuration, a fragile volume is gently placed face-up in an adjustable V-shaped cradle. Both pages of an open book are scanned at the same time, and software splits the images into two separate pages, making adjustments for the curvature of

the pages into the binding so the result is two rectangular pages with no distortion. Further processing includes OCR (optical character recognition) so that the end result can be a searchable PDF, TIFF, or JPEG file, in grayscale or 24-bit color. Some scanners in this market are fully automated costing over US\$100,000, which would be quite excessive for our needs. After a lengthy search of the scanner market, we settled upon the **Bookeye 4 V2 Basic by Image Access** as the best choice for our needs and budget. We are very grateful that the combination of a bequest from Don Campbell and a grant from The Kern Foundation made this purchase possible.

This scanner is designed to capture clear and crisp images within a narrowly defined focal range. The largest page size that it can accommodate is A2 (420 x 594 mm, or about 17 x 24 inches). That will work very well for scanning whole pages of scrapbooks from the Archives. We have had some training from the vendor and are still working out the best workflows for the types of projects we have in mind. The design of web pages to provide access to the digitized items will be a few months off.

We are reviewing our rich collections of periodicals, rare books, and pamphlets to set priorities for scanning, based on research value and condition. Another possibility is digitization of the annual General Reports of the Theosophical Society, which would be of great value to historians. We hope to assist IAPSOP to fill in some gaps in its runs of *The Theosophist* and *Light*. The options for scanning projects are almost endless, and we expect to keep this workstation busy for many years.

Our productivity with this new equipment depends largely on having volunteers who can turn the pages and snap the images. This year when our national convention occurs on July 17-21, we will be recruiting some members to help!

Janet Kerschner, Archivist  
[archives@theosophical.org](mailto:archives@theosophical.org)

Marina Maestas, Head Librarian  
[mmaestas@theosophical.org](mailto:mmaestas@theosophical.org)

Theosophical Society in America, Wheaton, Illinois





# Hidden in Plain Sight

by Robert A. Gilbert



**Dr. Robert A. Gilbert** is an author and retired antiquarian bookseller. He read Philosophy & Psychology at the University of Bristol and after retiring he completed his doctoral dissertation, on the publication of esoteric literature in Victorian England, at the University of London. During his career as a bookseller he specialised in the literature of the occult, and continues to lecture on aspects of esotericism. He is the author, co-author or editor of many books in this field, including *A.E. Waite, Magician of Many Parts* (1987) and, most recently, *Gnosticism and Gnosis, an Introduction* (2012).



What, exactly, is a Theosophical Archive? In one respect it is like any other specialist archive: the records of a particular institution concerned with its specific subject, and of the individual men and women associated with that institution. But archives, whether institutional or private, discrete collections or integrated with associated libraries, are almost never straightforward.

To some extent this problem may be offset in the case of Theosophical archives, because these tend to be managed, or owned, by people who are fascinated by or committed to the spiritual philosophy and the religious and cosmological speculation to which the term 'Theosophy' applies. It is thus reasonable to expect that they will be able to understand, to correlate and to interpret the contents of their archives. But however well these may be organised and however efficiently, meticulously and intelligently catalogued, archivists and librarians (and historians for that matter) are yet human, and thus subject to personal preferences and to unconscious bias.

This is, one must hope, less of a problem today, now that the internecine warfare which bedevilled the Theosophical Movement in previous generations is now largely a thing of the past. But selective acquisition and the disposal of both archival and library holdings that have been deemed irrelevant or inappropriate to institutional collections in the broader esoteric field have certainly depleted and damaged them. And this has largely come about because those in charge of these collections have looked at them with blinkered eyes and failed to see the merit of what they have.

A greater awareness of the inter-related nature of esoteric movements, and perhaps a greater knowledge of the complex history of their own specific institutions, has lessened this problem for contemporary archivists and librarians, but there is still much that they fail to see when they look at their holdings. Let us consider what these are likely to contain, and what aspects of the contents are at risk of remaining 'unseen'.

The records of any institution concern not only its origins, history and activities, but also its relationship with

other bodies, and the identity and actions of its founders, members, employees, supporters and other individuals associated with it (any or all of which categories may overlap). Even these parameters are restrictive, for archives will contain more than original records, in manuscript, typescript, printed or digital form, of meetings (minute books, letter-books and accounts) and members (membership lists, attendance registers and related correspondence). There will also be other financial records, miscellaneous correspondence, personal diaries and the less obvious: printed ephemera, pictorial images (drawings, prints and engravings, paintings and photographs) and other related material objects.

This, you may say, is simply to state the obvious, but some of these categories tend to be overlooked and any comprehensive correlation of them is all too rare. Connections and extrapolations that could and should be made are simply not seen. To some degree this is a result of limited resources. Archives, even more than libraries, tend to be significantly and chronically under-funded, and there are rarely enough staff (paid or voluntary) to engage in adequate cataloguing, shelving and correlating archival material.

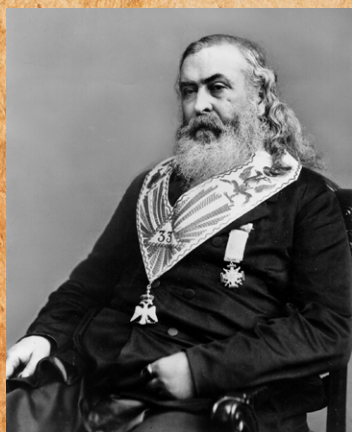
But the little that can realistically be done will be of far greater value if the archivists concerned can recognise the significance of each item within the context of the whole. They do not need to be polymaths in order to do this, but they ought to have a firm grasp of the history of their specific institution – and of its changing membership. What might they discover if they examine their archives with 'seeing' eyes?

An ideal starting point is to examine new arrivals in a new light. Given the invariable constraints of space, donated collections, small or large, are usually filleted on the basis of relevance and (in the case of printed material) duplication, but it is fatally easy to overlook significant items. If the donor was a significant figure within the Theosophical Movement, then it is wise to retain the material *en bloc*, even if names of correspondents, for example, are not recognised as theosophists. By rejecting such items our overall view of the donor is diminished and

the task of future historians made more difficult.

Here I should emphasise that we must always recognise that individual theosophists did not, and do not, live in a theosophical vacuum: they have other interests, other associations and other friends. Examining and understanding these interactions – and the complex array of records that relate to them – enable us to arrive at a far more detailed appreciation of theosophical institutions in their social, religious and intellectual contexts.

And are additional copies of printed books, periodicals and pamphlets *really* duplicates? Seeing them for what they are requires us to consider their provenance. Is there a bookplate or inscription to indicate past ownership? Did the owner or the author inscribe the book? When and to whom was it inscribed? Does it have annotations, and if so, by whom? Inscriptions and annotations by any significant person can enhance the historical value of the book, and provide insights into the thinking and manner of working of the writer. I will illustrate this point from my own experience.



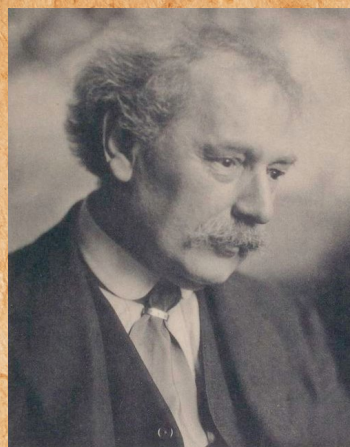
Albert Pike

Image Source: <http://tinyurl.com/qas2u9o>

While working on my paper 'The Role of Bibliography in Masonic Research' (AQC 103, 1990) I visited the library of the masonic Scottish Rite in Washington, DC. Among the books in their open access section on esoteric subjects I found a first edition of Eliphas Lévi's *Dogme et Rituel de l'Haute Magie* (1856). This was not surprising, for Lévi's book was a major source for what was once the key work of the Scottish Rite, Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma* (1871). What did amaze me was that the staff had not noticed that this was Pike's own copy. When I explained its provenance they were delighted – and highly embarrassed.

That was simply non-recognition, but another example will illustrate the problem of duplication. In 1980 a smaller masonic library was integrated with the Library and Museum of the United Grand Lodge of England (now the Library and Museum of Freemasonry) in London, and among duplicated titles was a set of *The Rosicrucian and Masonic Record*, the journal of the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* from 1867 to 1876. I was thus able to purchase it, although they should have retained it because it had belonged to Dr. W.R. Woodman, the second Supreme

Magus of the S.R.I.A., co-founder of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn – and the actual, if unacknowledged editor of the journal.

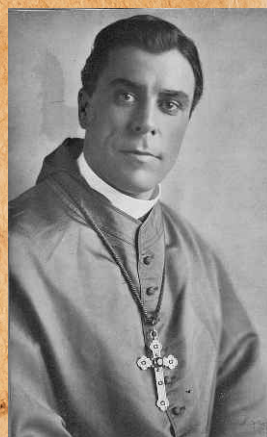


A.E. Waite

Image Source: <http://tinyurl.com/owym684>

My own collection of archives relating to A.E. Waite, which came from a variety of sources and is now in the Bibliotheca Philosophica et Hermetica in Amsterdam, included many examples of material that was thought to have no relevance in relation to Waite and his work. Yet further examples of the people who had charge of these records failing to see just how significant they were. What they rejected included domestic records, printed ephemera and scrapbooks, each and all of which threw new and often startling light on Waite's private life and on his masonic and esoteric careers. As his biographer it was my task to build up a rounded view of Waite's life, but those who previously held these varied records should have looked beyond their preconceptions and realised that the freemason, the Rosicrucian and the family man were all the same person. Let us keep this in mind when assessing the contents of our archives.

But how wide should a biographical or historical net be cast? What other institutions may be relevant when correlating theosophical archives? And how can we discover the breadth of any individual's interests and affiliations? To the first question I would answer, 'As wide as the spatial constraints permit'. On which point I would emphasise the need to check the provenance of titles



J.I. Wedgwood

Image Source: <http://tinyurl.com/q29acas>

discarded from theosophical libraries. De-accessioned books are often discarded not because they are duplicates, but because they are deemed irrelevant from the narrow perspective of a theosophical purist. Apart from being unfit for the task, such persons can also display surprising degrees of ignorance. Thus, in the past books with J.I. Wedgwood's bookplate

have been cast out by the English Theosophical Society, and books from J.W. Brodie-Innes's library discarded by the Scottish T.S. Provenance appears to be a word unknown to such unseeing custodians.

To the second question the answer may reasonably assume a degree of limitation – to those societies, orders and other bodies that are likely to have an appeal to an occultist, a ritualist or a speculative religious philosopher. Thus, British members of the Theosophical Society may be drawn also to Freemasonry, to Rosicrucianism, to secret, or quasi-secret, esoteric Orders, to Spiritualism, to established or obscure Churches, or to investigative groups such as the Society for Psychical Research.

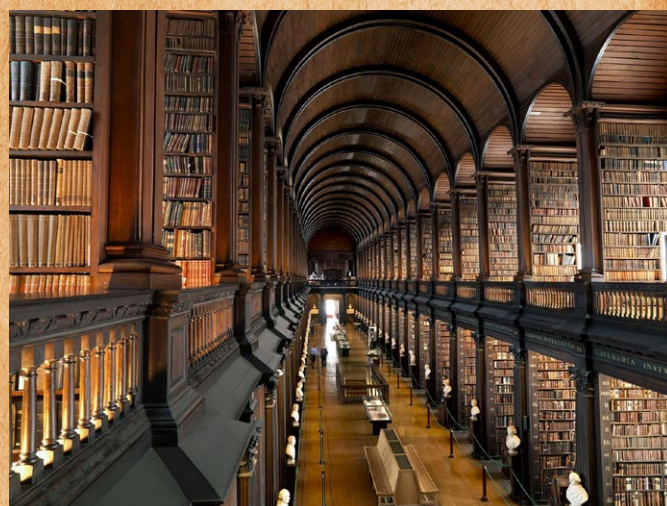
Most, if not all of these bodies will have extant archives, and many of them printed and circulated membership lists, lists of society officers, summonses to meetings, announcements and reports of lectures and details of the speakers. They are not always easy to find, but the appropriate libraries usually hold them and some are accessible even though in private collections.<sup>1</sup> Ploughing through such lists in search of multiple memberships may be a tedious task, but it is also rewarding – not least for discovering the composition, at any one time, of warring factions within and around the various bodies (e.g. Mead's Quest Society, and the Besantine TS between the two World Wars). It can, and should, also lead to increasing contact with archivists and librarians working in what might be termed 'associated fields'.

But such searching presupposes an extensive knowledge of theosophical and parallel institutions, and of their probable members. This will certainly improve our ability to see what is before us, and it will be helped by having access to appropriate reference books, and to less obvious sources of information. Consider such an unlikely title as Walter Walsh's *Secret History of the Oxford Movement* (1899); it is a bigoted book, virulently anti-Catholic, but it sets out in great and accurate detail the structure, work and membership of the many religious societies that the author perceived as subverting the Church of England. Its significance lies in the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church being the source of the greatest number of Anglican priests who were or who became theosophists. In like manner Peter Anson's *Bishops at Large* (1964) is a thorough and comprehensive

history of the many autocephalous churches, and their curious clergy, in the English-speaking world. It is thus an essential source work for any archive that includes material relating to the Liberal Catholic Church in its many varieties.

For records of individuals library and sale catalogues of the private libraries of identifiable theosophists, spiritualists, occultists and freemasons, can tell us much as to who read and purchased what, and how that reading influenced their own work. Examples of these are George Redway's catalogues of the libraries of Frederick Hockley and Walter Moseley (and the annotated book lists that he inserted in the early issues of *Lucifer*, although these were rarely bound up with the journal), and the catalogues of Mrs. Atwood's library – the large part that she did not give to the Theosophical Society – issued by William Tait.<sup>2</sup>

These are a few random, but relevant examples; readers of this article will certainly be able to suggest other unusual but valuable reference works, and it is the intelligent use of these aids that will supply the answer to my third question. It may also stimulate debate on the issue of limited archival vision and thus identify other aspects of archival cataloguing in which we need to see more clearly. This would lead, in turn, to more extensive recognition of the significance of unique material, and thus to its preservation rather than to its dispersal or destruction. Will this happen? We shall see, and if we do, then it will.



Trinity College Library Dublin  
Image Source: <http://tinyurl.com/p3qjday>

<sup>1</sup> For example, I possess a typed list of members of the Metropolitan College of the S.R.I.A from 1866 to 1947. This is the society's most important unit by far, and I am happy to photocopy the list for those who may find it useful.

<sup>2</sup> Auction catalogues of libraries are usually less useful unless they have been annotated or include a list of purchasers and the prices realised.



# Research on Theosophy in Poland

---

## AN OUTLINE

---

by Karolina Maria Hess

Painting by Stabrowski, 1910, *Golden autumn fairy tale*  
Source: <http://tinyurl.com/ndtpe4l>



**Karolina Maria Hess** conducts research on the history of Polish Theosophy within two projects: a doctoral dissertation at Jagiellonian University; as well as an individual project focused on the reception of the category of the East in Poland at the turn of the 20th century (the latter is funded by the National Science Centre, Poland, awarded on the basis of decision no. DEC-2013/11/N/HS1/04812). The interest in this topic among Polish researchers is constantly growing, which makes it possible to hope that in-depth studies of Theosophy in Poland will appear soon.

Any readers who have questions or comments, or know of any sources or information relevant to the topic, are invited to contact the author at [karolinamariahess@gmail.com](mailto:karolinamariahess@gmail.com).

The theosophical movement developed in Poland for the most part in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but its beginnings, like in other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, date back to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most dynamic period of development was in the two decades between World Wars, when many prominent and influential groups became interested in Theosophy, as well as other related and similar ideas. Institutional activities connected to the movements ceased almost completely in the years after World War II; attempts at reactivation of the Theosophical Society were unsuccessful. Initial research suggests that the history of the theosophical movement in Poland can be divided into three distinct stages: an initial stage from the late years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of World War I; a proper stage of dynamic activity and development in the interwar decades; and a period of decline from the beginning of World War II to about 1950. After this date no more than a few Polish theosophists were active, and only abroad.



Wanda Dynowska 'Umadevi'  
Image Source: <http://tinyurl.com/q9kkew8>

The reception and cultural adaptation of Theosophy had various forms in different countries. Also in Poland, Theosophy was received in a distinct way and creatively interpreted. The theosophical ideas were imported to Polish lands at first by artists, and after being absorbed by intellectual elites, became the object of

interest of a broad audience. Despite the significant popularity of Theosophy in Poland over the period of several decades in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the movement is very rarely, if ever, mentioned in historical scholarship of the period. Some aspects of the history of the Polish Theosophical Society are discussed in articles by Tadeusz Doktór, a sociologist of religion, and Ludwik Hass, a historian of freemasonry. No major monograph has been devoted to the topic as yet. This

fact is partly explained by the scarcity of sources. Most of the documents of the Theosophical Society were lost or destroyed during World War II. However, some personal notes, memoirs, letters and historical sketches were preserved in private archives. Of great importance is the work of Kazimierz Tokarski, who, while planning to write a biography of Wanda Dynowska 'Umadevi', collected a large number of materials and documents related to the Theosophical Society. He donated them to the Archive of the Polish Academy of Science and the Polish Academy of Arts and Science in Kraków, where they are accessible to researchers. Other than that, information about Polish Theosophy is dispersed among archives, private collections and libraries around Poland – in Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań, Cieszyn and other cities – as well as abroad, in Vilnius or Lviv, and in places where Polish theosophists found refuge during World War II (e.g. British lodges).

It should be kept in mind that not all theosophical initiatives in Poland were affiliated with the officially registered Society (which joined the worldwide Theosophical Society based in Adyar only in 1923). Theosophical groups and circles were active much earlier and they assumed various institutional forms – from unregistered meetings and lectures, through groups such as Kazimierz Stabrowski's Theosophical Circle, the Alba Lodge (under Russian jurisdiction), the Warsaw Theosophical Society or the Polish Theosophical Society in Cieszyn Silesia (cf. Karolina M. Hess, *The beginnings of The Beginnings of Theosophy in Poland: From Early Visions to the Polish Theosophical Society*, The Polish Journal of the Arts and Culture, forthcoming).

Let me present here a short overview of theosophical activity in Poland. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Polish nationals took part in the activities of lodges in other countries (among others the London lodge of the TS), as well as in international congresses. The beginnings of organized activity of Polish theosophists should, however, be traced to Russia, whence ideas of Theosophy were brought to Poland by the painter Kazimierz Stabrowski (1869-1929), who was a student in the Academy of Fine Arts in Petersburg, and who during his studies there frequented

meetings of theosophical character. Around him a circle of people interested in esotericism formed and in 1908, when the Russian lodge was registered, a Polish section of it formed as the lodge Alba. From early on, however, there were attempts to establish an independent Polish section. They remained unsuccessful, but a partial success was achieved when the authorities agreed to register the Warsaw Theosophical Society in 1912. Nonetheless, further failure to establish an independent Polish section, as well as other factors, led the members of Alba to join the followers of Rudolph Steiner's Anthroposophy. A separate initiative was the Polish Theosophical Society in Cieszyn Silesia established in Nydek in 1919. However, already in 1920, after another redrawing of the borders, the town of Nydek found itself on the Czech side. The Polish Society partially moved its organization to Wisła in the Polish part of Cieszyn Silesia – a region that was known throughout Poland for the dynamic activities of esoteric publishing houses, issuing numerous journals and books. The Wisła Society never joined any section of the TS approved by the Theosophical Society in Adyar.

The structure of the Theosophical movement was still chaotic and dispersed at that time. Wanda Dynowska (1888-1971) began to work on establishing a Polish Theosophical Society in 1920, and her energetic actions allowed things to finally go more smoothly. From early on she held a negative attitude towards Anthroposophy and its Polish followers. In 1920 she went to France to meet Annie Besant, and to get her written approval for forming a Polish section of the Society. The statute of the Polish Theosophical Society was signed by the founding members – W. Dynowska, I. Brzostowska and J. Dejke in Warsaw on February 21, 1921. Władysław Bocheński wrote: "In the spring of 1923, Anna Kamiensky, of many years the president of the Russian Theosophical Society, moved to Geneva. Soon after, the first Congress of TS members in Poland took place, during which the Section of the Theosophical Society in Poland, under the name Polish Theosophical Society was established, and Wanda Dynowska was unanimously voted its Secretary General". From the beginning of its existence, PTS published the journal *Przegląd Teozoficzny* ("Theosophical Review"). The establishment of PTS was connected with a truly significant expansion of its institutional activities in the following years, including, among others, creation of new lodges, and other organisations such as the Polish counterpart of the Order of the Star of the East, the Liberal-Catholic Church, a freemason mixed lodge *Le Droit Humain*, as well as extensive publishing.

Theosophy not only existed and developed dynamically in Poland, but it also evolved in a specific

way related to the background of Polish intellectual history and the political situation of the time. An important role was played by so-called new patriotism, a movement closely connected to the traditions of Polish Romantic messianism, which combined ideals of universal brotherhood and national karma. The PTS considered itself a teacher of Europe, a representative of a nation, which, due to its historic experience of subjugation and suffering, can introduce a new quality and bring about positive changes in the international arena. Religious acts, and a conception of liberation in an eschatological sense were merged with an idea of national liberation – the salvation of individuals became equivalent to the salvation of the nation.



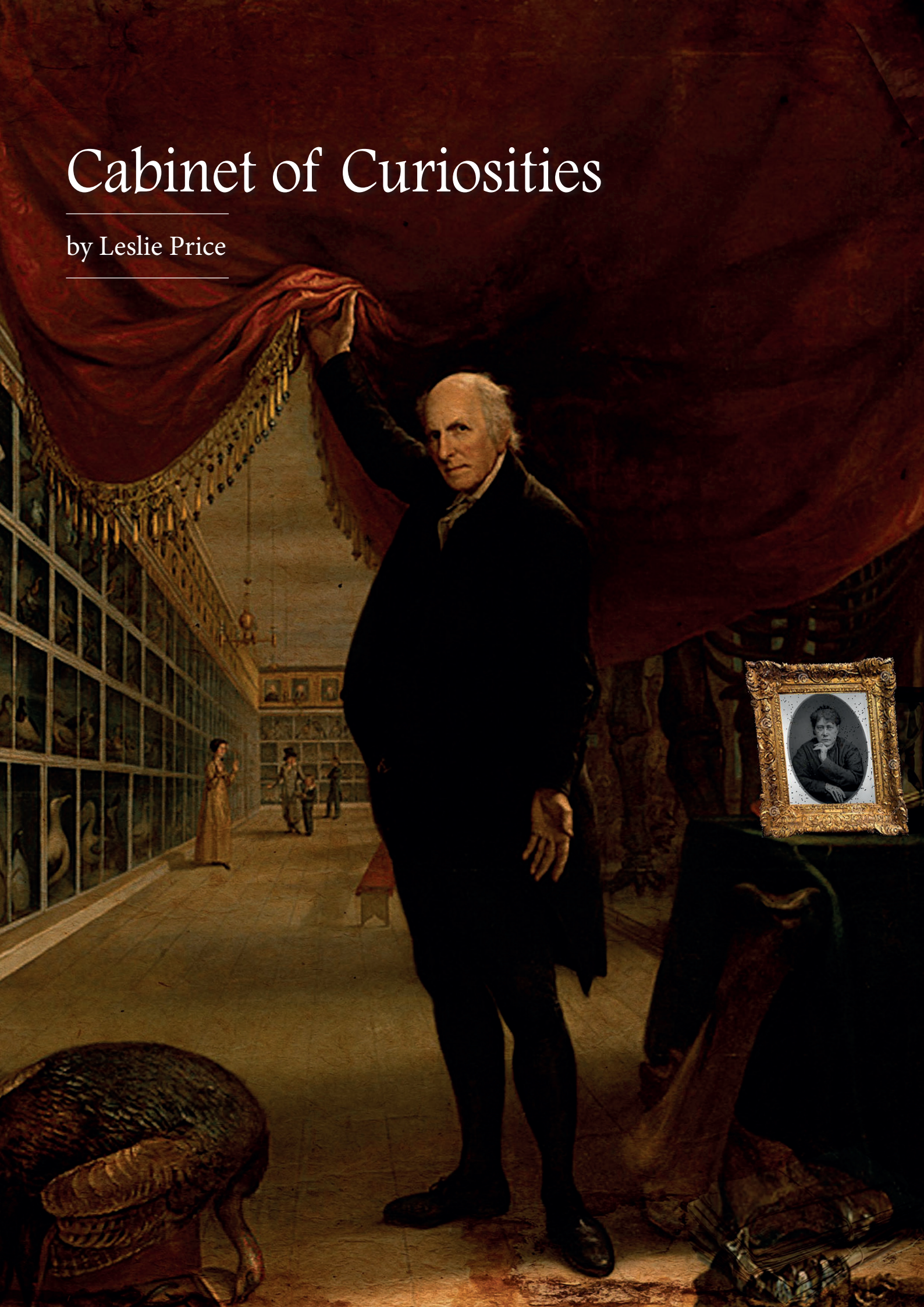
Painting by Stabrowski, 1908.  
Peacock - Portrait of Zofia Borucińska née Jakimowicz  
Image Source: <http://tinyurl.com/nlyg4s4>

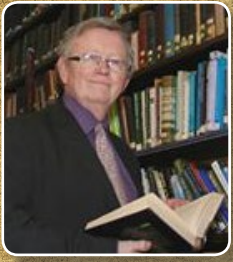


Painting by Stabrowski, 1910,  
*Le Récit des vagues, portrait d'Emilia Auspitz*  
Image Source: <http://tinyurl.com/ovnmzf>

# Cabinet of Curiosities

by Leslie Price





*Leslie Price is the founder of "Theosophical History" and "Psypioneer" journal, and a past editor of "The Christian Parapsychologist". Currently an associate editor of TH and sub-editor of "Psypioneer" journal. He was the Secretary of the first Society for Psychical Research conference in 1977, and served on the SPR's Library Committee and as a member of Council and is currently an Honorary Member.*



The notes reproduced here were originally published on FOTA's facebook page; some updates are added.



## Madame Blavatsky and the Seven Archival Mysteries

25 April 2015

Theosophy Forward, the international on - line magazine, has published on its site an edited lecture which I gave as an epilogue to the Theosophical History conference in London in July 2014.

The first part of "Madame Blavatsky and the Seven Archival Mysteries" appeared in December 2014.

<http://www.theosophyforward.com/.../1332-madame-blavatsky-and...>

The second and final part was posted in March 2015.

<http://www.theosophyforward.com/.../1408-madame-blavatsky-and...>

The lecture argues that HPB can only be understood by reference to certain published archives, to some which remain unpublished, and to other material (like the original for "The Stanzas of Dyzan"), yet to be found.

Since this lecture, the new international president of the T.S. Tim Boyd, has taken steps to make the Adyar archives safe for those who use them. Reports are in train on how to better conserve and make available the extensive and already catalogued material. [See this issue of FOTA for Janet Kershner's article about the Adyar articles.]



## The Buddhist Society in London

1 May, 2015

The Buddhist Society in London is celebrating 90 years of work, and in a special issue of its journal "The Middle Way" (Feb. 2015) there's a warm tribute by Muriel Daw to

its first president Christmas Humphreys, who was also a leading Theosophist. Users of the Theosophical archives in London have cause to bless him because he left his Theosophical archives to the T.S. including material about the Mahatma Letters (he chaired the Mahatma Letters Trust). Among the choicest items was the membership diploma of one of the recipients, A. P. Sinnett.

Diplomas are a neglected source in theosophical history. You might like to ask yourself; what was the third degree, or the third section, or the Western Division? Did the Founders, Olcott and Blavatsky, carry a stock of pre-signed diplomas as they travelled around India?

Christmas Humphreys was also a founder of the Blavatsky Trust, and there is another fine article about him on their web site.

[http://www.blavatskytrust.org.uk/html/c\\_humphreys.htm](http://www.blavatskytrust.org.uk/html/c_humphreys.htm)  
Incidentally, he was christened Travers Christmas because they were names traditional in his family.



## Who was the greatest Theosophical scientist?

4 May 2015

Who was the greatest Theosophical scientist? In England, we recall that Alfred Russel Wallace, co-discoverer of evolution with Darwin, briefly joined the New York T.S. in 1876. And Dr E. Lester Smith, isolator of vitamin B2 also left a rich legacy of work with the Theosophical Research Centre. But surely William Crookes, who joined the T.S. in 1883 and remained until his death in 1919, was the greatest?

But was he an occultist before that? Quoted in SPR Proceedings 1964, in a paper about Crookes and the physical phenomena of mediumship, there is preserved in

the Adyar archives, a letter from C. C. Massey (an S.P.R. Council member at that Society's inception in 1882, and first president of the British Theosophical Society in 1878) to Colonel Olcott, dated December 17, 1875. Massey writes:

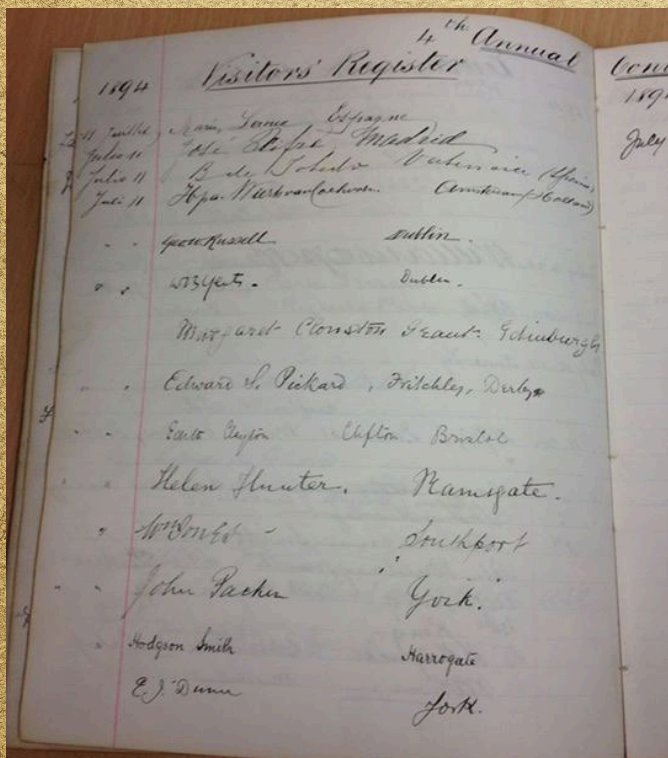
"I sat next to Crookes at dinner the other night and had a very interesting conversation with him. Indeed neither of us spoke a word to anyone else all the time. He is an Occultist, and a pupil of Eliphas Levi, whom he met in Paris. He has himself produced results, but told me that like all profound Occultists there were secrets which he was not permitted to reveal. Is he an initiate in Madame's lodge? Probably not, for he does not appear to believe in human spirits and says that Magic is almost altogether bad and dangerous. He asked me much about you and Mme. B. and Felt, to whose work he wishes to subscribe. He is going to write to you, being more interested in finding the similarity of results at which you have both arrived. "

Madame Blavatsky visited Crookes' laboratory in London in 1884, and he called on her when she settled in London later. They had much to discuss, we may be sure.



Headquarters Visitors Book of the  
English TS for July 11 1894

6 May 2015



Here is the page in the headquarters visitors book of the English TS for July 11 1894 which shows the Irish poets George Russell and W.B. Yeats signing in for the Annual Convention. The Judicial Committee had met the day before and decided it could not rule on certain charges against William Q. Judge, the American leader. But the Judge crisis deepened, and a year later Russell became vice-president of the Irish division of a separate Theosophical Society led by Judge. So, poignantly, this 1894 Convention was the last at which there was even a semblance of Theosophical unity.

Note the name on the page of Hodgson Smith. Harrogate was to become a major centre of Theosophical work in England.



# White Lotus Day

May, 8 2015

Today May 8 is White Lotus Day when Theosophists of all traditions mark the passing of Madame Blavatsky (HPB) in 1891, with readings and charitable acts. An unusual address was given on this Day in 1909 here in London by Annie Besant, and can be found in her book, "The Changing World". The Day was, she said, one of commemoration for all our workers who had passed onward. She had news of several old Theosophists. Subba Row, for example, "is now a lad of nearly fifteen, in the Indian body once more... very soon to be ready again to take up his work. " Damodar had "found his way to his Master's home near far-off Shigatze. He has been living and working there since, and is now a man of middle age, but his return ere very long we may without fear look forward to." W.Q. Judge "after a while worked his way through the mistake that had been made, and has again thrown his life force, his enormous energy into the Movement..." Olcott, now residing in his Master's home, "is ever eagerly working for the Movement he loved and loves". As for HPB, she had already come back, indeed "the great and strong disciple will again come amongst us to work more powerfully than in the woman's body that last time he wore."

There had lately been what she called “a shaking”, that is a significant loss of members in the UK and USA, but Mrs Besant had kind words for those leaving the T.S. “in the days which are just dawning, surely it is bad karma enough.” For the T.S. “is literally the John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Coming of the Christ.”

Mrs Besant was doubtless aware of the formation in

March 1909 of a different expression of the Theosophical impulse, the Quest Society, led by G.R.S. Mead, lately discussed in Psypioneer March 2015.

<http://www.woodlandway.org/PDF/PP11.3March2015.pdf>



## Astrological Lodge of London Celebrates its Centenary

13 May 2015

This year the Astrological Lodge of London celebrates its centenary. There is to be a book to mark this occasion, to be published on the very day 13 July and the Lodge president Kim Farnell has been investigating how it began in 1915. A very informative article on the Lodge website reveals that the Lodge was originally called Middlesex Lodge, and we are hoping to find in the TS archives more light on the change to the present name, which happened after only a few weeks.

<http://www.astrolodge.co.uk/history-of-the-lodge>

The potential for tension between the Theosophical and Astrological sides of its work has always been present, and has sometimes flared up, so to survive a century is quite an achievement. Some of the first reports of the new Lodge appeared in "The Vahan", a house journal published by the TS in London. But what we hope to find is the minute book for the early years.



## Ernest Lester Smith (1904-1992)

17 May, 2015

Some scientists joined the early T.S. but the only later one I immediately recall who was elected an FRS (1957) was the industrial chemist Ernest Lester Smith (1904-1992), chairman of the Theosophical Research Centre. As well as the usual obituaries in Theosophical journals, I found in the T.S. archives in London a Biographical Memoir of Fellows of the Royal Society (Vol. 40 p. 349-365) devoted to him. His chief work was in the wartime production of penicillin and the elucidation of vitamin B2. When I met him, he was still contributing to the intellectual work of the Society, with his late works "Occult Chemistry Re-Evaluated", "Intelligence Came First", "Inner Adventures" and "Our Last Adventure".

The memoir notes "Lester's life was dominated by

his belief in theosophy". Among his awards were two professional gold medals, but the memoir adds he "received in 1977, the seldom-awarded Subba Row Gold Medal of the International Theosophical Society. Lester cherished above all others, this prestigious award, which put him among the Theosophical Greats." That medal is now in our archives, together with that of Geoffrey Farthing, (1995) with whom Lester had disagreements about after-death states.



## The most influential living Theosophical scientist

22 May, 2015

The most influential living Theosophical scientist is Rupert Sheldrake. When did he first appear in Theosophical literature? I consulted the Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals, which, though incomplete, is a wonderful legacy which we owe chiefly to the late Gladney Oakley in Australia.

<http://www.theosophy.com/theos-talk/200601/tt00085.html>

It looks like one of Dr Sheldrake's early contributions was "The Hypothesis of Formative Causation" in "The American Theosophist" November 1982. We are fortunate in the UK that Dr Sheldrake lives here and a member of the English Section.



## Palmyra

25 May 2015

Palmyra is in the news now, as an important heritage site threatened with destruction. Madame Blavatsky once began an article

"WHETHER one surveys the imposing ruins of Memphis or Palmyra; stands at the foot of the great pyramid of Ghizé...."

But did she really see the city?

Sinnett states in his memoir of HPB, "Incidents" which he wrote with the help of material from her sister, that in 1872 HPB left Cairo.

"Disgusted with the failure of her spiritist society and the gossip it provoked, Mme. Blavatsky soon

went home via Palestine, and lingered for some months longer, making a voyage to Palmyra and other ruins, whither she went with Russian friends. Accounts of some of the incidents of her journey found their way into the French and even American papers. At the end of 1872 she returned in her usual way without warning, and surprised her family at Odessa. "

If those accounts did appear in newspapers, they would be valuable early accounts of HPB. Her work in Cairo had of course been featured in Spiritualist papers in London.



## When a Theosophist Passes

3 June 2015

When a Theosophist passes, the obits will often identify their lodge. George Arundale, paying tribute to the scientist William Crookes "On the Watch-Tower" in "The Theosophist" June 1919, noted that he was a member of London Lodge. This however was no ordinary lodge, being chiefly a vehicle for A.P. Sinnett. It was for a time affiliated direct to Adyar, and there was even a spell when Sinnett and friends broke away and formed the Eleusinian Society. Did Crookes follow him, one wonders. I must confess I had not fully appreciated how much Crookes' membership was bound up with Sinnett, from the time when Sinnett brought him into the T.S. Sinnett sat with various mediums, an interest he shared with Crookes. Crookes was a very great scientist, and Mr Sinnett did well to retain his friendship. Their cooperation deserves further exploration. Professor Brock's biography of Crookes is a good place to start.

Leslie please send me the image which follows this note. The one in facebook is too small for me to publish.



## Psypioneer

6 June 2015

Theosophical archivists know that relevant material is often published in the free on line monthly journal Psypioneer which is archived at [www.woodlandway.org](http://www.woodlandway.org). The March 2015 issue reprinted a paper by G.R.S. Mead on "The Quest" which explained how he worked with Madame Blavatsky but eventually came to leave the T.S., while the April/May joint issue offered Clara Codd's

memories of incidents in the life of C.W. Leadbeater. He was apparently the only Theosophist ever to be attacked by a werewolf, and one moreover which Robert Gilbert [co-editor of the Oxford Book of Ghost Stories] tells me, behaved in the traditional manner of such entities in folklore. But we do need a channel for the publication of mundane Theosophical records, not significant enough for the quarterly "Theosophical History" ([www.theohistory.org](http://www.theohistory.org)) which has made available published much vital material since it was founded in 1985, not least about Blavatsky. Here we may hope that Friends of Theosophical Archives will play a valuable role. The next issue of its Newsletter will carry an article by Dr Gilbert himself.



## How old was Madame Blavatsky?

15 June 2015

How old was Madame Blavatsky? Christmas Humphreys, the only person ever to edit both "The Secret Doctrine" and "The Mahatma Letters", says in his booklet "The Field of Theosophy" (TPH London, 1966) "She was born in South Russia on August 12, 1831, new style, and died on May 8, 1891, in London at the age of 60." A few other authors give the age of 60, but 59 appears to be the correct calculation. One might also say that she passed in her sixtieth year.



## Rudolf Steiner

19 June 2015



Dr Rudolf Steiner was active in the T.S. between about 1902-13. One of the most remarkable archival achievements is Crispian Villeneuve's two volume book "Rudolf Steiner in Britain" which contains much rare

documentation about those days, some from our own English T.S.

<http://www.templelodge.com/pages/viewbook.php...>

Dr Steiner was interacting with leading Theosophists, such as G.R. S. Mead, Annie Besant and Mabel Collins. There is much still to be discovered about the very sad separation that followed.

Crispian visited the T.S. again last month and met Janet Lee, lead member for archives on the English E.C. This week he returned, and he is pictured in the T.S. library in London with Barry Thompson the librarian and Leslie Price from FOTA England.

Under discussion was Daniel Dunlop, a leading Theosophist of wide affiliations, who joined Dr Steiner's work not long after giving the Blavatsky Lecture, a highly prestigious occasion never otherwise followed by leaving the T.S.



## Who is the most significant Hungarian in the history of Theosophical archives?

19 June 2015

In the National Archives catalogue of the UK, we find the following entry

Reference: HO 334/155/14777

Description: Naturalisation Certificate: Beatrice Maud Hoffmann. From Hungary. Resident in London. Certificate AZ14777 issued 22 August 1939. Note(s): Re-admission.

Held by: The National Archives, Kew

Miss Hoffman also that year gave the Mahatma Letters to the British Museum. Later a new building, the British Library, was built for books and manuscripts, and it is there we can now find the Mahatma Letters.

Miss Hoffman became British just in time. The Nazi-Soviet pact was signed on August 23 1939, and Hungary was gradually drawn into the war that followed. She may have wished to avoid this. By giving the Mahatma letters to the British Museum, she also ensured their safety. The BM web site states that "the Museum's collections of books, manuscripts, prints and drawings were sent to the National Library of Wales at the beginning of the Second World War"

**Update – see posting of 27 June below, indicating there were two different Maud Hoffmans. LP**



## The Mahatma Letters and References to Spiritualists

22 June 2015



In the Mahatma letters there many references to Spiritualists puzzling to a later generation. Take the passage below for example

"Mrs. Billing is — a medium, and when that is said all is said. Except this, that among mediums she is the most honest if not the best. Has Mr. Massey seen her answer to Mrs. Simpson, the Boston medium that the questions — very compromising no doubt for the New England prophetess and Seer — should be brought forward as evidence of her guilt? Why — if honest has she not exposed pro bono publico all such false mediums? — may be the question asked. She tried to warn her friends repeatedly; result: "friends" fell off and she herself was regarded in the light of a slanderer, a "Judas." She tried to do so, indirectly, in the case of Miss Cook (junior). Ask Mr. Massey to recollect what were his feelings in 1879, at the time he was investigating the materialization phenomena of that young lady, — when told by Mrs. Billing — guardedly, and by H.P.B., — bluntly, that he was mistaking a piece of white muslin for a "spirit." In your world of maya and kaleidoscopic change of feelings — truth is an article rarely wanted in the market; it has its seasons and very short ones..."

Here is Mrs Billing who worked in the States and England; often mentioned by Theosophists, but worth more attention as to how she fitted into HPB's work; Mrs Simpson of whom I knew nothing; and Miss Cook (junior) whom I take to be Kate Cook, sister of Florence who had been investigated by Crookes.

Today we should try to clarify these references, because there are scholars around "Theosophical History", "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" (IAPSOP) and Psypioneer, to add to the old sources. As I write, several scholars are kindly trying to find if Mrs Simpson is the same lady from New Orleans and Chicago who did slate writing.



## Dion Fortune (1890-1946)

22 June 2015

Dion Fortune (1890-1946) was one of the most influential women occultists. In the 1920s she was active in the Theosophical Society. Despite several biographies, our knowledge of those years is still sketchy. But Geraldine Beskin of the Atlantis Bookshop lectures next Sunday 28th June at the Theosophical Society in London on how Dion came to join the T.S. and why, despite believing in the Masters, she left. Here is Geraldine today in the Theosophical Society library with archivist Leslie Price and librarian Barry Thompson. Is there material about Dion Fortune in your archive? One of the most significant documents actually appeared in a small American magazine, The O.E. Library Critic. There are also forgotten articles by Dion in the short-lived revival, by the T.S. here, of "Theosophical Review" 1925-8. Rarest of all are photos of Dion Fortune.



## Maud Hoffman

27 June 2015

Felix culpa! Recently I linked on this page Maud Hoffman, who gave the Mahatma Letters to the British Museum in 1939, and Beatrice Maud Hoffman who was naturalised in London that summer. In attempting find out more about these events, kind friends have almost certainly shown that the two ladies were different. Marc Demarest has posted on his blog Chasing Down Emma a good deal of information about Maud's early life, collected by him and by Lis Warwood in Australia.

<http://ehbritten.blogspot.co.uk/>

Janet Kershner, archivist at T.S. Wheaton, has located letters to and from Maud and Boris De Zirkoff in the months before she died in June 1953 which throw light on the decision to publish the Mahatma Letters.

And there is a valuable tribute to Mr Sinnett in "Theosophy in England and Wales", September 1921, written by Miss Hoffman. She reveals he was not a member of the T.S. when they met but she was! He lately had a disagreement with Mrs Besant, had left the T.S., and had formed the Eleusinian Society instead. But soon he returned to the T.S.

<http://ehbritten.blogspot.co.uk/2015/06/the-mahatma-letters-some-notes-on-maud.html>



## The British Library has modified its on line catalogue reference to the Mahatma Letters

2 July 2015

The British Library has modified its on line catalogue reference to the Mahatma Letters. An extra sentence alerts readers to the research of Dr Vernon Harrison. The entry now comments:

"The Mahatma authorship and penmanship are disputed by H. E. and W. L. Hare, Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?, 1936, who argue that the whole series is a fabrication by Madame Blavatsky, and their verdict is accepted by G. M. Williams, High Priestess of the Occult, New York, 1946, p. 165. This has since been challenged by Vernon Harrison in H.P. Blavatsky and the SPR: an Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885 (Pasadena, 1997)."

Dr Harrison first presented his research when invited to lecture to the London T.S. in 1983. Though a senior SPR figure, he was not a T.S. member, and did not know any Theosophists, but he admired HPB's writings. Harrison's report appeared in the SPR Journal in April 1986, and was accompanied by an SPR press release, which reverberated around the world. With further investigations, he published a book in 1997 which is available on line.

<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-spr/hpbspr-h.htm>.

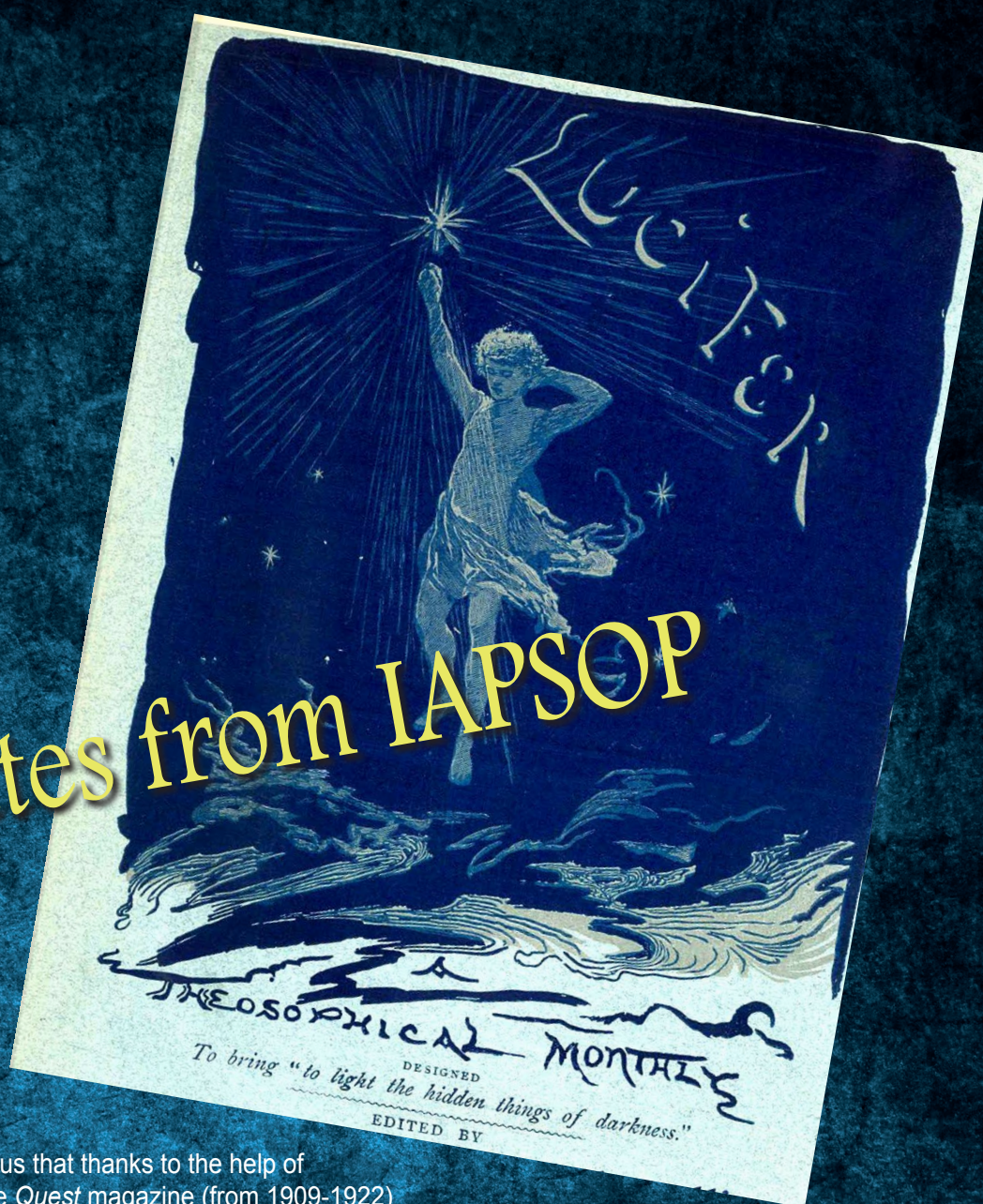
The action of the BL is a by-product of ongoing enquiries into Maud Hoffman who in early 1939 donated the Mahatma Letters to the British Museum; they were later transferred to the newly built British Library.

# Join Us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/friendsoftheosophicalarchives?fref=photo>



# Updates from IAPSOP



Marc Demarest informed us that thanks to the help of John Patrick Deveney, the *Quest* magazine (from 1909-1922) is ready for download and use.

<http://www.iapsop.com/archive/materials/quest/>

You can download, absolutely free, the first thirty-odd volumes of the *Occult Review*:

[http://www.iapsop.com/archive/materials/occult\\_review/](http://www.iapsop.com/archive/materials/occult_review/)

*Lucifer* and *The Theosophist* have both been updated with new material:

<http://www.iapsop.com/archive/materials/Lucifer/>

<http://www.iapsop.com/archive/materials/theosophist/>

There is also new material under *Light* and the *Medium* and *Daybreak*:

[http://www.iapsop.com/archive/materials/medium\\_and\\_daybreak/](http://www.iapsop.com/archive/materials/medium_and_daybreak/)

<http://www.iapsop.com/archive/materials/light/>

# A Review

## Adyar Library and Research Center

by **Elaine Fisher**  
Columbia University

The Adyar Library and Research Centre, housed within the idyllic grounds of the Theosophical Society in Chennai's Adyar neighborhood, is a gem of a research institute, both for its scenic landscape as well as its extensive archival holdings. Stealing a glance at the lotus pond in the enclosed courtyard or the acres of flowering foliage surrounding the library, one can easily forget the bustle of one of India's largest metropolises. Fortunately, the Adyar Library's holdings make a trip well worth the effort. For the Sanskritist in particular, Adyar is not to be missed on a research tour of India, with its extensive collection of palm-leaf and paper manuscripts, as well as a collection of rare printed material scarcely rivaled by any institution on the Indian subcontinent.

To read more visit: <http://dissertationreviews.org/archives/4058>



## Vatican Library Puts 4,000 Ancient Manuscripts Available Online For Free



<http://tinyurl.com/l2rdcrk>



# The H.P. Blavatsky Museum Center

Ukraine

H.P. Blavatsky House  
Image Source: <http://tinyurl.com/pqp869u>

# The Theosophical Society in Ukraine

The Theosophical Society in Ukraine invites you to contribute to the preservation of The HPB Museum Center by joining the ten days event "The Third Volunteer Decade". This event, scheduled to take place on August 12-21, 2015, is part of the project to preserve and restore HPB's birth house. On August 12 HPB's birthday will be celebrated at the Museum Center and on the next days the reparation program begins.

The project to preserve HPB's house needs volunteers and funding because the building has not been repaired for a long period of time and it is in deplorable condition.

You can contribute to the preservation of the HPB Museum Center by making donations or by travelling to Ukraine and participating of the Third Volunteer Decade.

For more details about the project, the event, donations and to subscribe to their update list you may contact:

Gavrylenko Svitlana +38 066 65 97 098.  
org@theosophy.in.ua  
Kyiv

or

Golovchenko Tetyana +38 067 630 16 46  
dnipro@theosophy.in.ua  
Dnipropetrovsk

## Donations

### For US dollars

#### **Intermediary Bank:**

The Bank of America N.A.  
New York, USA  
SWIFT: BOFAUS3N

#### **BENEFICIARY's BANK:**

OTP Bank , Kiev  
SWIFT: OTPV UA UK  
Corr.Account No. 3582023463002

#### **Beneficiary:**

Welfare Fund "H.P. Blavatsky Center"  
Ac. 26002455007733  
DETAILS: For welfare aid

### For GBP

#### **Intermediary Bank:**

Royal Bank of Scotland  
London, UK  
SWIFT-BIC: RBOSGB2L

#### **BENEFICIARY's BANK:**

OTP Bank , Kiev  
SWIFT-BIC: OTPV UA UK  
Corr.Account No. 10006498

#### **Beneficiary:**

Welfare Fund "H.P. Blavatsky Center"  
Ac. 26002455007733  
DETAILS: For welfare aid

### For EURO-1

#### **Intermediary Bank:**

Deutsche Bank AG  
Frankfurt/Main, Germany  
SWIFT-BIC: DEUTDEFF

#### **BENEFICIARY's BANK:**

OTP Bank , Kiev  
SWIFT-BIC: OTPV UA UK  
Corr. Account No. 100 9474974 0000

#### **Beneficiary:**

Welfare Fund "H.P. Blavatsky Center"  
Ac. 26002455007733  
DETAILS: For welfare aid

### For EURO-2

#### **Intermediary Bank:**

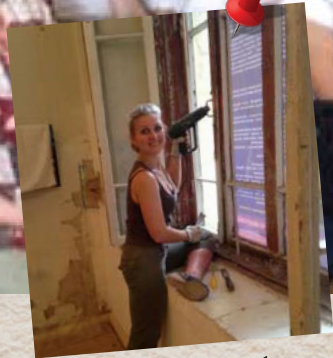
Commerzbank AG  
Frankfurt/Main, Germany  
SWIFT-BIC: COBADEFF

#### **BENEFICIARY's BANK:**

OTP Bank , Kiev  
SWIFT-BIC: OTPV UA UK  
Corr.Account No. 400 8880064 01

#### **Beneficiary:**

Welfare Fund "H.P. Blavatsky Center"  
Ac. 26002455007733  
DETAILS: For welfare aid



## Voluntary work in H.P. Blavatsky Museum Center



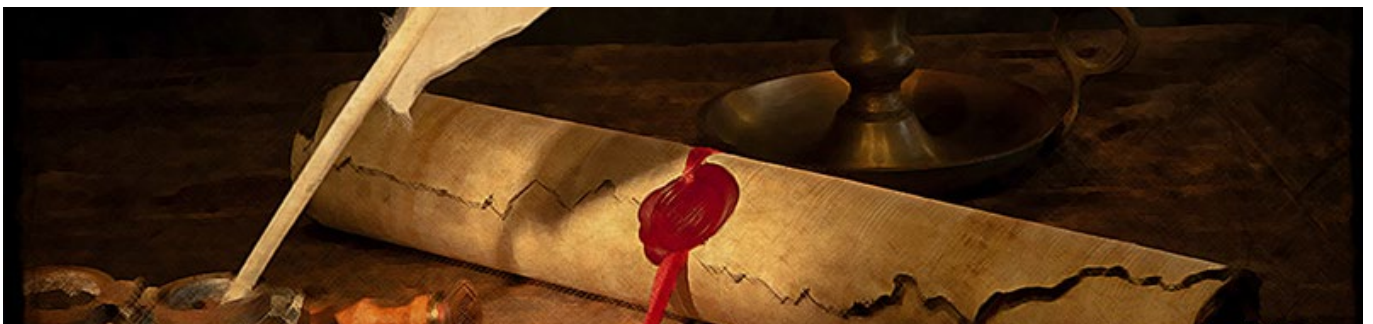


## You Can Help

If you wish to participate in the formation committee, contribute to the archival preservation fund, or identify an archive in need of preservation, contact Leslie Price: [leslie.price@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:leslie.price@blueyonder.co.uk)

If you wish to join FOTA's mailing list, subscribe to our newsletter by clicking here:

<http://www.hypatia.gr/fota/index.php/news>





VICTROL