

Frederic Bligh Bond

Frederic Bligh Bond (1864-1945) was an English architect and archeologist who in later life became deeply interested in psi research. He is mainly remembered for his extensive work at [Glastonbury Abbey](#), where he claimed to have made archeological discoveries through mediumistic contacts with deceased monks.



Early Life and Career

Bligh Bond (as he was usually known) was born on 30 June 1864 in Marlborough, Wiltshire. He was educated at home by his father, a clergyman, and later at Bath College (1878-1881). He moved to Weston-super-Mare, becoming friends with spiritualists and John Allen Bartlett, also a clergyman's son, who later acted as the mediumistic source for his psychic activities at Glastonbury.^[1]

From 1888 he worked as an architect in Bristol. His two-volume work *Roodscreens and Roodlofts*, written jointly with Rev Dom Bede Camm, brought him a reputation as an expert in church architecture.^[2]

Bond was a member of the Freemasons, the Theosophical Society, the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia and the Ghost Club. He joined the [Society for Psychical Research](#) in 1902 and the Somerset Archeological and Natural History Society the following year.

Glastonbury Excavations

In 1907 Bond joined excavations in monastic buildings taking place at Glastonbury, where he was appointed unpaid director by the diocese of Bath and Wells. This work uncovered the dimensions and purpose of a number of the monastic buildings, notably the Edgar and Loretto Chapels.

Bond claimed that the breakthroughs were brought about by the mediumship of his friend John Bartlett making contact with dead monks from the time of the early history of the abbey.^[3] He published his results in a book *The Gate of Remembrance*.^[4] This led to his dismissal in 1921 by the dean of Bath and Wells, Dr Joseph Armitage Robinson, who was opposed to mediumship being used in archeology.

Critical archeologists disputed Bond's claims, pointing out that some documentation already existed regarding the whereabouts of the buildings and objecting to a lack of scientific controls.^[5]

As editor of *Psychic Science*, the quarterly journal of the [College of Psychic Science](#), between 1921 and 1926 Bond published several pamphlets about his continued mediumistic contacts with deceased Glastonbury monks.^[6]

For a full description of this episode, see [The Glastonbury Scripts](#).

Other Research

Bond collaborated with the medium Geraldine Cummins on automatic writings that came to be known as the [Scripts of Cleophas](#), purporting to be accounts by Christians who lived in the first century after Christ's death. This later led to a [copyright dispute](#), with Bond claiming that the scripts were addressed to him and that he should therefore have full rights. The claim went to court but was dismissed.^[7]

Another medium, Hester Dowden, provided him with the spirit communication which led to his writing *The Gospel of Philip the Deacon*.^[8]

Bond's research on the possibility of thought-forms in psychic photography, carried out with Ada Deane,^[9] was acknowledged in the book *Thought-forms* by Annie Besant and CW Leadbeater.^[10]

American Society for Psychical Research

In 1926 Bond emigrated to New York, where he was appointed education secretary to the [American Society for Psychical Research](#) (ASPR) and editor of its journal. He became involved in the dispute over the mediumship of [Mina Crandon](#) ('Margery'), and having been a strong supporter became sceptical of its validity, following which he was dismissed.^[11]

At this time, he became a member of the Catholic Church of North America (the Old Roman Catholic Church), founded in 1925, being ordained in 1932 and being 'swiftly elevated to a status equivalent to (the only) bishop...'.^[12]

In 1936, Bond returned to England and after living in London for a while moved to Wales, where he died in 1945.

Works

A detailed list of Bond's works, including those on architecture, can be found in 'Frederick Bligh Bond 1864-1945, a bibliography of his writings and a list of his buildings', by Richard Coates.

Selected Books

An Architectural Handbook of Glastonbury Abbey, with a Historical Chronicle of the Building (1909). Bristol: Edward Everard.

Roodscreens and Roodlofts (1909, with D.B. Camm). London: Sir Isaac Pitman.

Gematria: A Preliminary Investigation of the Cabala contained in the Coptic Gnostic Books (1917, with T.S. Lea). Oxford: Blackwell.

The Gate of Remembrance (1918). Oxford: Blackwell.

The Hill of Vision (1918). Boston: Marshall Jones Co.

Materials for the Study of the Apostolic Gnosis, Part I (1919, with T.S. Lea). Oxford: Blackwell.

The Company of Avalon. A Study of the Script of Brother Symon, Sub-Prior of Winchester Abbey in the Time of King Stephen (1924). Oxford: Blackwell.

The Gospel of Philip the Deacon (1932). New York: Macoy.

The Secret of Immortality (1934). Boston: Marshall Jones Co.

The Mystery of Glaston (1938). Glastonbury: Glastonbury Publications.

Selected Articles

The place of will and idea in spiritualism (1920). In *Spiritualism: Its Present-Day Meaning*, ed. by Huntly Carter, 105-11. London: T. Fisher Unwin.

The discoveries at Glastonbury (1920-21). *Psychic Research Quarterly* 1, 302-12.

A voyage and its strange consequences (1925). *Light* 45, 18 June.

The pragmatist in psychic research (1927). In *The Case For and Against Psychical Belief*, ed. by Carl Murchison, 25-64. Worcester, Mass.: Clark University.

The mind in animals. Record of some experiments with the "Briarcliff" pony (1928). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 22/1, January, 15-22.

Athanasia: My witness to the soul's survival (1929). [five parts]. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 23/1, 15-20; 23/2, 97-103; 23/3, 148-57; 23/4, 191-200; 23/5, 261-69.

Book review: (1929). *Man's Survival After Death* by Charles L. Tweedale. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 23, 319-21.

Subjective evidence for survival or continuity (1930). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 24/1, January, 35-38.

Nascent and obscure phenomena and their detection (1930). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 24, 82-84.

A case of obsession with alleged precognition of events (1930).

Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research 24, 170-74.

The Boston-Venice cross-correspondence in the Margery mediumship (1930). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 24/5, May, 206-12.

A curious 'apport' by Walter at the Boston sitting of May 30th (1930). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 24/5, May, 213-14.

Reincarnation and Experience (1930, translated by René Sudre). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 24/5, May, 215-18.

Some rare forms of mediumship (1930, with Harry Price). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 24, 437-39.

Varieties of cross correspondence: A comparison of notable instances, such as the Piper and Margery series, with a review of methods and results (1930). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 24/11, November, 498-512.

An American Nostradamus (1931). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 25, 320-24.

Notes: Transcendent powers of the living personality; thumbprint records by 'Walter'; etc. (1932). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 26, 93-94.

A new type of metapsychic phenomenon [in photography] in the work of the W.H.P.B. Group (1932). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 26, 241-50.

The explanation of Premonitions Theory of "Psychoboly" by Dr A. Tanagra (1932). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 26/10, October, 369-74.

Psychical elements in heredity (1932). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 26/12, December, 433-34.

The record of a strange automatic script (1933). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 27, 138-40.

The oracle of Manumetaxyl: A strange automatic script (1933). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 27, 187-91.

The present status of psychic research and spiritualism (1933). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 27, 254-57.

A human aura photographically recorded (1933). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 27.

The inspiration of Glastonbury [automatic writings of Jessie B. Stevens] (1933-34). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 27/9, 258-62; 27/11, 319; 27/12, 345-51; 28/1, 22-26; 28/2, 31-33; 28/3, 67-70; 28/4, 90-100; 28/6, 143-48; 28/7, 176-82; 28/9, 225-29; 28/10, 247-51; 28/12, 304-309.

Debate with Dr Shailer Lawton: Do psychic phenomena prove survival? (1934). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 28, 131-37.

Melvyn Willin

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Endnotes

Footnotes

1. ^ Lambert (1966), 301.
2. ^ Bond & Camm (1909).
3. ^ Timm (2015)
4. ^ Bond (1918).
5. ^ Feder (2010), 43-44; Wilkins (1923).
6. ^ See Coates (2015) for details.
7. ^ Cummins (1951), 112-13; Hopkinson-Ball (2007), 154-58. For Bond's perspective see Fodor (1934), 34.
8. ^ Bond (1932).
9. ^ Fodor (1934), 34.
10. ^ Besant & Leadbeater (1901).
11. ^ Tymn et al (2022).
12. ^ Coates (2015), 6.