

Mollie Goldney

Mollie Goldney (1895-1992) was a psychical researcher noted for contributions to the critical literature on hauntings and physical mediumship.

Life and Career

Kathleen Mollie Goldney was born in 1895 and spent her early life in India where her father was a judge in the civil service. She married there, to a railway network director.

Goldney moved to England in 1933 and undertook training in midwifery at Queen Charlotte's Hospital. She was a Regional Commissioner in the Women's Voluntary Services and was subsequently awarded the MBE for her work there.

Goldney spoke fluent German and was an accomplished pianist.

Psychical Research

Goldney joined the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in 1927, having become intrigued with Indian firewalking. She joined its governing council in 1942, served as its secretary from 1949 to 1957 and was later appointed a vice-president.

In addition to her work in the SPR, Goldney worked with Harry Price at his National Laboratory of Psychical Research, assisting with the investigation of such mediums as Rudi Schneider and Helen Duncan, whose trial for witchcraft she attended.

Later she collaborated with Eric Dingwall and Trevor Hall on a critical report of Price's Borley Rectory investigation.^[1]

With RG Medhurst, Goldney authored a historical examination of William Crookes's investigations of Florence Cook and other mediums, defending them against charges of experimental incompetence and gullibility.^[2]

Soal-Goldney Experiments

Goldney assisted SG Soal in telepathy experiments in 1941-1943 with Basil Shackleton, whose unusually high success rate was later shown to have been achieved by Soal's covert manipulation of the data. Goldney was not implicated in the deception.^[3]

She took an interest in telepathy experiments later carried out by Soal with two Welsh boys, investigating claims by a sceptical psychologist that the boys might have signalled by means of an ultrasonic whistle inaudible to adults.^[4]

Works

Books

Crookes and the Spirit World (1972, with RG Medhurst and MR Barrington). London: Souvenir Press.

Articles

Report on a series of experiments with Mrs Eileen Garrett. Part 1: An examination into physiological changes alleged to take place during the trance state (1938-39, with SG Soal). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 45, 44-87.

A case of purported spirit-communication due actually to sub-conscious or trance memory powers (1938-39). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 45, 210-16.

Experiments in precognitive telepathy (1943, with SG Soal). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 47, 21-150.

Correspondence (1948). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 34, 101-02.

The history of Borley Rectory: A critical survey of the evidence (1956, with EJ Dingwall and TH Hall). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 51.

The Shackleton Report (1960, with SG Soal). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 40, 378-81.

The Jones boys and the ultrasonic whistle (1960, with C. Scott). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 40, 249-60.

William Crookes and the physical phenomena of mediumship (1964, with RG Medhurst). *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 54, 25-157.

The Shackleton experiments: Mrs Gretl Albert's accusations against Dr Soal (1968). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 44, 308-13.

Mr Hastings and the Borley Report (1969, with EJ Dingwall and TH Hall). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 45, 115-24.

Two experiences of an apparition (1970, with A. MacKenzie). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 45, 381-90.

The Soal-Goldney experiments with Basil Shackleton: A discussion. A personal account. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 56, 73-84.

Three comments on the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 56: A reply to Dr Wassermann (1975). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 48, 91-94.

Obituary: SG Soal (1975). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 48, 95.

Melvyn Willin

Literature

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Medhurst, R.G., Goldney, K.M. and Barrington, M.R. (1972). *Crookes and the Spirit World*. London: Souvenir Press.

Markwick, B. (1978). The Soal-Goldney experiments with Basil Shackleton: New evidence of data manipulation with statements by KM Goldney and JG Pratt. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* 56, 250-81.

West, D.J. & Markwick B. (2018). Dr Soal: A Psychic Enigma. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical*

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West, D.J. (1992). Obituary: K.M. Goldney. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 58, 285-86.

References

Footnotes

- 1.^ Dingwall, Goldney, Hall (1956).
- 2.^ Medhurst, Goldney, Barrington (1972).
- 3.^ West and Markwick (2018).
- 4.^ West (1992), 286.

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