

Guy Lambert

Guy Lambert (1889–1983) was a British senior civil servant who contributed articles on mediumship, poltergeists and other topics to the publications of the Society for Psychical Research

Life and Career

Guy William Lambert was born in London on 1 December 1889. He attended Cheltenham College public school and St John's College, Oxford. He joined the civil service in 1913 and retired in 1951 having received the Chevalier, Legion of Honour (1920), the Silver Jubilee Medal (1935), the Coronation Medal (1937), and the Companion of the Bath (1942).

Psychical Research

Lambert became interested in psychical research after reading [Frederic WH Myers's](#) *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* in the school library. He joined the [Society for Psychical Research](#) and was co-opted to its governing council in 1925, serving as honorary secretary and as president from 1955 to 1958.

Lambert published articles exploring different aspects of psychical research, notably automatic writing, the experiences of Moberly and Jourdain at Versailles and the geophysical nature of poltergeist outbreaks.¹

Verrall Automatic Writing

In a 1971 paper, Lambert scrutinized automatic writing produced in the early twentieth century by Margaret Verrall, a Cambridge classics teacher and SPR researcher. The scripts came in response to an impulse to write, initially in Latin in which she was fluent; she did not afterwards recall what she had written.² Some of the material appeared to be veridical communications from deceased SPR researchers, notably [Edmund Gurney](#), who died in 1888, [Henry Sidgwick](#) (1900) and FWH Myers (1901). Lambert adopts the view that such communications are not necessarily evidence of personal survival, but that at a minimum they indicate that a person's memories continue to exist for an indeterminate period following their death and might be reactivated by sensitives.³

Versailles Time Slip

Examining the 1901 'time-slip' experience at [Versailles](#) reported by Moberly and Jourdain,⁴ Lambert was persuaded that the two women did perceive historical scenes paranormally, but that the scenes date to a somewhat earlier period than they believed.⁵ See details [here](#).

Geophysical Theory of Poltergeists

Lambert's most original contribution was to argue that poltergeist phenomena are initiated by the movement of underground streams, pointing to a geographical distribution of such cases to coastal regions, especially tidal areas and claiming a significant correlation with local weather, tides and geological conditions.⁶

[Alan Gauld](#) and [Tony Cornell](#) objected that Lambert's proposal lacked evidence and was marred by factual errors.⁷ Lambert conceded that it could not apply to cases where other factors were in play, notably a source that demonstrated intelligence.⁸ Gauld and Cornell later tested it by mechanically creating vibrations in the walls of a house, finding that small objects were dislodged only with significant shaking.⁹

Lambert was praised for producing a theory that was testable even if contested.¹⁰ A recent critical overview of haunting theories includes arguments for and against the theory.¹¹

Selected Works

Articles

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Two synchronous experiences connected with a death (1968). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 44, 232-27.

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Endnotes

Footnotes

- [1.](#) Haynes (1982), 219-20.
- [2.](#) Verrall (1906), 6.
- [3.](#) Lambert (1971), 219.
- [4.](#) Morison & Lamont (1911).
- [5.](#) Lambert (1953, 1955, 1962).
- [6.](#) Lambert (1955), 49-71.
- [7.](#) Gauld & Cornell (1961), 129-47,
- [8.](#) Gauld & Cornell (1961), 148-53.
- [9.](#) Gauld & Cornell (1979), 334-37.
- [10.](#) Eysenck & Sargent (1982), 106-7.
- [11.](#) McCue (2002), 1-21.

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